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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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“ . . . Neither Do They Spin . . . ”

by BRYAN W. MONAHAN

II

In a matter of some two hundred years, the main burden of maintaining life has been transferred from men to machines. That this is so is not immediately obvious, because so much else is done besides the maintenance of life. Appearances, notoriously deceptive, suggest that the maintenance of life is a hard and continuous struggle. Jungle struggle has become the class war.

The appearance, however, has to be assessed in relation to the activity involved in the struggle, and this, as we have seen, is a very mixed activity. Only part of it, and a minor part at that, is concerned with the real burden of maintaining existence—the production of food, clothing and shelter, and of the essential amenities which modern technology makes possible.

Suppose that the whole resources of modern harnessed power and applied technology were devoted *primarily* to the production of a sufficient supply of basic requirements. Since even at present an *almost* sufficient supply is forthcoming from the employment of a small fractional part of the total resources of men and machines, it is evident that a policy directed to ensuring a full sufficiency by the most suitable methods would leave surplus immense resources of power, material and men. That is to say, that without a further policy to utilise those resources, they would be unemployed.

The potentially unemployed resources *are* immense. Their magnitude may perhaps most easily be grasped by considering the state of affairs during the war. Then, virtually the whole population of the belligerent countries were maintained in a state at least of adequate sufficiency by the efforts of a fraction of the population and resources of those countries, while millions of men were under arms producing nothing (the ‘unemployed’ in another guise) and millions more were engaged in the production of almost unimaginable quantities of complex, precision-built equipment destined for rapid destruction.

That is a measure of the magnitude of the potential ‘unemployment’ problem. There is, of course, a further policy to deal with it: Full Employment.

At this point it is essential to observe that Full Employment is a fundamental *policy*, not an economic theory. Financial and economic policies derive from the pursuit of the objective of full employment of all persons physically and mentally capable of employment. It would be perfectly possible to set as the objective the minimum of human employment, in which case economic and financial policy would follow a quite different set of maxims. Except for

the decreasing few, in modern industrial nations, who can support themselves by their own efforts on the land, money is a licence to live; and again, except for the decreasing few in receipt of independent incomes, the price of that licence is employment—and employment, let it once more be emphasised, in the main without regard to its inherent value. Employment in the mass-slaughter and physical devastation of war was accepted as entitling the individual to the licence to live, so long as he could evade the physical hazards of his employment. Leaving aside what justification or necessity there may be for war, the physical effort is equivalent to any form of waste, one of which is the scramble for export markets.

Here it should be noted that it is impossible in any realistic physical sense for a country to prosper by an excess of exports over imports. It appears to do so, just as there is a monetary prosperity in war: it disposes of production in excess of real internal needs, just as war does. War, in fact, is an unlimited export market, and the logical and ultimate extension of the idea of trade ‘war.’

III

It is so much a commonplace to say that the majority of modern occupations are soul-destroying that the reality underlying the observation is hardly ever examined. But is it not a fair part of the explanation of contemporary materialism?

Paintings and other relics of pre-historic peoples bear witness still to the fact that in some way, appropriate to the understanding of their age, they pursued their lives “to the greater glory of God.” Throughout recorded history the evidence is far greater and plainer. Whole civilisations were developed and inspired by some one or other application of that idea. But not our present civilisation.

Yet if we subtract from our present power-mechanical civilisation its mass amusements and its gadgets, how much higher is the standard of living than it was in civilised communities in pre-mechanical times? Is the life of the contemporary wage-slave, with his repetitive part in a mass-production process which he does not comprehend in its entirety, with his beers, his gambling (this, surely, in the hope of escaping his lot in life?); with his fear that the fecundity of his wife will outstrip his economic resources; with his only idea of Heaven derived from the synthetic standards of the movies—is his life *in any sense* superior to the life of a native in living communion with an un-despoiled Nature, living in symbiosis with his environment,

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From Week to Week

One of the main characteristics of an Age of Materialism is its apparent lack of a unifying principle, and this is probably the main reason for the prevalence—almost the universality—of the episodic view of history. The episodic view—not only of history, but of life—is that everything happens from day to day, a sort of “I wonder what will happen to-day?” outlook. It is as if night had the power to cancel the consequences of the day.

If, as we believe, history is crystallised policy, it must be remembered that that policy is the application of a philosophy. History, and insofar a given civilisation or culture, is the concrete expression of philosophy. “In the beginning was the Word.” “Society is primarily metaphysical.” If these statements are true—and the Social Credit position rests on the assumption that they are—then even a Materialistic Age has a metaphysical basis. That is to say, day to day events and appearances are the outcome of a continuous policy, which in turn derives from a definite belief. So far as the masses are concerned, this belief may be that there is nothing to believe in, apart from the ‘good’ of employment and amusement.

But there is much evidence that this ‘belief’ of the masses is the outcome of a policy designed to inculcate it—a policy of attack against indigenous culture, carried on by subversive propaganda (not Communist only), and by cross-breeding. To paraphrase Professor Toynbee, the industrial revolution is being used to break up indigenous cultures, and create large cosmopolitan cities whose populations are being recruited from all corners of the earth.

Behind this policy again there must be the philosophy from which it derives. Just as the centuries of greatness of the British Isles, and Europe, for example, were the outcome of a belief, issuing in policy, in a Trinitarian God; or in the case of China, in a belief, again issuing in policy, in the Tao—so the Welfare State is the outcome of the belief, issuing in policy, in the mission of a Chosen People to rule One World.

This belief, and its derived policy (which, of course, has varied in its adaptation to circumstances) has had a beginning in time; but now we are faced with a tremendous acceleration in its spread—thanks largely, as Professor Toynbee points out, to the industrial revolution and the annihilation of distance, to which we may add the virtual simultaneity of modern communications.

It is this acceleration that constitutes the Social Credit problem. It is this that makes the episodic view, particularly of contemporary events, appear appropriate. Events appear now ‘to happen by themselves,’ so that their derivation from a steadily applied policy is so much harder to grasp.

The reason for this acceleration is the progressive replacement of one philosophy, or system of belief by another. A homogeneous culture can naturally be displaced only slowly at first, but as this displacement and replacement proceed, a point comes when the advantage lies with the replacing philosophy. And that is where we are now.

The situation is like a set of scales, with Social Credit on one side, and the Welfare State on the other; as one side rises the other falls. It is not a question of a system, but of an *outlook*. Social Credit is the policy of a philosophy; at present the wrong philosophy is in the ascendant, so that, *in this sense*, Social Credit policy is inapplicable, and, *a fortiori*, so is Social Credit technique. The latter, however, is quite applicable in the sense that at least an arithmetically correct financial system is a prerequisite to recovery *when we are in a position to recover*. Thus the correct application of Social Credit policy at present is to reduce the ascendancy of the opposing philosophy. Now there are signs of opposition to this philosophy on many fronts, as the fruits of the tree become apparent. But it is no use our hanging figs on the thorn-bush; it has to be rooted out; then we shall see what condition the fig-tree is in.

Vale James Gilbert

From his son, Mr. George M. Gilbert, we regret to learn that James Gilbert of Glasgow, “passed peacefully away on December 30, 1955, in his 93rd year.

“He was a loyal supporter of Major Douglas from the day he gave to the world his immortal Social Credit proposals and philosophy, and all through the varying changes from the old ‘New Age’ days with A. R. Orage and Arthur Brenton.

“My father was a man of great humanity and that absolute integrity which is very rare in these days of mass corruption and degraded life values, and only to be found in these few of us who are illuminated by the inner light.

“During his last hours while barely conscious, he kept repeating the words ‘The Social Crediter,’ a fitting tribute and proof of his love for that great cause.

“So passed a good man.”

Social Credit Secretariat

Mr. R. B. Gaudin has resigned from his appointment as a Director of the Secretariat as from February 6, 1956.

The Aims of Education

Parts I, II and III of Dr. Bryan W. Monahan’s essay, *The Aims of Education*, have appeared in our last three issues. Parts IV and V to complete the essay will be published at a later date after which the whole will be published as a booklet.

Inflation

"... it is doubtless a misconception to accuse the financiers of planning wars, . . . and many other tragedies associated with the present state of affairs. They are in much the same position as the immoderate drinker, whom it would be absurd to suppose desires *delirium tremens*. He will do everything possible to avoid *delirium tremens*—except stop drinking."

—C. H. Douglas in *The Monopoly of Credit*, p.11.

Having regard to the immensity of the issues involved, there has probably never been a more deeply ironical observation made in the whole history of literature than the above. It is to be remarked with what increasing force Douglas's statements of every kind tend to stand out as year succeeds year. Time would seem almost to be running backwards in his case, for instead of the landscape diminishing behind one, features from it seem to loom up and begin to occupy the foreground of the picture. The above was written in 1931, at a time when the whole industrialised world was speculating as to the nature of catastrophe that had struck it down—twenty-five years ago that was. Since then the financiers have had their second world war. An incredible interlude one would say, if one hadn't lived through it. And that misuse of words—a peace in which the noise of collapsing human institutions has been continuous and extreme.

The drunkard, one would say, has tried everything—except giving up drinking. Even inflation itself has not been omitted, if one is not misinterpreting the trend of the last few years; on the homeopathic principle, presumably. And still the financier marvels that his *delirium tremens* not only persists, but grows more tremendous. The unhappy politicians, who were pushed into the experiment, are to be now thrown out, and their party is threatened with replacement by its political opponents, if nothing better can be found.

What essentially is Inflation? Not the technical analysis of its cause, with which Douglas's name is associated, so much as how it strikes the individual consumer, as such. For it is he—or more significantly she, the housewife—who must be the focal point of any realistic investigation of the matter. The constitutional position of the producer, being functional and not political, is definitely secondary. This may appear an insignificant distinction, but it is, in fact, the turning-point, or test, of any really impartial approach to the subject. From this realistic angle, the simple answer to the question, What Is Inflation? is that it is a wasting disease afflicting the contents of the individual consumer's purse. Quite apart from, and additional to, all questions of taxation, either of property or income, of super-tax, or even death-duties, as Douglas said, it can be summed up in a single word, Confiscation; appropriation of the fruits of the individual's ingenuity and toil, by means of an unremitting Capital Levy.

Its elementary symptoms, which, of course, affect every conceivable monetary transaction of the day, can be most easily identified in the simple form of the Government Savings Certificate; in which twenty shillings-worth of purchasing-power invested, say in 1939, when it emerges

at the end of fifteen years or so, is fit to buy no more than eight and fourpence worth. To the naive, but not unnatural question as to where the confiscated money goes, the answer is that it is not money that is confiscated, but values, real wealth or substance. To revert to the analogy of the Savings Certificates, the emerging pound sterling has lost weight or virtue—power actually to purchase—to the extent of eleven and eight pence. To make up this deficiency the individual consumer must borrow, from his own Financial (Book-Keeping) System, since there is no other ultimate course available to him. This loan is charged against him, individually and collectively, in the form we call National Debt.

Now it is an elementary condition of the Monetary System—or any reliable system of book-keeping—that to borrow money one must, either actually or by implication, pledge capital securities. This is the operation referred to above as an "unremitting Capital Levy," the rout by which the real assets of the individuals composing society are progressively being pledged to a pure abstraction called the Monetary System; handed over by the Government of the day, as the effective negotiators of the loan on the individual's behalf. The practical effect of this is that those individuals in whose charge the functional operation of the system is—and among these, of course, is the highly responsible function of creating costless credit—have thereby acquired potential control over all and every kind of individual activity, political and/or functional; elected Government having become little more than bailiffs who collect the interest on the National Debt for the mortgagees.

Because technically speaking it is on the consumer's behalf that all these freshly-created credits are being continuously asked for, to make good the chronic wastage of purchasing-power inseparable from an inflationary monetary policy. It is in his name—or her's—that the National Debt stands, and it is he who pays the interest on it, and who makes an occasional token repayment—at longer and longer intervals, as the disproportion between the funding operation, as it is called, and the size of the debt grows increasingly ludicrous. All this at the cost of additional borrowing from the System, and with further inflation, and consequent pledging of more assets. NORMAN WEBB.

THE FIG TREE

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by

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The Cumberland County Council

Addressed to the Editor, the following letter appeared in *The Observer*, Cronulla, N.S.W., February 2, 1956:

Sir,

The Cumberland County Council—the instrument through which the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Renshaw, moves—has of late, because of its “administrative tyranny,” intruded itself before public opinion.

The activity of the Minister, in his endeavour to force the issue of “planning” on the people of Sydney and suburbs, is in fact violating the common law that in the past held society together peaceably.

Referring to the letter, published in your columns on January 19, from Mr. Robert Mackie, J.P., the text and conclusion of which will be overwhelmingly endorsed by every clear-thinking person in this shire, brings “planning” as an overriding policy to the moral and ethical plane.

In so doing it clearly, on *moral* grounds, brings the question before the Christian Churches of this State.

The essence of the matter seems to devolve on the pernicious idea, that, because the “planners” have “knowledge” and by various legalistic devices have gained “power,” they can override “authority.” They just have not got their concept of ultimate authority right. I am sure that any Church leader would be more than pleased to instruct the local government minister, Mr. Renshaw, Councillor Luke or even the entire parliament on the authority of God’s universal law.

Because the matter is also suspect of violating ethical law, it naturally has forced itself into a position of claiming the attention of the judiciary.

Perhaps the guardians of our moral law, the Church, and the guardians of our ethical law, the judiciary, interacting together could, if they so desired, give a lasting remedy to this vital question, a situation to which the late Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Hewart, labelled “the new despotism.”

Any reader of this letter, who desires to do something constructive to rectify this situation, should contact Mr. Bamford who is Hon. Secretary of the Sutherland Shire branch of the Cumberland Justices Association, address Chapman Street, Gympie.

Yours sincerely,

John W. Stirling.

Dolan’s Bay.

“... NEITHER DO THEY SPIN ...”

(continued from page 1.)

and participating in the mystic rites of his tribe? Again: one can only ask *how much worse* is his life than that of a craftsman of the Middle Ages? And where now are our Socrates, our Chaucers, our Shakespeares, our Beethovens, our Rembrandts? Are there now as many *craftsmen* in the world as there were three hundred and more years ago? Technicians, yes. But a craftsman is concerned with the whole of a thing a technician with a process only. The life of a craftsman is creative, that of a technician repetitive.

The apparatus of modern civilisation is highly impressive. Yet—how much of it is to enable us “to have life more abundantly,” and how much to enable us to do more business? Full employment, in fact? How many women overload the transport system going to work to help pay for the labour-saving devices to enable them to go to work, and thereby create employment for thousands in enlarging the transport facilities? And what employment do they give in the chemical industry, by their demand for contraceptives so that their unwelcome fecundity shall not inhibit this ‘expanding economy?’ “Work,” as described, is Moloch.

(To be continued.)

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