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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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THE SOCIAL CREDITER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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From Week to Week

In *Self Condemned*, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, through the instrumentality of 'Professor Rene Harding,' the hero of the novel, expresses himself as follows:—

"[History] can only be visualised and written about as a crime story. The criminals, of course (and some are exceptionally unpleasant ones), are the endless series of persons who figure as the heads of States. . . .

"The explanation of this terrible paradox, that the state should always be in the hands of ruffians or of feeble-minded persons, is that the enormous majority of men are barbarians, philistines, and mentally inhabit an 'heroic' age, if not a peculiarly violent Stone Age. And upon that popular plane the political world has its being. [Yet] a number of creative 'sports' are born into every successive generation of uncreative gang-rule. . . .

"It is suggested that the principal figures in the history-book should be those heroic creators who attempt to build something, usually to be knocked down by the gang of criminals above mentioned, with the assistance, of course, of the unenlightened herd. The actual rulers are not necessarily concerned in any way with these creative individuals; it is usually left to members of the ill-disposed majority forcibly to prevent the success of the designs of the creative few: or the contemporary wielders of power, may for some reason, do no particular mischief; may omit to stage a blood-bath, debase the currency, pillage and tax to death the community. . . . They may be absorbed in their pleasures, or once in a way they may even possess a streak of goodness. Anyway, in such periods, the creative minds are relatively free to carry out their civilising work. Such work is usually destroyed within a few decades by a remarkable outbreak of bestial barbarity. . . .

"To conclude, history can only be written as a tragedy, because all that is worth writing about that has come down to us has been denied its full development."

Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* of November 16 to say that there are still country squires who retain a sense of noblesse oblige, Mr. L. D. Cave says he has recently visited a village where almshouses have been built for the aged poor, where modern five-roomed cottages are let at 6s. and 7s. a week and where old-age pensioners have comfortable homes at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a week. If there are any 'poor' they are in council houses.

The Observer for October 10, in commenting on the purchase of *The Spectator* by the 28-year old son of Sir John Gilmour, who was Home Secretary from 1932 to 1935, gave some details of staff changes. Mr. Walter Taplin was to remain editor and *The Times* leader-writer, Mr. T. E. Utley would act for six months as political adviser. *The Observer* commentator inferred that *the Spectator* might make a bid to establish itself "as a kind of *New Statesman* of the Right." Mr. Utley is said to be 'a high Anglican . . . regarded as one of the leading young intellectuals of the Tory Party.' Alas, there is no Tory Party, and we cannot recognise anyone today as a 'High Church Tory,' the nominal equivalent of the phrase used by *The Observer*. Mr. Utley is thirty-three, took a double first at Cambridge ("The citadel of the Whigs"), and, being blind since the age of nine, obtains his information through the services of a secretary who reads books and articles to him "at top speed and in an expressionless monotone." Ah! if only demos could be read to 'in an expressionless monotone'!

"For since it is in the very nature of men to follow the guide of reason in his actions, if his intellect sins at all his will soon follows; and thus it happens that looseness of intellectual opinion influences human actions and perverts them. Whereas, on the other hand, if men be of sound mind and take their stand on true and solid principles, there will result a vast amount of benefits for the public and private good." (Leo XIII.)

"Metaphysics remains the knowledge of the first principle, and of all the rest in the light of that principle. Thus grounded on existence, as on the most universal object of intellect, it is its permanent duty to order and to regulate an ever wider area of scientific knowledge, and to judge ever more complex problems of human conduct; it is its never-ended task to keep the old sciences in their natural limits, to assign their places, and their limits to new sciences; last, not least, to keep all human activities, however changing their circumstances, under the sway of the same reason by which alone man remains the judge of his own works, and, after God, the master of his own destiny." (Etienne Gilson.)

Freedom to Live

The following extracts are taken from Dr. Albert Schweitzer's book *The Decay and the Restoration of Civilisation*, translated by C. T. Campion. The work was published by A. & C. Black Ltd., in 1923 and in view of its age is all the more remarkable. The author explains that he had "been occupied since the year 1900" with the subject matter:—

"Material and spiritual freedom are closely bound up with one another. Civilisation presupposes free men, for only by free men can it be thought out and brought to realisation.

"But among mankind today both freedom and the capacity for thought have been sadly diminished.

"If society had so developed that a continually widening circle of the population could enjoy a modest, but well-assured, condition of comfort, civilisation would have been much more helped than it has been by all the material conquests which are lauded in its name."

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"The lack of freedom which results is made worse still because the factory system creates continually growing agglomerations of people who are thereby compulsorily separated from the soil which feeds them, from their own homes and from nature. Hence comes serious psychical injury. There is only too much truth in the paradoxical saying that abnormal life begins with the loss of one's own field and dwelling place."

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"Unconsciously to themselves, the majority of the members of our barbarian civilised States give less and less time to reflection as moral personalities, so that they may not be continually coming into inner conflict with their fellows as a body, and continually having to get over things which they feel to be wrong.

"Public opinion helps them by popularising the idea that the actions of the community are not to be judged so much by the standard of morality as by those of expediency, but they suffer injury to their souls."

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"The establishment of as favourable conditions of living as possible for all is a demand which must be made partly for its own sake, partly with a view to the spiritual and moral perfecting of individuals, which is the ultimate object of civilisation."

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"How closely the nations which form the great body of civilised humanity are still interrelated spiritually is shown by the fact that they have all side by side suffered the same decadence."

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"Again, the renewal of civilisation is hindered by the fact that it is so exclusively the individual personality which must be looked to as the agent in the new movement.

"The renewal of civilisation has nothing to do with movements which bear the character of experiences of the crowd; these are never anything but reactions to external happenings. But civilisation can only revive when there shall come into being in a number of individuals a new tone of mind independent of the one prevalent among the crowd and in opposition to it, a tone of mind which will gradually win influence over the collective one, and in the end determine its character."

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"One thing, however, is clear. Where the collective body works more strongly on the individual than the latter does upon it, the result is deterioration, because the noble element on which everything depends, *viz.*, the spiritual and moral worthiness of the individual, is thereby necessarily constricted and hampered. Decay of the spiritual and moral life then sets in, which renders society incapable of understanding and solving the problems which it has to face. Thereupon, sooner or later, it is involved in catastrophe.

"That is the condition in which we are now, and that is why it is the duty of individuals to rise to a higher conception of their capabilities and undertake again the function which only the individual can perform, that of producing new spiritual-ethical ideas. If this does not come about in a multitude of cases nothing can save us.

"A new public opinion must be created privately and unobtrusively. The existing one is maintained by the Press, by propaganda, by organisation, and by financial and other influences which are at its disposal. This unnatural way of spreading ideas must be opposed by the natural one, which goes from man to man and relies solely on the truth of the thoughts and the hearer's receptiveness for new truth. Unarmed, and following the human spirit's primitive and natural fighting method, it must attack the other, which faces it, as Goliath faced David, in the mighty armour of the age.

"About the struggle which must needs ensue no historical analogy can tell us much. The past has, no doubt, seen the struggle of the free-thinking individual against the fettered spirit of a whole society, but the problem has never presented itself on the scale on which it does today, because the fettering of the collective spirit as it is fettered today by modern organisations, modern unreflectiveness, and modern popular passions, is a phenomenon without precedent in history.

"Will the man of today have strength to carry out what the spirit demands from him, and what the age would like to make impossible?

"In the over-organised societies which in a hundred ways have him in their power, is he destined to become once more an independent personality and to exert influence back upon them? They will use every means to keep him in that condition of impersonality which suits them. They fear personality because the spirit and the truth, which they would like to muzzle, find in it a means of expressing themselves. And their power is unfortunately, as great as their fear."

H.R.P.

The New Zealand Election, etc.

It has frequently been asserted that the failure of potentially great and significant movements, not to 'do something' (which is a very different matter) but to gain an appreciable part of their real (as distinct from their presumed) objectives (*cf.* even Christianity itself) is related to a defect of relationship between their instigators, or leaders, and their followers, or disciples. This has been expressed by saying that the 'leader' allowed himself, or was forced, to come between his idea and those who embraced it. Psychologically, the worship of heroes is not easily dissociated from self-glorification: the greater the master, the greater the servant: hence, inflation of the master from a motive which is ulterior. The Master's *idea* is straightway subordinated to the usurping objective, which is invariably power of some sort. Leave it to the mob, and Caesar's history will certainly paint out Caesar. If, for some readers, this mention of Caesar rings an Emersonian bell, they are strongly recommended to put a finger on the rim to stop it from vibrating: whatever Emerson may have meant it was not, we fancy, aligned with our present intention.

One may see that, on the, lowest plane of political intrigue, to *cause* this immolation is one of the surest means of bringing about the defeat of a movement by removing the idea it is designed to advance from the scene of operations. The inherent dislike of new ideas is so widespread as to make this trick easy to play and, if the technique of the ballot-box enters into it anywhere, deadly in its effect. The modern use of the ballot-box is an amplifier of evil.

Particularly in his later years, Douglas was very well aware of this pitfall. While, in general, Social Credit ways of looking at things act strongly against the danger, and while Douglas's own eye was so constantly 'on the ball,' not on himself, that the objective was never lost to sight, there are other doors by which the devil of deflection can enter, and some of them are very wide open at the present time.

Quite dispassionately, we merely point to the fact, which is, like most facts, something quite beyond our competency or, we believe anyone else's, to alter. It has to be accepted.

We are informed that three members of the Christchurch 'Group' of Social Crediters have lately subscribed £6,000 between them to circularise 500,000 homes in New Zealand and otherwise to assist the determination in the Dominion to 'enter politics'—*i.e.*, to submit the future of Social Credit to the ballot-box. Quite a 'plum.' The election is now over. A hundred and twelve thousand votes are said to have been cast for "Social Credit" candidates, of whom none gained a seat, and one reached second place in a three-candidate constituency. Whether the election result is, as the Labour Party leader, Mr. Nash, has said, to give the National Party the victory by vote-splitting, or, as *The Times* thinks, due to some other cause is a matter of supreme indifference to us. We are equally unmoved by the suggestion that Social Credit will now proceed to (a) die because of the crushing disappointment the result of the election has brought, or (b) live because of the energising effects of this first taste of electoral 'blood' by the hounds of Social Credit. We are mildly interested in the phrase used by the 'Company of Free Men' in its autumn *Bulletin*, "a genuine S.C. ticket." What is a genuine Social Credit ticket in face of Douglas's repudiation of party politics altogether? We are also interested by the allegation that

the 'Company' has been active in New Zealand, in co-operation with the Leeds Social Credit Society and the 'Committee' which has appointed itself to register us all and 'co-ordinate' our activities. Since this activity has taken the form of a repudiation of the Social Credit Secretariat in terms familiar to all who read party pronouncements of any kind, we may perhaps say without argument that there are three outstanding dates in the history of Mr. Hargrave's followers. First, that of the association between the return of the late Mr. G. F. Powell from Albert to England and Mr. Hargrave's escapade in a west London hotel, where, jumping on a table prepared for the chairman of an unofficial 'welcome' meeting, he announced his displacement of Major Douglas as the "Leader" of the movement which owed its origin and inspiration to him. The rapid enlistment of a Green Shirt army on the lines of the already existing Brown and Black-shirted armies whose spectacular rise on the European continent doubtless provoked the usurper with envy was inhibited by a pre-war Emergency prohibition of distinctive shirts, ties, caps and other appurtenances of illicit military formations. At last, Mr. Hargrave announced to his followers the hopelessness of their task and disbanded the remnants of his force.

Next, with at least the respect due to genuine origins, and in the manner, however assumed, of sadder and wiser men, a direct approach was made to Douglas to ask whether a place might not be found for the stones which the Hargrave builder had rejected. It is slightly puzzling that Mr. de Maré and Mr. Carden were discovered later to have completely forgotten the terms of Major Douglas's reply, which was that the basis for such co-operation as was suggested was the constitution of the Social Credit Secretariat, which 'has been most carefully drawn up.' Application to the Secretariat's address at Liverpool was, therefore, advised, and a copy of the letters exchanged posted there. Along those lines at least, no further action was taken by the would-be 'co-operators.'

To understand fully the latest manoeuvres, it must be borne in mind that the collectivity which Mr. Carden and his associates now refer to as 'Social Credit Movement' (whether in England or elsewhere) comprises, in addition to more-or-less well-informed followers of Major Douglas (the same Major Douglas as was repudiated by Mr. Hargrave before the war) many thousands of men and women who know nothing of Social Credit but a few slogans, are virtually ignorant of the very existence of the Secretariat, and know nothing whatsoever of Douglas's writings either before or after 1938 at first hand. Quite obviously, therefore, the rage exhibited on the score of the 'pretensions' of the Social Credit Secretariat, whether by Mr. Carden or his motley Company of Free Men, is absurd. Neither the New Zealand, nor the British Columbian, nor the Albertan electorates know enough about anything to be in the slightest degree deflected from their political courses by anything the Secretariat may say. The most that could possibly happen in consequence of our exertions would be the detachment of a few sober persons from participation in an electioneering stunt, and, possibly, the fortification of their minds against erosion.

We agree that both of these are important objectives. They are vitally important objectives. Placed side by side with them, scarcely any other objective has any importance at all.

The Social Crediter recently reviewed some aspects of the work of Dr. Erich Fromm (*T.S.C.*, October 30).

We direct our readers' attention to the following fact:—That numerically, however mixed the human types may be, those individuals in whose composition any one of the "unproductive" orientations, as described by Fromm, predominates, vastly outnumber those who have, to an effective degree, a "productive" orientation. This is most strikingly the case as soon as the individual leaves the private and domestic sphere and strives to participate in the "political" sphere—the "world." Of what we may term the "genius" class, considered separately the same dichotomy of orientation is just as true, for "genius" is merely a more concentrated *intensity* of orientation. But if it were not so, the effects of the presence of even a minority of those unproductively orientated in the political community would ensure the defeat of any movement (such as Mr. Carden and his associates profess themselves to be resolved to create) with mathematical certainty.

We say categorically that no 'movement' of this kind has, in fact, in the whole history of political agitation, ever succeeded in the realisation of its initial and later its presumed objective. It has grown, truly, sometimes to proportions which stain whole epochs with its name. It has heard after long and bloody struggles the name of 'Victory' shouted in its behalf. Men have lived and died for it.

But it has not *succeeded*.

This thesis is not advanced on the 'authority' of the Social Credit Secretariat, or on the 'authority' of Major Douglas. It is advanced on the Authority of the facts of history.

What must be done about it? We have not yet reached a decision concerning this vital matter. The circumstances are not 'unprecedented'—quite the reverse! What most concerns us is whether there is any precedent for a solution, or, in Douglas's own work, any suggestion leading to that end. We believe there is; but also we believe it is one which, as our contemporary *Voice* reminds us, "comes better by meditation than by explanation."

Background to Crichel

The Southern Farmer prints the following letter:—

Sir,—The late Lord Chief Justice Hewart wrote the following prophetic words some twenty-five years ago—"The old despotism, which was defeated, offered Parliament a challenge. The new despotism, which is not yet defeated, gives Parliament an anaesthetic. The strategy is different, but the goal is the same. It is to subordinate Parliament, evade the courts, and to render the will or the caprice of the Executive unfettered and supreme."

Surely the heart of the Crichel Down affair is the disclosure of the ominous fact that a group of bureaucrats separately employed in a number of Government Departments or Agencies have no compunction in working together to achieve aims and objects upon which they have set their hearts, with a fine contempt for their duty to the individual citizen, whose servants they are.

I have read, most assiduously, both the Crichel Down report and the subsequent debate in Parliament on this

affair, and there seems every justification for coming to the conclusion that anaesthetics are still being administered to Parliament as effectively, if not more so, as at the time Lord Hewart wrote his warning. We are told that those under the influence of an anaesthetic are subject to illusions and delusions!

It deeply concerned me to note that, apparently throughout the debate those Members of Parliament, of all parties, taking part in it showed an almost complete indifference towards their paramount duty; the protection of the rights and personal sanctity of the individual against the power vested in the State. Most of the Members taking part in the debate seemed to be preoccupied with making trivial points or with a great display of emotion in pressing irrelevant party propaganda. For the rest, it seemed to be a matter of "scoring off the other fellow" or indulging in some cheap jibe.

I commend to you, Sir, and your readers, the leader in *The Times* of 16th June, 1954, headed "Naboth's Vineyard"—an article remarkable for its fearless and uncompromising point of view, in which occurred this sentence, "The cruellest and most irresponsible maker of gibes against the arbitrary incompetence of bureaucracy could scarcely have invented Crichel Down." The leader writer of that article had not misunderstood the real nature of "Background to Crichel."

As an admirer of your paper, a subscriber and constant reader I am greatly disappointed to feel that apparently you have been a victim of the parliamentary anaesthetic and succumbed to the consequences of its administration. We must all hope that you will very quickly recover from the dose and that your normal clear vision will be rapidly restored. You will then see clearly that the "Background to Crichel" is that the "new despotism" has come dangerously near achieving success in reaching its goal—"to subordinate Parliament, evade the courts, and to render the will or the caprice of the Executive unfettered and supreme."

Yours faithfully,

Guildford.

E. C. GORDON ENGLAND.

Edward Pilgrim

The case of Edward Pilgrim, the latest victim of "let-us-get-into-power-and-we'll-show-'em-how-to-run-Socialism" (*vide* the 'Conservatives before the General Election'), seems to be getting as wide publicity in Australia as in England.

The Sydney Morning Herald for October 11 carried a 'banner' headline about the case, with a smiling portrait-photograph of Mr. Peter Thorneycroft to set it off. A sub-heading announces that "EDWARD PILGRIM PREFERRED TO DIE WHEN HE FOUND HE WAS JUST A UNIT IN AN OFFICE FILE."

The Tablet's comment on the case is one of the best we have seen in a newspaper with a circulation:—" . . . Mr. Harold Macmillan . . . gave an explanation . . . that should have greatly disquieted Conservatives, for its implicit assumption that basically what was wrong was not that a man's property could be arbitrarily taken from him, but that the unhappy man who lost his savings and took his life had failed to inform himself correctly about the involved network of powers which local authority could exercise."