



Idols of the Mind

Of wars it has been said that they are started by persons who could not construct a decent chicken-coop. The significance of this observation may not astonish the reader with its brilliance, but the remark epitomizes an important point. The building of a chicken-coop, as we all know, requires not only a plan, a design, a mental "model", but a concrete realization of that plan. The plan must be tested in its incarnation: the builder is confronted with certain laws of association which, if ignored, will frustrate the cleverest theory; moreover, he is in immediate relation to the project he initiates and therefore must be personally responsible. A war, on the other hand, is one of those large-scale projects initiated by persons with grandiose ideas who know that the immediate responsibility for their designs will be borne by others — that is, those who will be dispossessed, maimed, and killed. The relevant difference lies in the dissociation of the planner from the practical consequences of his design.

The principle involved operates widely, and it is not becoming less prevalent. The politician who decides to increase taxes or "employment" "for the common good" is, in the name of a complex of mental fixations (not only the "common good", but certain entrenched economic prejudices), imposing a program whose effects will be suffered in countless different ways by other people. Or, the sociologist sitting in his university office constructing social "models" is being (or has been) seduced by the notion that it is enough to be "clever". Funded by the Canada Council and protected by tenure, he need never accept any responsibility for his plans. If, as is likely, they die in the world of academe, he need never be concerned whether they "work"; if they are "tried", it will be others who will be the guinea pigs, while he remains abstracted by his position of privileged insulation.

We have often urged in these pages the proposition that what is needed is a "return to reality", and have suggested that this involves adopting the "right" philosophy. But ideas in themselves, though powerful, are often "unreal", abstract; that is, they are intangible and, if always disincarnate, are not convincing. The effective "turning again" to reality that is required is exercise in doing real things — in putting our "designs" and understandings up against the tribunal not of other theorists, but of natural law. The pervasive and dangerous dissociation is the separation of the instigator of an action from the results of his action, the abstracting of persons from the sphere of immediate operation of natural law to, say, the sphere of operation of bureaucratic law, which is wholly the product of fantasy (and ugly fantasy at that).

What I am suggesting is something unsubtle — quite mundane, but quite fundamental. It may be illustrated by the experience of an acquaintance, who claims that, as a tailor, he learned about natural law: you can stretch cloth only so much, and then it tears.

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Our Policy

SEED aspires to fulfil a unique role transcending the functions of other magazines and journals.

Our purpose is neither to propagandize in the sense of promoting some fixed point of view or body of thought nor merely to comment on current events.

Our partisanship does not extend beyond two considerations. Firstly, we believe that reality does exist: it is not a matter of opinion and will assert its authority over all opinions that contradict it. All sanctions reside in reality; opinion has none. Secondly, we believe in the desirability of extending human freedom. Genuine freedom is contingent upon our comprehension of reality, since to the extent that men disregard reality, they court personal and social disaster.

In other words, far from conforming to the modern view that value judgments are to be avoided, SEED will intentionally consist of a succession of value judgments, which will constitute the principal criterion of its success. Man cannot approach truth without rigorous formation of value judgments and perfecting of definitions. Discovery and refinement of the correct principles for human action and association will be the focus of our attention within the field of reality. If we carry our investigation of the nature of reality far enough, we shall illuminate the way to the formulation of sound policy.

We have no delusions about the facility of the course on which we are embarking. It is possibly the most difficult course open to us. However, its value should be proportional to the efforts it requires. If the distractions to intelligence and will which characterize contemporary society are, as we believe them to be, fundamentally unsatisfying, we are confident that some seekers of truth will involve themselves in the experiment that SEED represents. Such persons are the only ones capable of responding to such an experiment.

We approach our undertaking in the spirit of making an offering that will call forth latent creative capacities. If the ideas that SEED disseminates have validity and settle in good soil, they will grow. Moreover, their growth will be progressive and cumulative. SEED will serve as a medium permitting the cross-fertilization of adventurous intellects, thereby diminishing the effects of the entropic phenomenon that paralyzes development by compelling men to struggle to find truths that they have lost sight of and had to rediscover repeatedly during the past.

If our project is conducted correctly, it will at the least generate a new conceptual vigour among a segment of the community — and perhaps even result in the formation of new men.

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The Duty of Dissent

Strictures on the right to opt out of government programs excite little controversy nowadays. When people are told they will have to join such-and-such a scheme or take such-and-such a poison, they generally acquiesce. Planners may still be heard complaining that individual contrariety is rampant; but, more often than not, the latter get their way. Indeed, bureaucratic inertia has supplanted public opposition as the chief menace to the implementation of their schemes. Too many battles for the right of the individual *not* to participate have been lost, and drifting with the current (the custom which, Dante suggested, earns the hottest seats in hell) has become respectable in virtually all circumstances.

Underlying this situation is the assumption that group benefit is the ultimate criterion of the value of action. Of course, clever people have never had any difficulty producing arguments to justify any policy—from car insurance to concentration camps—on the basis of group benefit. The change from the personalized conception that the individual's progress toward the practice of what is right should have priority to this group viewpoint amounts, in terms of Western European culture, to revolution. The relations of Man to his Creative Source, of Man to Man, and of Man to his Environment are all being remoulded accordingly.

This 'new' approach is a throw-back to early periods in history when adverse conditions made rigorous social discipline essential to survival. As the human heritage accumulated, the adversity diminished and the physical possibility arose for the discipline to be relaxed. Individual free will began to be recognized as the *primum datum* of institutions and laws—especially under the stimulus of Christian philosophy. Twentieth-century collectivism has annulled hundreds of years of social evolution in which the individual was emerging from the group.

Healthy personalities do not enter into associations out of resignation or with the purpose of dying into a collectivity, but rather to open new fields in which their unique attributes can flourish. The no-choice society is thus geared to keeping sick personalities sick.

Responsible citizens are faced with a problem of re-evaluating their civic behaviour. We believe that many will opt for steadfast resistance to all bureaucratic schemes having inadequate provision for contracting out as true evidence of genuine public virtue.

Meaning in the Monarchy

Foul Attack

One of the results envisaged for the current "crisis of national unity" is the elimination of the monarchy from our political system. Persons antipathetic toward the principle of monarchy have jumped at the opportunity to publish the thesis that the abolition of this institution would remove an irritant from the relations among Canadians of French and British origins. Ironically, some of the people who have formally sworn to uphold the monarchy appear to be its most dangerous enemies.

Prime Minister Trudeau has long been endeavouring to rewrite the Canadian Constitution; and, for this reason, no one should be surprised at his discovery (being voiced by his entourage and himself) that our present difficulties arise from its unworkability. Of course, such a case can always be made out against any constitution, since the governance of a country never achieves perfection. Perhaps of more interest to Canadians is the fact that Mr. Trudeau has not in the past worked on the assumption that the existing Constitution should be made to work.

Mr. Levesque is now serving his former (?) associate, Mr. Trudeau, well by providing an object lesson in the unworkability of the Constitution. In the opposition of Quebec to Canada they have found a dialectical conflict from which they both appear to be extracting what they really want—namely, power to effect rapid institutional change and concentrate control over individuals in the hands of government. That the Queen will be one of the victims of the national consumption of this unwholesome stew is beyond doubt. The Prime Minister—the man who should, because of his position and oaths, be her chief defender—stated at Oxford in June that whether the Queen remains the Head of State in Canada "doesn't much matter one way or the other." Readers will remember (in contrast with this declaration) his paeans for people who "matter"—such as Fidel Castro and Mao Tse-tung.

The fact that "irrelevant" seems to be the harshest word that critics of the monarchy feel they can cast against the institution warrants attention. Most persons involved in politics nowadays are, alas, not "irrelevant" enough. Their actions are continually impinging on our lives in unpleasant ways. Any school-boy knows (or, at any rate, used to know) that the

problem of the threat of excessive use of royal prerogative was solved through centuries of Constitutional evolution—at least in so far as the British monarchy is concerned. The earliest constitutional treatise in the English language¹ laid down in its first paragraph the axiom that in England the "kyng may not rule his peple bi other lawes than such as they assenten unto."

Suggesting that the abolition of the monarchy would contribute to the lessening of our real political and economic problems is patent nonsense. The blame for these problems is attributable to the Trudeaus and the Levesques, and others abusing the power of the State. Indeed, these persons have carried their depredations of personal freedom to lengths of which the most megalomaniacal medieval kings would never have dreamt.

Constitutional reform entailing abolition of the monarchy is clearly a diversionary device designed to distract the citizen concerned about the erosion of his freedom and independence from the primary source of the erosion.

Sentiment and Social Strength

These are the facts. Behind the facts are two warring concepts of "social progress", which are finding expression in the monarchy issue, among others. The first conception, which is fundamental to the development of the British Constitution, insists that social evolution should be conditioned by the actions of autonomous individuals constituting society as a whole—in other words, it assumes that change should be possible, but that this should follow the build-up of pressure for change among the people. This conception values the basis that we inherit from the past as an embodiment of successes to be ignored only by the foolish.

The second conception of social change centers on the future: it is anticipatory, geared to creating a society with certain predetermined characteristics. It assumes change to be the only constant in human affairs: traditions, cultures, beliefs are merely evanescent shadows moving across—and, inevitably, off—the stage of life. Moreover, change can legitimately be made whether or not it is broadly desired by the members of the community; elites impose reform on the assumption that the population can subsequently be brought to accept it. Mr. Trudeau exemplified this approach very well

when he wrote that, "The true tactical position of the democratic socialist is on the left, but no further."² His "participatory democracy" is really nothing more than the opportunity for people to vocalize about policy being implemented regardless of the orientation of the clamour.

Monarchy is associated with the first of these conceptions. Its roots originate deep in the past; it is heavy with tradition, ritualistic forms, and cumulative dignity. It incarnates the principles of continuity and heritage. It is a remnant of an historical period before the theories of psychological dissectors made societal "remoulding" a respectable activity. And this incompatibility with anticipatory social engineering quite adequately explains why members of the latter school have little sympathy with the institution.

The monarchy is out of joint with the times in that it relates social stability and continuity to personal bonds involving such unpredictable and quantification-defying phenomena as trust and love. Contemporary rationalism, the planning mentality, is repelled by the sentimental aspects of the relationship between Crown and subject.

You can revere a written constitution; but you cannot identify with it. You cannot empathize with a piece of paper; but you can imagine the life-long trials of a man bred from infancy to bear the awful burden of being more than himself.

The superior potency of the relationship between two personalities—as compared with the relationship between a mind and an idea, overwhelming though this may be—is undeniable. History is replete with instances of the overriding effect of the contact of personality, the most dramatic being the instance of God-become-man in Christianity. An individual can relate in all the facets of his being to another individual; however, he can relate only intellectually to a principle or a legal fiction.

The majority of men do not want to spend their lives writing and interpreting constitutions. What they desire is simply an economic, political, and social context that facilitates their ability to do the small things of which life chiefly consists. They have less difficulty associating the maintenance of this context with a person than with a list of rules or laws. This is why supporters of the monarchy are predominantly interested in the fact of the thing rather than the the-

ory of the thing.

National Families

The potential for success in a society depends upon the quality of trust its members can accord their institutions and fellow citizens. This proposition holds regardless of the dimensions of the society under consideration. Everyone has seen evidence of the disintegrative effects upon a family of the breakdown of faith in or loss of its head. The monarch stands in a position analogous to that of the head of a family; his is the personality about which the family-life-writ-large of the nation revolves, however remotely. He is the mediator of certain relations among the population as a whole, the symbol of the special bond linking inhabitants of a certain land and heirs of a certain culture.

Of course, the great dilemma posed by the concept of the monarch as the head of a national family is that national families in the cultural sense are ceasing to exist. This is the direct result of the policies of internationalist politicians and bureaucrats who, with the assistance of largely artificial economic pressures, have concocted populations mixes that have diluted the feeling of belonging to a unique cultural environment. Melting pots and mosaics can be formed into nations on an arbitrary basis only; homogeneous cultures form themselves into nations naturally. Deep sentimental attachments of members of a community to one another rarely form when the community is arbitrarily defined; in such a situation, the role of the monarch becomes essentially a hollow role.

Recycled Paper

This process of undermining the *raison d'être* of the monarchy is continuing, and eventually the institution will be so detached from the thinking of the citizens that its disappearance must follow. The Trudeaus and the Levesques—or perhaps their ideological progeny—will probably have their way. The personality of the monarch will be replaced by a piece of paper with promises upon it. This piece of paper will be shown to be revocable and will elicit respect accordingly. It will be fiddled with, amended, and finally overturned as new demands for "an updated, realistic Constitution" are made. The only evidence of the Canadian nation will be shiftier politicians and shifting constitutional

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Marxist Prophets

An article reprinted in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (September 11, 1977) outlines the career and some of the prognostications of the influential American Marxist intellectual, Paul Sweezy, who has apparently decided that the collapse of the capitalist social and economic system of the U.S., which he has been forecasting for years, may not occur for another century after all. Nevertheless, he says reassuringly, it will come eventually.

What is interesting about Sweezy's analysis (to the extent that it can be represented in a brief newspaper review) is that it bears a superficial resemblance to that which has been elaborated in these pages. Thus, for example, Sweezy emphasizes the implications of the re-investment of "profits" (or, of savings), which he argues is necessary in a capitalist economy to maintain expansion: "To be healthy a capitalist enterprise must grow and grow and grow. The alternative is stagnation and eventual death. And individual enterprises can grow only if the economy as a whole grows". He points out that at least one of the consequences of this situation is that "capitalism...requires increasingly massive forms of public and private waste to keep itself going at all" --waste in the form, for example, of war.

The Income Deficiency

These observations are scarcely earth-rending in their novelty. We have often quoted Keynes's assertion that capital investment must constantly increase in order for demand to keep up with *previously-created costs*, which leads to the sort of situation which Sweezy describes. Sweezy appears even to agree with Keynes that part of the pressure on the system arises from the need to maintain *demand*, although he presumably couches this in Marxist terms, as the reviewer's summary suggests: "because capitalists hold down wages in order to make more profit, they unwittingly restrict consumption at the same time that they are investing much of the profit to expand productive capacity". That is, Sweezy perceives that *incomes* are not keeping abreast of costs incurred in production, although this is not his point of emphasis and his notion that "capitalists hold down wages in order to make more profit" is simplistic in the extreme.

While we can accede readily enough to the *general*

proposition that there are pressures which force ever and ever more capitalization in the economy, and that an important consequence of this is the sophistication of techniques of waste, we do not, of course, accept the specific analysis that Sweezy offers. As our readers know, we do not subscribe to the notion that only capitalists are liable to ravening greed, and that it is their insatiable desire for profits and power that is the cause of all our economic woes. On the contrary, we recognize that most capitalists are at the mercy of the cost-price squeeze much as the rest of us are, and that an important aspect of the deficiency of demand is the radical inadequacy of the employment system as a vehicle for the distribution of incomes.

State Capitalism

We also differ radically from Sweezy in our estimation of the political implications of these economic phenomena—or, at least, in the alternative we see to the situation to which they lead. Quite accurately, he predicts that economic chaos must eventuate in more and more state control: "Sweezy", writes A. Kent Macdougall, the reviewer, "predicts that underutilization of productive capacity, unemployment, and unrest will continue and eventually worsen. As a result, the government will have to intervene ever more massively in the economy to prop it up. 'We are headed toward state capitalism,' he concludes". We agree; we are headed toward state capitalism. But we are surprised that Sweezy regards "state capitalism" as a bad thing, for the alternative to crumbling capitalism which he suggests could very well be described by this very epithet: "Growth must be decisively checked, he concluded, but doing so implies the end of capitalism and its replacement by a planned system of production for use, rather than a market system of production for profit".

If this does not involve "massive intervention" by the state, I wonder what does? The phrase "a planned system of production for use" tells the whole story. Who is to do the planning? The state, obviously. Who will define what is a legitimate use? Again, those who wield power in the state. And who will do the "producing"? "Employees", under central direction. If a system in which the state will control all capital in-

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The Educated Overplus

A recent article in *The Washington Post* outlines a crisis facing the United States: a study by the federal government's Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals that during the "1974-through-1985" period, there will be "950,000 more college graduates than jobs that have traditionally required degrees"; even worse, a follow-up study paints a bleaker picture—of "a surplus of more than a million college graduates between now and 1985". The tale is, in fact, an old one, and a common: we are becoming over-educated and underemployed.

That this situation continues to evoke prognostications of gloomy disaster is a tribute to the intractable obtuseness of people in general—and probably to the downright mendacity of politicians, pressmen, and the welter of publicists who are entrusted with the task of mass conditioning populations. Of these we would ask, what was all the uproar about universal education during the nineteenth century in aid of, anyway? Why educate people so that more of them will become engineers, scientists, administrators, trained to devote their time and energies to making life economically more efficient, to minimizing the necessity for armies of hewers of wood and drawers of water? Even in spite of concerted and protracted sabotage of this program, it has, in some measure, worked. If they are serious about wanting full employment, these people should quite blatantly be attacking any advance in technique, anything that allows anything to be done more quickly, more easily, or even "better". Indeed, they are attacking these every day, but they would be the last to admit this.

The question of the 950,000 (or is it one million?) unemployable university graduates is somewhat complicated. For one thing, probably a large proportion of university students are there in the first place only because governments have found this a handy method of disguising "unemployment". That is, persons with no intellectual aptitudes or interests are encouraged—by an educational regime that eschews education—to "go to college", where they more or less dutifully put in time for three or four years before being discharged with meaningless degrees. Miserable themselves, they effectually vitiate any intellectual activity that might otherwise go on in these tabernacles of enlightenment.

However, more often than not, they manage (with the help of the government) to maintain the illusion that they are in some meaningful sense "students". However, the chickens are now coming home to roost, as the old saying goes: the deferred "unemployment" problem is now coming due, and we are in the incongruous position of having to beat our breasts about how overeducated we are.

What else this anomalous situation does—as we have said before—is reveal how absurd the notion that "education" is for "employment" is. Why should anyone (I am sadly aware how many do) want to undergo the trauma of education (in its present form) in order to have more "work"—that is, work in the sense of labour, expenditure of energy, under someone else's direction, on someone else's terms, for someone else's objectives? And why does anyone need an education (which, as opposed to "training", must involve the development of persons' capacities for making discriminations and taking initiatives) if his main goal in life is to become an "organization man", a functionary?

The fact that we, that "society", can afford the luxury of hundreds of thousands of educated persons who do not have to work should be regarded as a measure of success, not failure. The question that should be asked is, "How can access to wealth be distributed (not redistributed) realistically so that surpluses become a boon and not a bane?" Rather than busying ourselves devising means of putting all these "liberally" ("liberatedly"?) educated persons back under constraint, we should be delighting in the evidence they afford that human beings can be at least partially freed from economic (to be distinguished from financial) compulsion.

Meanwhile—and I fear that the time will be long—there is always the Arctic gas pipeline which, as both President Carter and Prime Minister Trudeau are jubilant to point out, will, along with its other remarkable benefits, provide how many hundreds of thousands of "man-years of employment"?

D.R.K.

A Choice of Compulsions

In some ways, it is surprising that the Protestant Separate school board of Montreal should be "defying" the Quebec government in its institution of the new language law, for such defiance is a challenge to the well-entrenched principle of universal, uniform, compulsory, "state"-financed and state-directed education. The restrictions imposed by the new law are merely a logical and consistent manifestation of a system of education which no "right-thinking and progressive" individual would be prepared to question.

Consider: education is within the jurisdiction of the provincial government; it is "public"; it is state-supported. Therefore, surely, the state has the prerogative of deciding what is to be taught, by whom, to whom, and on what conditions. And, of course, if someone does not like this set of circumstances, it does not really matter, since the state has all the sanctions that make any difference—the legal and financial ones. (Thus, it is a matter of some concern that Protestant/English schools will not get the customary per capita grant for illegally-registered students.) Moreover, few "liberal democrats" would be willing to argue that the state should not have all the sanctions that matter, because, presumably, that is what democracy is all about.

Nevertheless, the school board claims it is determined to hold its position—even coming dangerously near to proclaiming that "freedom of choice" in the matter of language instruction is important, if not fundamental. This, I should think, must be for them a frightening precedent: if one allows freedom of choice on the basis of language, which of the other myriad differences among individual persons might not be urged as a justification for seeking or requesting a kind of education different from the standard one prescribed by the state in its omniscience?

I wonder, even if the English school system does win its battle, how fervent would be its support for the diversion of public funds from it to alternative institutions or, say, for a system of voluntary subscription by taxpayers to the schools of their choice. I suspect not very.

D.R.K.

To Those Who Share Our Concern

The publication of SEED is an enterprise which we feel is of cardinal importance to the revitalization of our culture. This endeavour represents the concern of a few individuals sensible of their responsibility to reverse, where possible, what they perceive to be the deterioration of the ideological and practical bases of this culture, and prepared to make personal sacrifices in the accomplishment of this objective.

However, our success can only be in proportion to our resources, which — particularly in their financial aspect — are quite limited. We are determined to proceed, even within those limitations. But we would like to do more.

Therefore, if you respond to the challenge that SEED has set for itself and would like to contribute to our venture, we invite your donations.

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("Prophets", continued from p. 5)

vestment, define all industrial objectives, and employ all worker-citizens is not "state capitalism", what is? Even in a corrupt "market system" the consumer (the individual person as consumer) probably has some effective choice, but Sweezy seems to envisage a system of total control by "planners", albeit in the name of the "people".

Ironically, Sweezy not only deplores state capitalism while advocating it, but apparently he even castigates the foremost exemplar of "socialism", the Soviet Union. "The Soviet Union, he says, is today a class exploitative system. Workers have no control over conditions of work or disposition of the product. The country is run by a new ruling class. It rules not through private ownership of the means of production, as in capitalist society, but through occupying the decision-making positions in the party, the state, and the economy...". Precisely. And what is to prevent a similar "ruling class" from occupying "decision-making positions" in the party, state, and economy of Sweezy's planned society? Sweezy, in fact, tells us nothing: he offers, apparently, no radical analysis of the crucial matter of *sanctions*; he imagines a so-

cialist utopia in which there will be administration without hierarchy, and in which policy can be entrusted to an omnipotent and presumably beneficent "order". One wonders why Sweezy even bothers.

In this regard, Macdougall makes one unoriginal but revelatory remark: "Things have to fall apart before anything approaching a revolution is a possibility". If it can be arranged that things *must* fall apart, then the revolution is inevitable. At the same time, if we can be made to believe that people like Sweezy are the only revolutionaries, then so much the better for the plans of the real revolutionaries. Sixty years ago, C.H. Douglas pointed out that "the superstructure of capitalistic society is most unquestionably failing, because the pediments which should sustain it are honeycombed with decay"—and proposed some positive remedies. It is the persistent recalcitrance (if that is all it is) to deal with this decay in a realistic fashion that continues to make people like Sweezy sound like prophets—while what they are prophesying is already largely history.

D.R.K.

("Monarchy", continued from p. 4)

arrangements.

Extensive reliance on paper relations within a family signifies that its surest basis, trust, has broken down. They may become necessary, but the soundest families instinctively dislike and avoid them.

Retaining the monarchy is no guarantee of a better political future; but discarding it would be tantamount to an admission that the best quality we can hope to attain in our national life is that of an unenthusiastic *mariage de convenance*.

R.E.K.

¹ *The Governance of England: Otherwise Called the Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, written by Sir John Fortescue around 1475 a.d.

² *Federalism and the French Canadians* (Toronto, 1968), 128.

It seems perfectly certain that either a pyramidal organisation, having at its apex supreme power and at its base virtual subjection, ... will crystallise out of the centralising process which is evident in ... finance, industry, and politics; or else a more complete decentralisation of initiative than this civilisation has ever known will be substituted for external authority.

The issue transcends in importance all others....

C.H. Douglas, "The Pyramid of Power"

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