

THE B.B.C. SPEECH ON SOCIAL CREDIT

*Broadcast in the 'Poverty in Plenty' series
November 5th, 1934*

THE FEAR OF LEISURE

An Address to the Leisure Society

BY

A. R. ORAGE

INTRODUCTION

L. Denis Byrne

Introduction

It is indeed a privilege to have known Alfred Richard Orage and to write these few lines of introduction, for in a very real sense he was “the midwife” who brought to birth the world-wide Social Credit Movement.

During the early part of the Century, Orage was a literary giant in an era of literary greats in England. Among his friends and associates were Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, Wyndham Lewis, Katherine Mansfield, and others of like stature.

As editor of *The New Age*, despite its limited circulation, Orage’s influence extended throughout the English-speaking world. In 1918, when he first met Major C. H. Douglas, *The New Age* was the organ of the National Guilds Movement. Once he was convinced of the soundness of Douglas’s ideas, Orage used the columns of *The New Age* to convince the supporters of the ideal of National Guilds that Social Credit offered an even more fundamentally desirable alternative. Thus, through the influence of *The New Age*, within a relatively short period the foundation was laid for the world-wide Social Credit Movement in Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

In 1922 Orage retired from active participation in the literary field and went abroad. However, *The New Age* continued under the editorship of Arthur Brenton to serve as the official organ of the Social Credit Movement. On his return to England in 1932, Orage launched a new periodical, *The New English Weekly*. He had in the intervening years lost none of his old literary magic, and within weeks the new publication was recognized as outstanding in its sphere of influence — Orage having attracted many of the leading writers of the time.

However, the excellence of *The New English Weekly* was mainly due to Orage’s commentary on economic and social issues presented from the Social Credit perspective — this at a time when Social Credit was taboo in the English press.

It was with pleasure and astonishment that English Social Crediters heard the news that Orage was to broadcast on the B.B.C. series, “Poverty in Plenty,” on November 5th, 1934. Following that historic broadcast, Orage retired to his rooms after partaking of some refreshment at the B.B.C. studio. He appeared to be in good spirits and good health. However, he died in his sleep during the night. Thus the text of that broadcast recorded in these pages was the parting message of a great man to a wider audience than he had previously touched.

*L. Denis Byrne,
June, 1977*

First Printing	1935
Second Printing	July, 1935
Third Printing	April, 1936
Fourth Printing with Introduction by L. D. Byrne	June, 1977

-PRINTED IN CANADA-

ISBN: 0-920392-10-5

Social Credit

Though most of you, I understand, are students of economics, I shall try to use only simple and everyday words.

For instance, instead of the abstract terms, Plenty and Poverty, I shall contrast England as Producer with England as Consumer; or England as Manufacturer and Shopkeeper with England as Shopper. For if we are a nation of shopkeepers, we are also a nation of shoppers.

Imagine a plate-glass window stretching from John o' Groats to Land's End; and, on the inside of it, all the goods that England makes, and, on the outside, the forty or fifty millions of us still flattening our noses against the pane, just as we did when we were children.

As it costs us nothing, let us enter the shop and have a look round.

The first thing that strikes us is the staggering variety of the goods on sale. Nature is prolific in having created about half a million species of living creatures; but the British genius has invented even more kinds of goods, and is still going on inventing. A collective sales catalogue of all our shops would probably run to a million items. I happened to see that two hundred different kinds of English apple were put on the market this year; and one London store—you may be glad to hear—stocks no fewer than forty-three varieties of lipstick.

If we ask the shop-keeper whether, and for how long, he can undertake to keep up the supply of three million varieties of Goods, he may show us, first, a line of warehouses all bulging with goods ready for the shop window ; and, behind the line of warehouses, a line of factories and workshops ; and, behind those, quarries and mines and farms ; and, behind these, laboratories and research schools ; and, finally, behind them all, the British people themselves, with their character, industry, genius and history. With these resources, our shop-keeper says, he can undertake to keep up a practically unlimited supply for a practically unlimited future. And we can take his word for it.

As we stroll round the works, we notice how relatively few workpeople there are about. This relative, and, as we know, progressive depopulation of industry is due, of course, to applied Science. Applied Science seems to have made it its mission in life to lift the curse laid on Adam and to transfer work from the backs of Men to the broader backs of Nature's other forces—steam, electricity and ultimately, perhaps, to atomic energy. For an ever-increasing output of Goods—both in variety and in quantity—the brains of the Few are dispensing more and more with the brawn of the Many.

Before leaving the premises we must remark one very important detail. All the Goods on Sale bear a Price label. And it appears that two processes of manufacture are carried on in England's workshop simultaneously. One is a visible stream of real Goods, and the other is an almost invisible stream of figures in the form of Prices. These two streams, though independent, flow side by side, and, in the shop window, they unite as real Goods with their Price labels on.

As a matter of curiosity, let us ask the shop-keeper what is his estimate of the collective Price-value of all the Goods in the window.

Without vouching for the exact figure, he says he reckons their collective value at not less than five hundred million pounds. And he adds that the collective Price-values created in a fair year of Production might be as much as ten thousand million pounds ; and that, working to capacity, it might be double that in a single year.

Feeling both terribly rich and terribly poor, let us now leave the shop of Plenty, and join the rest of the forty or fifty million would-be shoppers outside.

What a change of scene! In contrast with the Productive system we have just left, where all is co-

operation, reason and applied Science, we find a struggling mob in place of a disciplined army of technicians. Everybody seems to be fighting everybody else; and most of us seem to be getting the worst of it.

What is the trouble about?

Let us not be self-deceived. You and I know very well. It's about Money. If 98 per cent of the legal crime of England is admittedly due to Money, we may safely assume that a very large proportion of the crime of which the law takes notice is due to the same cause.

Now what *is* this Money we are all quarrelling about? If you will stick to your own experience you will realise that Money is only a ticket authorising you to go shopping in the emporium we have just left. The only difference between, say, a railway-ticket and a Money-ticket is that a railway-ticket is good only for transport, while a Money-ticket is universal and good for anything in the whole shop, up to its stated value in Prices.

And the reason why Money is important, and, so to say, worth quarrelling about, is that Money-tickets are just as indispensable to our shopping as our shopping is indispensable to our lives. The Aladdin's Cave we have just left will open to no other password. Money is the accepted and legal tender of life today in modern society.

What air was to the unhappy people shut up in the Black Hole of Calcutta Money-tickets are to the forty or fifty million of us shut up in the present financial system.

Now where do these indispensable Money-tickets come from? And how do we get hold of them? And why are there just so many of them about, sometimes more and sometimes less?

You will remember that in the shop we visited we found two streams in flow; a stream of real Goods and a parallel stream of Price-figures.

We have now to add a third and last stream; a stream of Money-tickets. And we can now say that just as all the real Goods and Price-values come out of the Productive system, so all the Money-tickets with which to buy the Goods come out of the Productive system also. And they come to the shopping public in one of three forms: Wages, Salaries and Dividends; the sum of which forms the Monetary Income of the nation. This Money Income of the nation, derived from the Productive system for services rendered, is the only shopping-fund the nation as shopper possesses. It is all the Money-tickets the nation receives with which to buy the Price-values the nation has created. These shopping-tickets are more when the works are busy, and less when the works are slack; but their number is always regulated by the activity of the Productive system.

How these Money-tickets that come out of the Productive system get into the Productive system is a simple matter. They are put in, in the form of loans, by private Money-ticket factories, called Banks, which have an exclusive monopoly of Money-ticket manufacture. We must surely have noticed in our tour of England's work-yard a number of elegant buildings to which some producers were always running to borrow tickets and others were running to return them. They are the Banks, where the Money-tickets come from, and to which they return.

Our immediate interest, however, is to compare the number of Money-tickets, *not* that are poured into industry, but that trickle to the shopping nation *out* of industry, with the Price-values created in the shop in the same period.

Obviously if the Money-tickets issued to shopping England were the exact equivalent of the Price-values created by shop-keeping England, the collective Monetary Income of the nation would be able to buy the collective Price-value of the Goods produced. We might dispute about the distribution of the tickets, but collectively, at least, there would be enough of them to buy our total Production.

The problem of equating the nation's means of Consumption with the nation's means of Production would be solved if every addition to Price-value resulted in an equal addition to Income.

But what we find, in fact, is that the Monetary Income of the nation, derived from the Productive system in the form of Wages, etc., is *not* equivalent to the Price-values created in the same period. The two streams of Prices and Income do *not* move at the same rate and volume. The stream of Price-values to the shop-window moves much faster than the stream of Money-tickets to the shopping public, with the result that the annual collective shopping tickets of the nation, called its Income, are insufficient to meet the collective annual Price-values created in its shop.

Now this is a matter of fact and not of theory; and it can be proved by simple arithmetic. Our shop-keeper, for instance, has told us that, at a rough estimate, our annual output of Price-values is ten thousand million pounds and probably more. And our taxing officials tell us, more accurately, that our annual Monetary Income is about two thousand five hundred million pounds. As four is to one, so is our output of Price-values to the Money-tickets with which to meet them. The nation's means of Consumption measured in Money-tickets, in short, is at least no more than a quarter of its means of Production measured in Prices.

Here, I believe, in this gap between Income and Prices, is the root-cause of our present difficulties. On the two provable assumptions : (a) that the Money-tickets distributed as Income to shoppers are our only title to go shopping—that is, to live; and (b) that the total number of tickets distributed among us is only enough to meet a quarter of the Price-values of the Goods in our shop— we can easily understand why we have to fight each other for tickets; why everybody looks for employment in the factory or, alternatively, for somebody to give tickets to him; why there are always more Goods than Buyers; and finally, why no Socialist scheme for taxing the rich, no “Communist” or Fascist scheme for administering the workshop, and no amount of Planning of Production can be of the least use so long as this Gap between Prices and Incomes remains.

And when we add that this gap is constantly widening with the progressive relative depopulation of the Productive system you will realise that our progress is towards the absurdity of a Maximum of Production and a Minimum of Consumption. Only, long before then, something will happen; something will break, as, in fact, it is breaking all around us.

Now while the fact of the Gap is the important thing, the explanation of the gap offered by Major Douglas appears to me to be convincing. He says that much of the money put into the Productive system as bank-loans never, in fact, gets out as Income during the same period in which it is put in. It is used simply to transfer capital Goods from one factory to another, and thus while it adds to the Price-stream, it does not add to the income of us shoppers.

If you ask, quite naturally, how in that case the Goods are ever sold at all, the answer is that there are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with butter. The Gap can be artificially bridged even if it is not actually closed.

For instance, Goods can be wilfully destroyed. Or they can be practically given away under the compulsion of bankruptcy. Or they can be disposed of in return for acknowledgment of debt, that is to say, by mortgaging our future Income of Money-tickets. Incidentally, every single one of us is in debt at this moment to the tune of about five hundred pounds apiece. But the most effective means of all is to distribute shopping-tickets on account of the production of Goods that never get into the shop-window at all, by Exports on Credit, by Capital Construction, and by Public Works such as roads—all of which provide Incomes without simultaneously adding to the Goods on Sale. By receiving Wages, in short, for the production of Goods we can't buy, we acquire the tickets with which to buy the Goods that can be bought.

But whatever the explanation, the fact of the ever-widening gap remains; and the vitally important question is what are we to do about it?

Without discussing, merely to dismiss them, proposals that are either irrelevant to the real problem, or

would only make it worse, it ought to be clear that our aim must be to close the gap between total Prices and total Incomes. And this can be effected only by either reducing Prices or raising Incomes till they are equivalent.

But this clearly necessitates a change of policy in regard to our whole Price and Money system. It involves the restoration to the community of control over its whole Money-ticket system. And it involves the institution of what we may call a National Credit Account, in which the Price-values created in the shop and the Money-tickets distributed for shopping would be kept constantly balanced.

The institution and keeping of such a National Credit Account would not necessarily require the nationalisation of the administration of the present Banks. On the contrary, it is only their policy we need to put under national control. The present Banks could just as efficiently carry out a National policy as they now carry out a private policy.

Then we have to find another means than direct Employment for the distribution of Money-tickets to the nation as shoppers. Employment for everybody is increasingly impossible in a Productive system that is becoming increasingly technical; and, again, since Employment automatically increases Price-values faster than it increases Incomes, Employment widens rather than narrows the gap.

Social Creditors believe that as the Wage-system becomes obsolescent, thanks to the progressive depopulation of Industry, Dividends should gradually take the place of wages; so that as the Machine displaces Men, the wage-income previously paid to the displaced men, continues to be paid to them by the Machine that has displaced them. If the Machine does the work of one hundred men, its production is obviously enough to pay one hundred men's wages. The Dividend is the logical successor of the Wage.

Lastly, we need a scientific Pricing-system that shall automatically, so to say, ensure the fall of prices with the rise of Production, and, conversely, the rise of prices with the fall of Production. At present, retail prices come to us laden with the charges for the depreciation of Capital plant, but never off-set and compensated by the appreciation of capital plant that has also taken place. Retail prices, credited with the difference between total Appreciation and Total Depreciation, would, we believe, give us the scientifically Just Price.

I need not say that I do not expect you to accept these suggestions all at once. You will find them explained in the books I have recommended—in the *Douglas Manual* and in *This Age of Plenty*.

But in conclusion, and by way of giving zest to your studies, I would only remind you of this historic date, and warn you that in the gap disclosed between Price-values and Income is enough gun-powder to blow up every democratic parliament.

The Fear Of Leisure

I

I TAKE it that in forming this Society for the Propagation of Right Ideas about Leisure you are not proposing merely to amuse yourselves by, as it were, singing in your bath. You have realised the desperate and critical condition of the world, and you wish to further the cause of world-emancipation by producing a definite and, if possible, decisive effect upon immediate contemporary thought and action.

In particular, you are, I presume, convinced that the next step for the world to take (and, of course, preferably for our own country first) is the adoption of what is called the Douglas Plan and the inauguration of a Social Credit Commonwealth.

No doubt, too, before forming your Society, you each and all considered how best you individually and collectively could help to bring that social order into actual being; and of all the various means at your disposal you have deliberately chosen to concentrate upon the aspect of Leisure.

There are, as you know, a number of different kinds of obstacle to the acceptance and actualisation of the Douglas Plan.

First there are the intellectual difficulties inherent in the novelty and subtlety of both the analysis and the plan itself. They are not trifling, as you all know; and, what is more, not everybody will be able to understand the theory however honestly or hard he may try. On the other hand, the theory is at least no more difficult to understand than a thousand and one others which people claim to understand; and, in comparison with the theory of the Gold Standard, for instance, upon which there appear to be millions of experts, it is elementary. Anybody who in one and the same breath professes to understand the existing Money-system and to be unable to understand Douglas is either wrong about the first or has never given his mind to the second.

Next to the intellectual difficulties there are the practical obstacles—the finding and the putting into effect of the legislative and other ways and means for the practical inauguration of the Douglas Plan. As to these, however, there is no doubt whatever in my mind that, provided the Treasury, let us say, adopted the Plan in principle, ways and means for giving effect to it could be drawn up in a week. Where there's a will there's a way.

Mention of the “will” brings us to the third kind of obstacle—the psychological resistances, both to the understanding and, of course, to the adoption of the Douglas Plan. And here, I think, we come to the real nigger in the wood-pile. A sufficient number of people can certainly be got to understand the Douglas Theory at least as a theory. A dozen good parliamentary draughtsmen, in consultation with Douglas himself, could certainly draw up the Statutory orders necessary to start the Plan in practice. But neither a sufficient number of people will trouble to understand the Plan, nor will any responsible official draught a clause of an enabling Act, *until*, by one means or another—despair of the existing order or hope of a new order—the objectives, implied in the Plan, are earnestly and unequivocally desired.

Now I think it is useful for us to have in mind precisely what those psychological resistances are. They are not an infinite number, and they are not indefinable. They are relatively few, and for their understanding we can all draw upon our personal experience, for the simple reason that we all in greater or lesser degree share in them. I am so far from thinking that any Grand Conspiracy could succeed against the community without at least the passive consent of the community itself that I even believe that the Grand Conspirators, if they exist, are only the conscious agents of the unconscious hopes and fears of their victims. And, in my judgment, if the world becomes subjected—as it appears likely to be—to the Grand Dictatorship of Finance, it will be because an overwhelming majority of its population will approve of that form of control, as, at any rate, the lesser of the two evils of world-dictatorship, on the one hand, and a Douglas Social Credit Commonwealth on the other. You can believe that the psychological resistances to the Douglas Theory must in my opinion be exceedingly strong to determine such a choice as that. Well, they are.

Now what are these resistances? These manias and phobias? They are as follows—

1. The Fear of Scarcity.
2. The Moral Associations of Work.
3. Hatred of the Principle of Something for Nothing.
4. Class-hatred, on the one side, and Class-revenge on the other.
5. The deep-rooted convictions that Man is not meant to be happy, that any prospect of happiness is too good to be true, and that even if the conditions were created for happiness, human nature would soon spoil them.
6. The Will to Power, by the simplest and most effective means—the control over the lives of others, and
7. The Fear of Leisure.
8. Fear of any change whatever.

Now of these forms of resistance, both to the fair study and, still more, to the practical institution of a Douglas Commonwealth, your Society has, as I say, deliberately chosen to concentrate upon one. In the Grand Army of Credit Reformers, yours is what I may call the Leisure Division. Obviously if our Grand Army were properly organised, each of these enemy resistances would have a whole Division marshalled against it. There would be a Scarcity Division commissioned to destroy the Fear of Scarcity. There would be a Class-hatred Division, a Too Good to be True Division, a Will to Power Division, and so on. Our Army, however, as you know, is not yet properly organised; it is only a skeleton Army. But your Society, at any rate, has begun to do its bit by forming a Leisure Division to engage the enemy on the Leisure front.

Now I am sure that as the self-commissioned Division responsible for this front, you have thought out your Plan of Campaign. You have defined your objective; you have reconnoitred the enemy position, estimated its strength, and devised plans for taking it. What I am about to say, therefore, will not be new to you. It will simply be a summary, in my own terms, of the conclusions at which you have arrived.

In the first place, then, I am sure you have occupied yourselves in forming and formulating a positive conception of the meaning of the word “Leisure”. By a positive conception I mean one calculated by its nature to overcome the *fear* evoked by the negative associations of the word.

And here let me say that since we have to fight our battle chiefly with words, spoken or written, we ought to be on guard against their two-edged character. Ordinary language is really a very treacherous medium of communication. Since we are not born with a knowledge of words, but have, each for himself, to acquire it, and since, again, our encounters with words are all different, the meanings we come to attach to words are also different, with the result that very often, as Blake said, you read black where I read white. The word “Leisure”, for instance, has associations of one colour for A, and associations of quite another colour for B. To A the word “Leisure” maybe like the blessed word “Mesopotamia”, while to B it may be a red rag to a bull. Suppose that A with his Mesopotamian associations tries to recommend the Douglas Plan for its promise of Universal Leisure, he is certain to produce in B the contrary effect of the one he intends. Instead of a friend for the Douglas Plan, he has made or confirmed an enemy.

We try to get over this inherent defect of words by agreeing to agree about their definition. A common definition implies a common agreement upon the meaning not that we naturally do, but that we *will* attach to a given word. Definition is the breath of Science; and fruitful discussion in any field presupposes and begins with a common definition.

Now what, I ask, is your Society's definition of the word "Leisure"? You naturally intend by the word something very agreeable and desirable; something that everybody would consider as good if he understood the word as you do. One of your objects, in fact, is "to proclaim that Leisure is a good and moral thing". How do you define it to make it undeniably a good and moral thing? How do you define it to make it both harmonise with the Douglas Commonwealth and have a positive attraction for everybody? In short, how do you define Leisure to make everybody want it, and not only for themselves but for everybody? Douglas can prove that it is possible; *you* have to make it desirable.

A good deal of time could be profitably spent in hammering out a suitable definition of Leisure—suitable, I mean, for the object we have in view. And I have no doubt you have, in fact, devoted a good deal of thought to it. I shall therefore assume that you have come to some such formulation as this—that Leisure is the economic condition of voluntary activity. I use the word "condition", of course, in both senses—as the necessary means and as the state resulting from their possession. A man of leisure is a man of means, and vice versa. He has the means, that is, to enable him to choose his form of activity. His activity is not forced upon him. Leisure, in short, is free or unforced activity in contrast with the forced activity which, in economics, we call Labour or Work.

I'm afraid that in order to get a perfectly clear conception of the place of Leisure in the Douglas Theory we shall have to put it into fuller relation with this corresponding conception of Work, or Labour. Work, in its economic meaning, is really a very ambiguous term. For when we have defined it as involuntary or forced activity (hence requiring "inducement" in the form of wages or goods to evoke), we have still to distinguish between an activity forced on men by Nature and an activity forced on men by other men. There are, in fact, two kinds of forced work; that is to say, of activity not freely chosen. There is the work forced on Man by Nature—the work God referred to when he told Adam that, outside of Paradise, Nature would yield him bread only in the sweat of his brow. And there is the work forced on man by other men—slave-owners and bankers, for example—who declare from their high throne that men shall not eat, not without Nature's consent, but without *their* consent. Let us call them respectively Natural Work and Artificial Work, and understand that both forms of work are forced—that is to say, neither is the voluntary, freely chosen, self-initiated activity of which complete Leisure is the condition and state.

Several very important ideas, it seems to me, become clear in the light of this distinction.

In the first place, we have the ground for a useful distinction between Servile and Natural Labour—the one being Man-forced and unnecessary, and the other being Nature-forced and necessary; and, we have also the reason for the common distinction between degrading Labour and dignified Labour. There *is* a dignity in Natural, that is, necessary, Labour, but there is none in Servile, that is, unnecessary Labour.

In the second place, I think we have the material here for a very exact definition of two other words, usually confused. *Liberty* we can define as freedom from Servile Labour; and it is obviously mainly individual. *Progress*, on the other hand, we can define as increasing freedom from Nature-forced Labour; and this, equally obviously, is mainly a collective affair.

In the light of the same distinction we can, however, do even more perhaps. We can perhaps begin to appreciate more clearly the very large outlines of the Douglas Theory as a whole. For the Douglas Theory, as some of you know, is not just another economic theory. It has deep roots in both psychology and philosophy.

II

The ultimate truth about Man is possibly God's secret; but, at any rate, there are two indubitable facts about Man that seem to point in the same direction. Man individually has always striven for Liberty, that is to say, for freedom from Servile Labour, and Man collectively has always striven for Progress, that is to say, for freedom from Nature-forced Labour.

It would seem, moreover, to be the case that Progress and Liberty are reciprocally related. No Progress,

no Liberty; no Liberty, no Progress.

The first is clearly true since in a community that has not collectively more or less freed itself from Natural necessity, individual Liberty is impossible. Everybody must work for Nature.

And the second seems equally true, if we take into account the fact that all collective Progress has been accomplished by relatively free individuals, that is to say, by such leisured individuals or classes as the Progress of a community could afford to maintain in that condition.

The peril in which the world is placed to-day is from failure to recognise the truth of this. Collectively Man has attained a degree of Progress, as I have defined it, beyond his wildest dreams; and he has attained this increasing freedom from Nature-forced work step by step with and in obvious dependence upon the increasing freedom of individuals from Man-forced or Servile Labour. In other words, we owe our collective Progress to individual Liberty.

But, tragically enough, just at the very moment when the condition of Progress warrants a wider extension of individual liberty than any community has ever enjoyed, the world is faced with the threat, backed by the sovereign power of private Credit-control, to force an increasing number of individuals into an artificial, Man-made Servitude unredeemed by being even necessary. As Man collectively frees himself from Natural slavery—by the aid of free individuals—a group of individuals, crazy with Will to Power, enslaves him again. I sometimes think that if the great dead pioneers of economic Progress, who dreamed of a time when by their genius the curse laid upon Adam would be at least partially lifted, should see the old curse revived, but with Men in the place of God and Nature, they would groan and turn in their graves. That a Mr. Montagu Norman should exercise the power of distributing the social inheritance of England—or, rather, of *not* distributing it—is a sight for the hell of our great dead.

Even at the risk of appearing to sweep under the mat, I must draw attention to one other detail—if it is a detail. The state and rate of Progress today are of such a degree that the alternatives before an increasing fraction of every modern community—apart from the catastrophe of war—are Leisure, as I have defined it, namely, economically guaranteed voluntary activity, and that form of Leisure called Unemployment—a Leisure without security that can more properly be defined as servilely waiting for a servile job. The collective striving of Man against Nature has been so successful that unless Leisure is freely distributed, it will and must be distributed by violence, with disastrous effects ultimately upon Progress itself. Progress, the fruit of Leisure, can hope for nothing but destruction from Unemployment.

I think I have now formulated the idea of Leisure which your Division of the Douglas Army has undertaken to “put over”.

We can now proceed to estimate the strength and character of the enemy resistance, and afterwards to consider the means to overcome it.

We can get at the strength of the enemy resistance best, I think, by imagining a Referendum taken on a proposal to distribute Leisure to everybody. The formality of a Referendum itself may be improbable, but the idea is not so wild as you may suppose. For, in effect, an informal Referendum is in process today. Everybody who takes the trouble knows that Society now possesses the means to provide an ever increasing amount of amply guaranteed leisure to practically everybody. With our present resources alone, a rising standard of living could be guaranteed to our present population working for only a few years of their whole life. Why is there not then a universal clamour for it? Why, if even a formal Referendum were taken on the proposal, would it be rejected, as I think it would be rejected, by an overwhelming majority?

You can say, of course, that every kind of influence and pressure would be brought to bear on the voters by the class that now has a monopoly of Leisure by virtue of its monopoly of Credit-power. Agreed; but since that influence would only make itself effective by trading on the fears of the majority, we have to register the fears of the majority as well as the fears of the minority in the total enemy resistance.

Now precisely what are these fears that inspire in one set of people a murderous resistance, and, in another set, a suicidal resistance to a proposal to distribute Leisure to everybody?

It is not so much the case that they doubt whether it can be done, as that they are indisposed to make sure, by inquiry, of the practical possibility of it. Any competent body of statisticians could demonstrate the amplitude of our resources for a general extension of Leisure. But very few people want the proof, for the simple reason that only a few are willing to draw the reasonable conclusion and to give effect to it.

The fears of the already Leisured class and the fears of the present Unleisured masses are, however, different in kind; and we have, I think, to distinguish them. Fortunately we can do it briefly.

The fears of the already Leisured class can be reduced to these two: fear that they will lose their present privileges; and fear that the masses would make a “bad” use of their Leisure.

The fears of the Unleisured class, on the other hand, can be reduced to simply this—fear that, in a Leisure State they would have nothing whatever to do. (Incidentally, I do not agree that the demand for Employment is merely an alias for the demand for goods. I’m afraid that Employment, particularly servile employment, is sought also for its own sake. There is no responsibility for self-initiated activity in it.)

These two kinds of fear suggest, I think, the desirability of dividing our Leisured Division into two wings. We need one Divisional wing to deal with the psychological resistance of the already Leisured class, and another Divisional wing to deal with the present Unleisured masses.

The practical task of the first wing is to persuade the Leisured that they have little to lose, much to gain, and nothing to fear from the extension of Leisure; and the practical task of the second wing is to persuade the Unleisured that, even if all of them cannot at once make good use of their proposed Leisure, many of them can, more will be able, and all the rising generation will delight in it.

Let us consider the case of the Leisured first, since their resistance to the Douglas Plan is more active than the relatively passive resistance of the Unleisured masses. Assuming that your Society had before it the plenipotentiaries of the Leisured class, and had undertaken the task of persuading them, not merely to consent to, but also to demand with you, the endowment of Leisure for Everybody, how would you set about it? (I am assuming of course, that the practical possibility had already been established in their mind.) What are the points you would have to make, both to allay their fears and to stimulate their hopes?

I know that this kind of preparation for attack may sound to some of you absurdly formal; but, as an old student of psycho-analysis and psycho-synthesis, I am convinced of its value. The “cure” of the psychological morbidities, the phobias and manias, of society, requires at least as carefully thought-out a technique as the “cure” of neurotic individuals. And to a very great extent the methods for both are the same.

Well, then, here is our patient enemy, the Leisured class, and here is your wing of the Leisure Society commissioned to “cure” it—what, I repeat, are the points you would have it try to make?

I do not claim to have enumerated them all or in their proper order of importance, in the following summary. In fact I have set them down more or less as they came into my mind when I was thinking on the subject. They appear to me, however, to fairly cover the case.

The first point, undoubtedly, to make is that, in the absence of a continuous series of wars, the final outcome of which would in all probability be the return of the world to barbarism, the increase of Leisure, resulting from the constant decrease in the demand for human labour, is inevitable. This forced Leisure, as has been said before, can take one of two forms—Unemployment with all its servile and threatening implications, or Leisure proper; that is, the guaranteed condition of optional and voluntary activity. Our Leisured classes must make up their minds to a fateful choice; the dilemma cannot be dodged.

My next point, I think, would be to show that Leisure, restricted though it has been, has nevertheless

given us all the values of Civilisation, as well as some of the values of Culture. Civilisation may be said to be the creation of Leisure, just as Culture may be said to be the right use of Leisure. The fact that we are tolerably civilised and only very elementarily cultured is due to the relative restriction in the past of economic Leisure. Civilisation is the work of a Leisured class; Culture is the achievement of a Leisured people. If history is any guide, we might expect the world, as Leisure became universal, to pass from the epoch of Civilisation into an epoch of Culture.

Apropos of Culture, I think we might very effectively point to the preciosity of Culture restricted, in its full possibility to a privileged class. There is inevitably something parasitic, something I would almost say, guilty in its expression. I think it can safely be said that the world has never yet seen a complete Culture; but the approximations to it have certainly been in communities most nearly approximating to real commonwealths.

III

Then we can confidently reply to the charge that the masses would probably make a bad use of their Leisure by pointing to the fact that the behaviour of our working crowds on holiday—good on the whole as it is, as compared with the behaviour abroad of some of our Leisured barbarians—is no criterion of what their behaviour would be in the assured circumstances of Leisure, any more than the fact that popular Education has to be made compulsory is evidence that the masses have no desire for education. They know very well that their present hours of Leisure are only enough for recreation, they are not enough for education. The education they receive certainly gives them a taste of values; but the certainty of insufficient Leisure turns it bitter on their tongues. Holiday from Servility and Leisure from forced Labour are two entirely different things. The one is a kind of intoxicant; the other is a food.

Next I think we can make the point that in the circumstances of a common Leisure, the already Leisured, with all the advantages of a long start, would, for the first time in history, have a serious function other than that of maintaining their privileges—the function, namely, of inducting the newly Leisured into the ways of Culture. I know nobody who has ever tried to spread sweetness and light among the masses who has not sooner or later broken his heart over the pathetic futility of his efforts within the existing framework of a Work Society. It is not in the least that there has been no response. It is that the response has in the majority of cases been frustrated by the absence of Leisure. I have often remarked to artists, teachers, writers, the clergy, and the professed representatives of Culture, that their real task will only begin when everybody has the means to Leisure. Up to the present they have been, as a rule, only entertainers of the Leisured and the polite police of the Unleisured.

One of the commonest fears—in all senses—of the Leisured class is their fear that, in a Douglas Commonwealth, they would be unable to obtain personal service. Our reply to that is the obvious and unanswerable one, that real ladies and gentlemen (I am, of course, not confining myself to Debrett!) have never found any difficulty in procuring personal service, and that the rest do not deserve it. Indeed, one of the tests of Culture is precisely the ability to command service without forcing it.

My final endeavour would be to comfort them a little by remarking that, after all, the diffusion of Leisure would in all probability be very gradual. I am not saying that it should be. I am simply saying that, in the best of circumstances, it is likely to be. And I do not think I am being merely lukewarm in my wish to see the actualisation of the Douglas Commonwealth, when I say that the sincere promise of it, its adoption as the ultimate goal of society, would reconcile me to a good deal of apparent delay in its actual establishment. In short, the more fearful among the Leisured classes today may console themselves that they will be dead before their Ordeal by Merit is imposed upon them.

I hope you are not under the impression that I regard my treatment of each of these points as complete. I have, in fact, little more than barely enumerated them. Each of them obviously contains material for a whole essay or, if you like to say so, Sermon, addressed to the Leisured. My outline is simply designed for the use of the Leisure Division of the Grand Army and, in particular, for the first wing of it—the wing, you may

remember, that would undertake to make the diffusion of economic Leisure acceptable and desirable to the already Leisured.

Let us now turn to the task of the second wing—the wing commissioned to make Leisure palatable to the Unleisured—to make them really desire and demand it. I wish we had a few Swifts and Cobbetts alive to draw up and present our case for us. A Blatchford would do at a pinch, though a Dickens would be better. We need an appeal to be created that would at once allay the fears and stimulate the hopes of the masses, who for untold centuries have been fed on the one and disappointed in the other. Confidence in a happy future is a plant of slow growth in an age-old servile class.

Again I can offer you only a brief summary of the points I think this wing of your Leisure Division would be called upon to deal with.

Well, then, it seems to me that our first task would be to convince the present Unleisured that Assured Leisure is possible for everybody, that is to say, that our actual productive resources easily permit of it. A vivid propaganda to this effect is highly desirable.

Next, I think it would be wise to lay particular stress upon the inevitability—always in the absence of an epoch of world-wars—of Leisure for an increasing number of people, either in the form of Unemployment or in the form of Leisure proper. The wage-earning classes of this country have not yet begun to realise, I think, how superfluous to modern industry they are rapidly becoming. And certainly they have not realised that the whole aim of Applied Science is to dispense with their labour as fast as possible. There are, for example, several million unemployed today; and at least half of those in nominal Employment are, strictly speaking, superfluous. In another quarter of a century, the proportion of both Unemployed and Unemployable will be far, far greater. Unless, therefore, the present Unleisured masses are prepared to demand Leisure for everybody as a right, the rosier prospect I can see for them is an ever-widening circle of Unemployment, embittered or relieved, according to taste, by doles of Bread and Circuses.

Then I should not say that an argument from the history of Labour would be altogether lost. There have been, and particularly noticeably within the last fifty years, two spontaneous and parallel demands made by the articulate section of the Unleisured masses—a demand for shorter hours of labour, that is to say, for more Leisure; and a demand for increased facilities for education, including, of course, the primary facility of financial means. Both these movements derive, in my opinion, from the profoundest impulses in Man as Man—the impulse to Leisure and the impulse to make the best use of it; in a word, to the impulses of Liberty and Progress. It would be one of the greatest ironies of history if the Labour Movement were to be buried on Pisgah, in sight of the Land of their Promise, which they had not the courage to enter and possess.

We can, many of us, sympathise with the apprehension of Labour that, in the absence of prescribed work, they may find time heavy on their hands. But apart from the fact already mentioned, that either Leisure or Unemployment is inevitable, a good deal can be said to make the prospect of Leisure at least more tolerable. Of the present generation itself, a considerable number would have no such apprehension nor any reason for it, and their example of busying themselves in voluntary activities would very soon spread to the rest. And in much less than a generation we should see, I think, a whole people taking and enjoying and employing their Leisure as a natural right.

After all, the stock of the present English working classes is good English stock—perhaps the best. The Douglas Plan does not propose to endow the Leisure of an inferior race, but of a class in no sense inferior, save in opportunity, to the class that has hitherto monopolised all the Leisure. To bring under cultivation a soil we know by experience to be rich is a very different thing from, say, the enfranchisement of an inferior race. There is, in fact, no peril in it. If I may use the phrase, it is merely a commonsense policy for Civilisation and Culture. An England that was “Merrie England” once, before the days of Credit Monopoly, can become a “Merrier England” than ever before, when the fruits of Credit are universally shared.

It needs to be made clear, too—and this should be noted by all Credit-reformers—that the voluntary

activity conditioned by economic Leisure does not necessarily exclude either participation in what may be called public necessary work, or participation, alone or in company, in private work upon objects in demand. As long as the Sun leaves us any work to do, work, as a Natural necessity, will always be obligatory. And though the qualifications for participation in the increasingly technical and exacting work of the future will create something of the nature of an aristocracy of practical scientists, there will always be room in a Leisure State at the top of it. Furthermore, as has been said, creative work on one's own account, is not only not excluded; the favourable conditions for its production are multiplied. Outside of the necessitated task of maintaining and increasing the bread and butter Real Credit of the community, there will be ample scope for the creation and development of what I may call the Cultural Credit of the community. The crafts-tradition of England may well be revived in an age of economic Leisure.

This ends my song, you will be glad to hear. I have outlined what, in my opinion, is a Plan of Campaign for a Leisure Society seriously engaged in the war of Human Liberty and Progress. It only remains for me to wish you, as the officers of the Division responsible for the Propaganda of Right Ideas about Leisure, in relation to the Douglas Commonwealth, victory in your own day and generation.