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Relief

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If Plato was right in asserting that the revolutionary spirit always makes its first appearance in the innovations on established musical form, is a stricter tendency a sign of impending resistance to revolution? The revolutionary movement has been likened to the observed course of events in physical nature—a persistent de-grading process, whereby energy falls constantly from a higher to a lower potential level, the ultimate end being imagined to be a state in which everything has reached the same “dead” level—the uniform temperature level of all matter, in which nothing is warmer than anything else, and nothing colder; a universe which has “run down”. Life opposes this principle. The Christian Era is exceptional in historical movements: it alone seems to embody the characteristic features of anti-revolution, to bring “Life more abundantly.” Apart from this unique movement (of which Social Credit is, organically, a manifestation) we cannot see anything in history but revolution; not a succession of ‘revolutions,’ but one revolution, one de-grading movement, changing its velocity periodically, and its outward appearances, but not its effect or direction. We picture something resembling a human procession moving for centuries in the same direction, blindly, sometimes quickly, sometimes more slowly, changing nothing but, occasionally, its clothes.

The only relief to this melancholy spectacle lies in the creative accomplishments of those times in which, under what seems to have been a single inspiration, Life and Art flourished together, magnifying each other. Attempts have been made to explain the inception of such times mechanically. An example is that of Brooks Adams; but all the ‘economic interpretations of history’ have the same origin: a revolutionary origin. They are absurdities, like the mechanical conception of perpetual motion. We are satisfied that the ‘up-hill’ movements begin as ideas. In no single instance is the internal evidence of the authenticity of the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, stronger than in their testimony to the power of ideas, and their ridicule of the simpletons who imagine them to be un-important.

So we see some significance in the increasing number of references to which our attention is drawn to a change in the attitude of individuals here and there to ‘form’ in Art. They are doubly evidential: they reflect both the referrer and the reference. The Left Book Club is no longer having it all its own way. Good and important books can be heard of, and people are seeking them. (They don’t seem yet to have developed optimum skill in finding them.) Cennini (*Il Libro dell’Arte*), “all unburdened of blood and weariness,” is cited on another page. And there lie before us passages from the lectures delivered

by John Constable at the Royal Institution in 1836, and (very unexpectedly) the essay, *Hand and Soul* by Rossetti. One correspondent writes: “The enclosed may be of interest—it seems to fit in with August, and some of Constable’s remarks have a far wider application than the limited [*sic*] subject of Landscape painting.” (Everything but Social Credit is limited to a Social Crediter.) We mustn’t keep all these good things to ourselves:—

Says Constable: “The art of painting may be divided into two main branches, history and landscape, history including portrait and familiar life. Landscape is the child of history, and though at first inseparable from the parent, yet in time it went alone, and at a later period (to continue the figure,) when history showed signs of decrepitude, the child may be seen supporting the parent . . .”

Constable pointed to a copy of a small evening winter-piece by Ruysdael. “This picture” he said, “represents an approaching thaw. The ground is covered with snow, and the trees are still white; but there are two windmills near the centre; the one has the sails furled, and is turned in the position from which the wind blew when the mill left off work, the other has the canvas on the poles, and is turned another way, which indicates a change in the wind; the clouds are opening in that direction, which appears by the glow in the sky to be the south (the sun’s winter habitation in our hemisphere) and this change will produce a thaw before the morning. The occurrence of these circumstances shows that Ruysdael *understood* what he was painting . . .”

“There has never been an age, however rude or uncultivated, in which the love of landscape has not in some way been manifested. And how could it be otherwise? For man is the sole intellectual inhabitant of one vast natural landscape. His nature is congenial with the elements of the planet itself, and he cannot but sympathise with its features, its various aspects, and its phenomena in all situations . . .”

“At a time when Europe was agitated in an unusual manner; when all was diplomacy, all was politics, Machiavellian and perfidious; Cardinal Bembo wrote thus to the Pope, who had been crowning the Emperor Charles V at Bologna. ‘While your Holiness has been these last days on the theatre of the world, among so many lords and great men, whom none alive have ever seen together before, and has placed on the head of Charles V the rich, splendid, and honoured crown of the Empire, I have been residing in my little village, where I have thought of you in a quiet, and to

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Dialectical Materialism

“It appears to be in the nature of the Universe that the misuse of ‘means’ results in the breakdown of the means misused. For instance, the centralization which is so rampant is claimed to be in the interest of efficiency. But civilisation was never so inefficient as it is today. We have unimaginable and unthinkable production—yes. And with it, less security, less leisure, more suicides, more lunacy. Is that efficiency? By the canon of dialectical materialism it may be.

“It is a curious illumination of the vanity of the human mind that materialism and Marxism are felt by their exponents to be ‘scientific,’ ‘progressive,’ ‘modern.’ Their ‘science’ is of the nature of that which, observing that an electric Power system consists of steel towers, wires, cables and machines would insist that Power systems consist in what you can see, and what you can’t see is superstition. The answer is, of course, ‘Climb up a steel tower, touch those wires, and let us see which is right.’

“As to their progressiveness, it is quite true that the massacres and misery in Russia far exceed anything which that unfortunate land has previously experienced. But as to modernity, I am not so sure. The invariable characteristic of the mob mind is destructiveness. Its cry is not ‘We see there are beings more fortunate and free than ourselves; let us be like them,’ but ‘Down with them!’ Because one blade of grass in the field comes up first, down with it! Who’s it to be a-puttin’ of itself forward?”

—C. H. Douglas in *Whose Service Is Perfect Freedom* (1939).

“Unburdened”

“... When it is all dry, get a nice flat panel, covered with black cloth or silk; and have a little study of your own, where no one will cause you any sort of interruption, and which has just one cloth-covered window; and you will put your table in this window, as if for writing... Take a needle, fastened in a little stick as if it were a little brush,

and have it quite sharp pointed. And, with the name of God, begin to draw lightly with this needle whatever figure you wish to make... And do you want to be convinced that you need to have a light hand, and that it should not be tired?—(Know) that the strongest shadow you can make consists in penetrating to the glass with the point of the needle, and no more... it is as delicate as that, and you must not work with haste—rather with great enjoyment and pleasure. And I give you this advice, that the day before the day you want to work at this job, you hold your hand to your neck, or in your bosom, so as to get it all unburdened of blood and weariness.”

—CENNINO CENNINI.

“As You Sit By Your Window . . .”

In her penetrating study of the subject matter of *Hamlet*, etc., in *The Court and the Castle* (London: Macmillan, 1958), which has apparently interrupted her completion of the trilogy which began with *The Fountain Overflows* published a year earlier, Dame Rebecca West has provided a prelude (not a postscript) to Douglas’s work on the constitutional issue. In our opinion, this writer of genius has partially but not wholly resolved the age-long problem of power and authority: she has left her statement of the true nature of Authority inexplicit. However, that may be, the book (which Social Crediters should study closely) ends with a quotation from Kafka’s *In a Penal Settlement*, and two pages of comment thereon, which we quote *in extenso* :—

The Emperor—so the story goes, has sent a message to you, the lone individual, the meanest of his subjects, the shadow that has fled before the Imperial sun until it is microscopic in the remotest distance, just to you has the Emperor sent a message from his death-bed. He made the messenger kneel by his bed and whisper the message into his ear; he felt it to be so important that he made the man repeat it into his own ear. With a nod of the head he confirmed that the repetition was accurate. And then, before the whole retinue gathered to witness his death—all the walls blocking the view had been broken down and on the wide high curve of the open stairway stood the notables of the Empire in a circle—before them all he empowered the messenger to go. The messenger set off at once; a robust, an indefatigable man; thrusting out now one arm, now the other, he forces his way through the crowd; where he finds obstacles he points to the sign of the sun on his breast; he gets through easily, too, as no one else could. Yet the throng is so numerous, there is no end to their dwelling places. If he only had a free field before him, how he would run, and soon enough you would hear the glorious tattoo of his fists on your door. But instead of that, how vain are his efforts; he is still forcing his way through the chambers of the innermost palace; he will never get to the end of them; and even if he did, he would be no better off; he would still have to get through the courtyards; and after the courtyards, the second outer palace enclosing the first; and more stairways and more courtyards; and still another palace; and so on for thousands of years; and did he finally dash through the outermost gate—but that will never, never happen—he would still have the capital city before him, the centre of the world, overflowing with the dregs of humanity. No one can force a way through that, least of all with a message from a dead man. But you might receive the message as you sit by your window and drowse, while evening falls.

This is an event (the author comments) which one can imagine as meat for a number of writers. Shakespeare might have seen it as what happened at the deathbed of an English king; one noble would have forced his way through the crowd, his passage made possible by the magic of his belief that the dead king had been truly anointed and had been faithful to the coronation oath. Fielding would have trusted Tom Jones and Amelia to perform the errand by virtue of

the magic of good sense and sound instincts. In later hands the accounts of the messengers might have been too circumstantial for deep interest, until we come to Proust, who might hold us by writing the passage as an account of the last hours of a president at Rambouillet: some festivity was being given by a Guermentes in the district, and all the roads were blocked by his guests' cars while Monsieur de Norpois' friends in the ministries and in the press were monopolising all the telephone lines; but the lonely integrity of Swann saw that the message was delivered. It was, however, Kafka who wrote the passage, and according to him the messenger never started. Yet what he had to deliver was of the greatest importance, for it came from the lips of the emperor before he died, from God at some time when he was not veiling Himself from the gaze of humanity, when he was willing to communicate with man otherwise than by the operations of an incomprehensible law, when he was not hiding Himself in the castle. Nevertheless the message could not be delivered, because of the courtiers who blocked the staircase, the lesser officials who thronged the courtyards, the rabble in the streets of the capital city. These have many names. They are the circumstances of family life, the terrifying father, the embarrassing brother, the disabling sicknesses, the love which is not strong enough to achieve and which is therefore a painful distraction, the interruptions of history, the wars, the inflationary crises, the Jew-baiting in the streets. They may be purely internal and not really discreditable: a man may be so intellectually vigorous that he cannot let the message remain as it was given by the emperor, he must seize it as it goes by him and improve it by debate, injecting into it ideas that are perhaps really brilliant, though not those conveyed by the words which actually passed the emperor's lips. It may also happen that the intervention is more remote: that the world will do to the message what it has done to *Hamlet*, and will dislike its meaning so much that it will pretend that it means something else.

But Kafka tells us that what happens to the messenger does not really matter, because the message will be delivered in any case, 'as you sit by your window and drowse, when evening falls.' There are two things which he might mean by this. He might mean that the artistic process is so sure, though unpredictable, that in spite of all forms of external and internal pressure it will discover the truth and convey it, and there is a hint that Keats' 'negative capability' is the means of resisting such pressures. But it might also mean that if the artist should fail to discover the truth and convey it to his readers, they might themselves receive it by direct mystical experience. The first meaning emphasises the dependence of society on the artist and his special gift; the second lays stress on the deeper solidarity of the artist and society. The experiences which the artist experiences are not peculiar to him, they are common to all human beings; his only peculiarity lies in his power to analyse these experiences and synthesise the findings of his analyses. That being so, it is not surprising that the artist should deviate from his straight aesthetic course and occupy himself with the interests which preoccupy the society of which he is a member. He still has his particular grace, to which William Blake referred when he wrote: 'If Homer's merit was only in these Historical combinations & Moral sentiments he would be no better than Clarissa.' Nevertheless it is a tendency of creative literature, when it rises above a certain level, to involve itself with statecraft and with religion: to exist and to belong to Him.

Alberta Minority Report on Education

(From our Canadian Correspondent)

After almost two years from its inception, the Alberta Royal Commission on Education released its report this spring. Through his minority report Mr. J. S. Carmack had made a significant contribution.

Mr. Carmack devoted himself mainly to two important general points. The first might be called discipline. He believes that the progressionist theory of Dewey has permeated the present educational system to its great detriment.

Against this he puts the essentialist view point: "In the midst of the welter of change and diversity, the essentialist believes that there are some points of the educational compass which are relatively fixed. He will recognise that there are many educational values by which one might steer but that there are some by which he must steer. Convinced of what are the essentials of education, he firmly and resolutely insists that the child learn them. If he does not believe that the whole curriculum should be prescribed, he at least believes that a considerable part of it should be. In the traditional curriculum he finds certain classics in literature, mathematics, religion, history, science and others whose value is independent of the place and time they are studied. These educated men must know. They are essentials. They must be learned even though their significance is not made clear in the fulfilment of some present purpose. Till such occasion arises later they are to be learned and stored away." (Brubadier in *The Modern Philosophies in Education*).

More important is Mr. Carmack's second point regarding the responsibility of the parent not the state, for education of the child which, it is to be hoped, thinking educationalists and interested lay people cannot help paying some attention to now that it has been set forth in a Royal Commission report, although the minority part of it.

I cannot do better than quote some paragraphs of the report in which he puts his point ably:

"It is nature's way of learning that its child belongs first of all in the family or that his parents have the prior right and responsibility to determine the *kind* (our emphasis) of education which the child should receive." (p. 26)

"If the parent is to be a factor in education at all, he must be given more freedom to choose for his child the school which will most nearly realize the aims or objectives which that parent wants from education." (p. 54)

"If, however, effective pluralism is adopted in our educational system (operation by more than one institution) free competition will automatically solve many of the difficulties for which we are presently trying to find solutions through wrong regulations and paper checks and balances. Pluralism will assure real competition between public and private institutions to secure the services of outstanding teachers. This will automatically secure merit rating for outstanding teachers." (p. 155).

Home and school federations, and Canadian conferences on Education have paid no attention to this point, but surely it follows from the first lesson in most catechisms—man's first duty is to know God, and his handiwork, and to help his children to do likewise.

—D. STEWART.

Layman's View of the Strategists, 1939

Addressed to the Editor, the following letter appeared in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, London, June 3, 1960:

Sir.—Col. R. Macleod's letters on the subject of one of the generals and Mr. Leslie Hore-Belisha impel me to make public some of the facts of that unhappy business which appear to be quite unknown.

Under the aegis of Lord Kemsley I was one of the original 39 war correspondents who were ferried over to France in October, 1939. We were extraordinarily well received by the military, with one rather bleak exception, and in the intervals of being conducted about the "front line" spent many happy evenings hobnobbing with the various generals and Air Force marshals of the period in the bars and restaurants in which the ancient town of Arras abounded.

It was a matter of a few days to discover that the "front line" consisted of one small French pillbox placed at intervals of one kilometre from the end of the Maginot Line at Sedan along the Franco-Belgian frontier to the Channel Coast.

They were not very good pillboxes. There was room for one sergeant and five men in each, and the single British machine-gun which was all the armament they packed, apart from a few personal weapons like rifles and so on, required to have its legs sawn off before it could be taken in through the concrete door. In between the pillboxes there was nothing.

This terrifying situation (everybody knew that the Germans had something in the nature of 200 divisions available and that the British Army then had four) appeared to be the result of a division in high places on matters of strategy (always so difficult for the layman to understand).

It was said—I certainly cannot vouch for the truth of this—that Lord Gort and his advisers were not very interested in the pillboxes because their grand strategic plan was to invade Belgium the moment after the Germans did and occupy a water line along the Ghent canal. Mr. Anthony Eden on the other hand, was said at G.H.Q. to favour the fortifying of the old high ground where World War I was fought, along a line based on Vimy Ridge.

Gen. Gamelin, the Generalissimo and therefore Gort's superior, was reputed to have a secret plan to allow the German panzer divisions to come crashing through until their supply lines were lengthened, and then nip them smartly off by a drive of the French army from Sedan to the coast.

To the layman all this simply added up to the strong probability that the Germans were going to be able to win the war at any moment they chose to attack, and since I was the first correspondent to return home on leave I was deputed by a committee of the others to see if I could make some sort of representation at the War Office.

I was first sent for by Ian Hay, to whom I told the whole horrid story. He arranged an interview with Mr Hore-Belisha, who was deeply concerned and asked if I could set the whole thing down in detail on paper as a memorandum.

I could and did, adding that on behalf of some of the other war correspondents I begged him to cross to France and see the situation for himself.

The rest we know, and there is little more to add. Except just this. Mr. Hore-Belisha was *degommé*, and for several months more the essential situation remained.

It seemed that the only thing that I, as a complete non-entity and a civilian, could do to prevent utter disaster was to sit down and dash off some sort of a book. Silly, in the circumstances, but there was no censorship of books in those days. I wrote the book in a matter of weeks. It came into the hands of Anthony Eden, who wrote to me personally to ask me, as a "patriotic English gentleman," not to publish it. It remained unpublished, and has so remained to the present day.

The Germans attacked. Lord Gort advanced in the direction of the Ghent canal, but found that the Germans had got there first. The pillboxes were never used. The high ground at Vimy Ridge was quite unfortified.

Gen. Gamelin's plan of allowing the Germans through seems to have been the only one which can be said to have been in operation. Unfortunately he failed to "nip them smartly off." The land war in Europe was lost.

I wonder if strategy is so difficult for the layman to understand.

Your faithfully,

ANTHONY GIBBS.

Peaslake, Surrey.

RELIEF—

(continued from page 1.)

me, dear and delicious solitude. I have found the country above the usage of any former years, from the long serenity of these gliding months, and by the sudden mildness of the air, already quite verdant, and the trees in full leaf. Even the vines have deceived the peasantry by their luxuriance, which they were obliged to prune. I do not remember to have seen at this time so beautiful a season. Not only the swallows, but all other birds that do not remain with us in the winter, but return to us in the Spring, have made this new, and soft, and joyous sky resound with their charming melodies. I could not therefore regret your festivities at Bologna. Padua, April 7, 1530.'

The Rossetti essay is an account of the painter Chiaro dell'Erma. In this case perhaps there can be no "wider application."
—T.J.

Reference Wanted

"If we are wrong, we are of all people the most unfortunate." These words, or their substance, appeared in *The Social Crediter* ("From Week to Week") before or soon after the close of World War II. Will a reader kindly postcard the Secretary of the Secretariat (British Isles) at 21, Milton Road, London, N.6, giving precise reference?