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The Federal Reserve

It is perhaps typical of modern American writers that they give names with epithets attached either of adulation or of disgust. Mr. E. Mullins, in his *The Federal Reserve*, does not hesitate to apply an appropriate adjective even to the venerable Herbert Hoover. And he gives plenty of other names in the story of the founding and results of the Federal Reserve Board. It is probably the first account devoted to the Board alone, and remains in manuscript.

The pattern revealed is one which has worked often and well. In 1907 there was a financial panic, in 1913 the Federal Reserve Board appeared in answer to the demand for financial reform. Its details were decided at a secret meeting of leading bankers, together with Paul Warburg and Senator Aldrich, on Jekyll Island in 1910. The financiers had another meeting in 1920 and successfully plotted another panic, with the object of ruining the banks outside the Federal Reserve system. A panic followed in 1921. A meeting followed in 1927 which resulted in the panic of 1929, and led up to the New Deal. A similar stratagem, one might add, of financial stringency has resulted in socialism for Great Britain, etc.

Mr. Mullins writes: "The President of the United States lending his active support to further a group of international gold dealers may seem a bit rough to some people, but this was only one incident of Roosevelt's use of his high office to help his friends." Indeed, it would have been most surprising if he had done anything else, Calvin Coolidge, for instance, had made a national proclamation in favour of speculation which served to magnify the crash of 1929.

It is significant too how the vilest of the species are able to pose as reformers. Such was the attitude of Paul Warburg, who gave America the choice of the Aldrich Plan or the Federal Reserve System (the same thing) before the first War. And when the Nye Committee met in 1935 to investigate the activities of the profiteers and munition-makers of that war, "the Du Ponts were made the scapegoats of that investigation, the purpose being to frighten Congress into accepting without amendment all of Baruch's plans for controlling this country during the Second World War. In a series of lectures to the Nye Committee he outlined, step by step, the draft, rationing of food and essential wartime materials such as oil and rubber, in which he had large interests, the cost-plus manufacturing system, price control, and the corporate excess profits system. The Baruch plans were followed minutely in setting up the military dictatorship which ruled this country from 1940 to 1945."

The Chairman said: "There is no man in the country who has given more time, more thought, to the subject of taking the profits out of war than Mr. Baruch." Evidently the public reputation of a 'reformer' is a danger signal. Mr. Baruch, when questioned about conscientious objectors, said "He works or fights." It was a concise enough summary of

the Welfare State. He added that President Wilson "one time gave me a letter authorizing me to take over any industry or plant." Mr. Mullins comments: "The Federal Reserve System is a central bank whose biggest job is *war finance*." (My italics).

Mr. Mullins examines other figures. Herbert Lehman, for instance, "learned that the Russian economy was the economy of the future." Mr. Mullins draws, not for the first time, on "Who's Who in American Jewry," and says that H. Lehman and Edmund Warburg "have siphoned off billions of dollars of American capital into the Palestine desert." Governor Marriner Eccles of the Federal Reserve Board said immediately after the second War, "Increased control by our central bank is necessary." He was replaced as Chairman of the Board by Thomas B. McCabe, head of the Toilet-Paper Trust, and worked with the Truman Administration "which since 1945 has steadily followed an inflation policy for the purpose of extinguishing that part of the national debt owed to the American citizens." A comparison with post-war Britain again suggests itself, with the reminder that inflation is just as *deliberate* a mechanism as deflation.

Henry Ford, the only person of any decency who appears in the narrative, is quoted: "The one aim of these financiers is world control by the creation of inextinguishable debts." The New York banker, Mr. Lawrence, says: "During the war and post-war years the moneys of the world have been in the hands of men who believed in a managed currency." And a Mr. Seltzer adds: "Since 1929 our commercial banking system has been transformed from one in which bank deposits and bank earnings were based mainly on direct customer loans to one in which they earn money mainly from bank ownership of the public debt."

In March, 1951, Mr. McCabe resigned and was replaced by William Chesney Martin as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. "Martin's father was a close associate of Paul Warburg in the American Acceptance Council, and worked with him to get American finance and industry to adopt the use of acceptances, on which Warburg held a virtual monopoly in this country." This was another of Warburg's little 'reforms.'

Mr. Mullins cites what he calls the most ominous pronouncement of the real rulers of the country. The quotation is from an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, October 28, 1944, by Peter Drucker: "Should the world adopt a controlled economic system, leadership would logically fall to the Soviet Union. Russia would be the model for such a directorship. . . ."

Mr. Mullins concludes: "The Federal Reserve System has been the death of the Constitution and the end of our liberty. The Federal Reserve Board of Governors, selected by and working for the powerful international bankers, have inflicted catastrophe on our people, involving us in two world

wars, and planning and executing two of the worst depressions which we have ever suffered. So long as this body continues to exercise its dictatorial powers, our freedom is a mockery of itself."

It is to be hoped that Mr. Mullins's researches may be made available to Americans, and others, to give them some idea of Who is Who, and Why.

H. SWABEY.

PARLIAMENT

House of Lords: July 4, 1951.

Chemicals and Food Supply

Lord Douglas of Barloch rose to call attention to the dangers to national health arising from the increasing use of poisonous chemicals in the growing and preparation of foodstuffs, and to the need for strict control over all processes which may affect the natural quality of food: and to move for Papers.

(For its concise and comprehensive survey of this subject we hope to publish Lord Douglas's speech IN EXTENSO in a forthcoming issue of THE SOCIAL CREDITER. Its effect is sufficiently indicated in the speaker's reply later in the debate:—)

Lord Douglas of Barloch: My Lords, I will not detain you for more than a few moments. In the first place, I should like to thank my noble friends Lord Hankey and Lord Teviot for the support that they have given me. I should also like to thank my noble friend who has spoken on behalf of the Government, although I am not completely satisfied with his reply. He has said that the Government cannot forbid the use of chemicals, although we do not know whether those chemicals are harmless or otherwise. That is the position which I accept only with very great hesitation. Somehow or other it seems to be assumed that this country would be unable to feed itself if the use of such chemicals were prohibited. I wonder how this country was able to feed itself a couple of generations ago, before the ingenuity of the chemists got to work upon this subject. Certainly we suffered from some greater inequality in the distribution of wealth, but I do not think there were any insuperable difficulties about supplying us with sufficient food.

The noble Earl has admitted that insufficient research has been devoted to this matter in this country. He has said that various researches have been conducted in the United States, and for that matter elsewhere, but that we cannot accept the results of those researches until we are able to prove the statements by fresh researches here. If that is the position, then it is high time that we were making more rapid progress. It may be that the present system of administration in this country works well. I do not doubt that for a single moment. But it does not cover all the ground which requires to be covered. That is the point which I wanted to make. I am very glad to see from what the noble Earl has said, that the Government are taking an active interest in this

matter, and that steps are being taken to provide a larger and better measure of protection to the public in regard to the foodstuffs which are being consumed. That being so, I am content for the moment to thank the noble Earl for the reply which he has given on behalf of the Government, and beg leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion for Papers, by leave, withdrawn.

House of Commons: June 25, 1951.

Food Supplies (Chemicals)

Dr. Barnett Stross asked the Minister of Food what control there is over the addition to foodstuffs which are processed or manufactured, of chemicals or substances which may ultimately prove to be poisonous, although no evidence is yet available of their toxic nature; and whether he will consider banning their use unless there is ample evidence that they are not harmful.

Mr. Webb: The Food and Drugs Act, 1938, puts a direct responsibility on manufacturers and distributors to supply safe food and they frequently seek, and adopt, our advice about the wisdom of using particular chemicals or substances. There is at present no more direct control over the use of substances which are not known to be harmful and which are not open to reasonable grounds of suspicion; and I do not think that I should be justified in seeking to employ the powers granted by Section 8 of the Act to make a general prohibition of the kind proposed, even if it could be drafted, which seems doubtful.

Dr. Stross: Is my right hon. Friend aware, however, that he used the word "frequently" and that he did not say "always"? Is he aware of the innumerable new substances turned out by the chemical industry and that none of us know at first whether they are toxic or non-toxic? Will he look again at the 1938 Act and strengthen it to protect the public.

Mr. Webb: The simple point between us is that at the moment I am quite content to rest on administrative action, with the advice that I am given. I do not think that any change in the law is required, but if, in the light of experience, such change is required, we will look at it.

Dr. Stross asked the Minister of Food whether he will give a list of the chemical substances which are used to refine, improve, preserve or adulterate foodstuffs.

Mr. Webb: It is an offence under the Food and Drugs Act to adulterate food; and the use of preservatives in food is prohibited, with a few exceptions, by the Preservatives in Food Regulations. Chemicals have, of course, been used in the preparation of food for very many years, and as the list is a very long one, and constantly being added to, it would, I am afraid, be impracticable to provide the information asked for by my hon. Friend.

Dr. Stross: While we all recognise that about 700 additives are in use in connection with foodstuffs of all kinds, may I ask my right hon. Friend whether he is aware that, from time to time, we find that some which we accept as being harmless prove to be dangerous and toxic? Will he not please look at Section 8 of the Act of 1938, and give himself more power to protect the public?

Mr. Webb: I should be very glad to look at that Section

On Planning The Earth

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if my hon. Friend would explain to me the meaning of the word "additives." I do not know what it means.

Dr. Stross: In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the reply, I beg to give notice that I will raise the matter on the adjournment tonight.

Flour (Improvers)

Dr. Stross asked the Minister of Food to what extent flour is still treated with agene; and when he estimates this type of flour treatment will have entirely ceased.

Mr. Webb: The proportion of flour used for human consumption at present treated with agene is estimated at about 90 per cent. As has already been announced, agreement has been reached with the milling industry to stop the use of agene and consideration is now being given to the choice of an alternative improver; but I cannot yet say when the treatment of flour with agene will cease.

Mr. Stross: Does not my right hon. Friend realise that his answer cannot be satisfactory to those of us who are interested in this subject and who suspect that agene is a toxic agent? Is he aware further that such an authority as Lord Mellanby recently stated that in his view it might be that peptic ulceration and acute appendicitis result from the use of agene? Cannot my right hon. Friend hurry up the process?

Mr. Webb: We are trying to hurry it up, but there is a conflict of evidence about it. There is no real evidence to support the rather alarming suggestions made by my hon. Friend. We have agreed to make certain changes in the production of flour and in the end to eliminate the use of agene. I hope that my hon. Friend will exercise some patience in allowing us adequate time in order to get this matter through the industrial machine.

Mr. Douglas Marshall: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the first answer he gave was exactly the same as the answer he gave to me in April, 1950, with the exception that he then said "in the immediate future." More than a year has elapsed and he has taken no action.

Mr. Webb: It is not surprising that my answer is not dissimilar from the one I gave in April, 1950. I said then that it was a long process. [An HON. MEMBER: "Why?"] For all sorts of reasons into which I cannot go now. We are committed to the change, but the task of effecting it is complicated and takes a long time; but we are proceeding with all due speed.

Sir Herbert Williams: Is it not a fact that the millers would not have put this substance into the flour unless the right hon. Gentleman's Department had forced them to do so?

Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd: Does not the fact that the Minister has now decided to terminate the use of agene as a chemical ingredient, in spite of the conflict of evidence, indicate that he has come to the conclusion that there is something radically wrong with its use? In view of that, ought he not to speed up the process?

Mr. Webb: I am doing all I can to speed up the process. It is not as easy as it looked when I started and entered into commitments about it. There are really serious difficulties for the people who are engaged in the milling of flour, all of which I have to take into account. They themselves agreed to this new arrangement, and they will,

I am convinced, make the necessary change at the earliest practicable moment.

Mr. Somerville Hastings: Is any direct research carried out in my right hon. Friend's Department into the toxicity or otherwise of such substances as agene?

Mr. Webb: I should like notice of that question.

Sir Waldron Smithers asked the Minister of Food if he will give the analysis of flour for bread used today, showing, in particular, how much potato flour is included.

Mr. Webb: The flour supplied by millers for bread-making is composed of home-milled wheaten flour with an 81 per cent. extraction rate and imported wheaten flour with a 72 per cent. extraction rate. Calcium carbonate, at the rate of 14 oz. per 280 lb. of flour, is also added. Bakers may add potato flour in baking bread, but because of its relatively high price hardly any is being used at present.

S. W. Smithers: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that deterioration in the quality of our bread is entirely due to bulk purchase and State monopoly? Is he also aware that shortages are produced by restricting consumption, and that there are no real shortages in the world today?

Mr. Webb: I cannot accept that supposition, because long before the State bulk-purchased wheat, private enterprise bulk-purchased wheat and flour.

Mrs Felton (Inquiry)

Mr. C. S. Taylor asked the Attorney-General whether he has now received a report from the Director of Public Prosecutions about Mrs. Monica Felton; and whether he proposes to institute proceedings against her for treason.

Mr. Fisher asked the Attorney-General if he has yet received a report from the Director of Public Prosecutions on the case of Mrs. Monica Felton; and if he will make a statement.

(Continued on page 6.)

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Saturday, July 14, 1951.

From Week to Week

The Times Literary Supplement devotes about seven and a half of its columns to a review of four studies of the behaviour of voters at elections. It asks whether election campaigns are changing into a ritual of doubtful efficiency gone through to satisfy the demands of conscience, of habit and tradition, and of courtesy towards the voters? Noticing the (to us) excessive courtesy towards *candidates*, we don't see the point in the last mentioned 'demand'—but our notions of ballot-box democracy differ from those of *The Times*. One point brought out in the course of the Article is the attribution of the result of a particular contest to the operation of the following sequence:—

(1) The voter assumes that political society rests upon the existence of classes, with conflicting interests. To one of these he must, perforce, belong.

(2) Which class he belongs to is a matter of self-assessment; but this assessment is material to the result.

(3) The voter assumes that the parties 'represent' different classes and votes accordingly. What is said at elections is relatively immaterial.

However far from the truth, this seems to us much nearer to it than any theory based upon an 'enlightened democracy' doing anything at all which shows signs of incipient intelligence.

If the average elector (voter) errs in judgment of a single point, e.g., what classes have you? which class am I? which party 'represents' which class? does any party 'represent' any class? and, miracles apart, the 'winning' collectivity are doomed to disappointment—which is the universal experience!

It is said that Dr. Theodor Vogel, the Grand Master of the revived Freemasons of Western Germany, is a Jew, and that Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, British High Commissioner, who sent a message of good wishes to the third annual conference in June, is a Roman Catholic. There are now 200 lodges with about 10,000 members in Western Germany.

An agreement concluded recently in Jerusalem between Israel and the oil companies provided among other things

for the formation of an Israeli Marketing Board empowered to distribute 30 *per cent.* of Israeli's total consumption of oil.

Another sidelight is the *Jewish Chronicle's* opinion that if Abadan's output is lost to the western world even for a short time, "the 3,000,000 additional tons of oil which Haifa could produce will suddenly become more important."

We are glad to see that *The Times's* theory of a "good" and a "bad" communism (upon which we have commented before) is receiving unfavourable notice in the . . . States. The trouble about treason is that it ceases to be treason when it prevails.

Chemicals in Bread

Under this heading, the following appeared in *The Dundee Courier* for June 29, and *The Scotsman* for June 30:

Dear Sir,—When speaking in the House of Commons last Thursday, I appealed to the M.P.s present to support our association in our demand for a public inquiry into the use of agene in our bread, by a disinterested body of scientists, the medical profession and the consumers.

This demand of ours is apparently beginning to be felt because the Minister of Food, who has consistently denied that agene has any deleterious effect on human beings, has now said that he has agreed with the flour millers to have it stopped. It is evident that a public inquiry such as we demanded would not have been in their interests.

In view of the amount of correspondence which I have had with the Federation of British and Irish Flour Millers over the matter, I called at their office in London last week. They maintained (and I later confirmed with the Ministry of Food) that they are no longer "free agents" in the milling of our flour, but are completely under Government control.

Here is what Dr. Coghlan (who gave evidence at a Hull inquest over a patient of his whom he had been treating for agene poisoning) wrote me:—"Prior to the introduction of agene, the death rate from heart diseases was steady at about an average of 66,000 per annum. With the introduction of agene it began to climb steadily until by 1947 it had reached the appalling total of 164,000 per annum, and, of course, it is still rising. At a most conservative estimate, well over 2,000 innocent people are losing their lives weekly as a result of agene poisoned hearts. Agene was introduced into the U.S.A. at about the same time as here and was followed by a similar cardiac debacle. The U.S.A. switched from agene to chlorine dioxide in 1948 without any drop in the cardiac death rate."

I trust the exposure which our association has been largely instrumental in bringing about over the continued use of agene will receive the active co-operation of all your readers in demanding, through their M.P.s, that when this agene chemical is discarded no other will be substituted. Men have been milling flour and baking bread for thousands of years without using chemical bleaches, and what they did we must do.—Yours truly,

ELIZABETH M. PATTULLO,

Member Central Committee Scottish Housewives' Association,

Sandyford, Kirriemuir, June 26, 1951.

Alexander Del Mar

This booklet* is a reprint of an edition of 1899. It has been published for The Del Mar Society of Washington. It contains a number of interesting records of certain changes in the Monetary System, starting with the middle of the 17th century. It gives considerable prominence to Barbara Villiers Countess of Castlemaine, who was the Mistress of Charles II. Apart from other well-known characteristics of this lady she appears to have had a somewhat grasping disposition and at any rate was in league with some of the financiers of her time. The booklet also goes into considerable detail of certain happenings in 1868. Alexander Del Mar appears to have taken an active part at that time in opposition to what is described as having been put through the legislature. It is a tale of political corruption and treachery in a relatively minor matter, *viz.*, the redeemability in coin of Bonds issued at half price, because at issue they were held redeemable in green backs. The Paris Rothschilds benefited by the legislation which required repayment in coin. There is, however, nothing very exceptional in this fact, or in the general corruptibility of politicians. Every country must have experienced scores of similar scandalous betrayals during the 19th century.

The book may be of interest to the student of coinage. Apart from that it is difficult to understand why in March, 1951, anyone should have troubled to have re-published it. There is one major monetary crime, the usurpation by the money power of the financial credit of every civilised country. Banking was at its inception a great and valuable discovery. Owing to the character of the individuals who made that discovery, instead of banking being an entirely beneficent discovery it has become a curse to country after country. To all intents and purposes the money power who, through the

Banks, create Bank credit "out of nothing" have acquired a lien on all the real wealth of the world. Through their legal right to issue financial credit and through the secret process of the creation of this financial credit they have in fact stolen from the individuals comprising each nation the real wealth belonging to those individuals. In any book of this type one would think that this major crime, dwarfing all the crimelets enumerated in this book, would have been given great prominence. The Hon. Alexander Del Mar, however, does not appear ever to have heard of Bank Credit, nowhere is it mentioned and throughout the book it is quite clear that he has no conception of it. He is entirely pre-occupied with the exchange ratios between gold and silver coinage and waxes eloquent about the variations of this ratio. He himself appears to be an exponent of Bi-metalism.

When the original booklet was published Bank credit was already a well-known and established fact. It need only be remembered that in 1801 the British National debt stood at £537,000,000, all of it Bank created. . . . The annual charge on this National debt was over £20,000,000 per annum. Anyone with the slightest claim to knowledge in Monetary matters must have been well aware of the creation of this debt as in the Bank of England's original Charter it is clearly stated that the first loan shall be created "out of nothing." There was, therefore, little excuse for the publication in 1899 of this Treatise. For it to be re-published in 1951, when there were so many other useful and instructive books which could have been re-published passes comprehension. In 1899 there existed already an extensive literature dealing with Bank credit. The year 1951 marks one-third of a century after Major Douglas had gone far beyond any previous writer on the iniquities of the Banking System.

H.R.P.

The Genealogy of Gnosticism

(Continued).

The first writer who attempted to classify the Gnostic systems on any other ground than that of mere chronological sequence, is the learned Mosheim, briefly in his 'Ecclesiastical History,' and more fully in his 'Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before the time of Constantine the Great.' 'It will be easily perceived,' he says in the latter work, 'by any one who shall have carefully investigated the account here given of the sects called *Gnostic*, that there is this principal point of difference between them; namely, that while some retained whole and entire the ancient Oriental doctrine of two principles of things, others subtracted something from it and supplied the deficiency by foreign inventions. All agree in admitting the existence from all eternity not only of God, but of a matter containing the cause of all depravity and evil. . . . But those who sprang up in Syria and Asia assigned to this eternal matter a special Lord and Master, either self-existent or sprung from matter itself; thus recognising, in addition to the good principle, an evil principle, which however was regarded as distinct from the Creator of the world. Those on the other hand who sprang up in Egypt, such as Basilides, Valentinus, and others, know nothing of this Prince of matter, though they added to the Oriental teaching various fancies and inventions of Egyptian origin. A similar principle of classification is adopted by another learned German Church historian, Gieseler, who how-

ever finds it necessary to add to the Egyptian and Syrian schools a third class comprising Marcion and his followers. A more philosophical principle of arrangement has been suggested by Neander, who distinguishes the Gnostic sects into two classes according to the relation which Christianity, in their conception of it, is supposed to bear to the Jewish religion and to the God of the Old Testament. All the Gnostic systems had one feature in common; namely, that they regarded the Old and New Testament as revelations of two different Gods, and considered the mission of Christ to proceed from a higher power than the God of the Jewish religion, who was identified with the Demiurge or Maker of the world. But under this common assumption there was room for two very opposite estimates of the older revelation and of the God whom it reveals. Some of the Gnostic sects regarded the Demiurge as a being altogether alien from and opposed to the Supreme God; others considered him merely as a subordinate power, inferior but not hostile to the Supreme God, and acting before the coming of a more perfect revelation, as his unconscious organ. By the former, Judaism was regarded as a religion wholly antagonistic to Christianity, and which the higher revelation was designed to destroy. The latter regarded it as an imperfect preparation for Christianity, which the higher revelation was designed to complete. From this point of view the Gnostic schools may be divided into two classes, those hostile to and those comparatively favourable to Judaism. Under the former head Neander classes the Ophites, as well as in the schools of Carpocrates, Saturninus,

* A History of Monetary Crimes by Alex. Del Mar.

and Marcion. Under the latter he reckons Cerinthus, Basilides, Valentinus and his followers, and Bardesanes. As Mosheim's classification was supplemented by Gieseler, so that of Neander has been supplemented by Baur, who adds Heathenism to Judaism as two religions whose relation to Christianity and to each other were contemplated from different points of view, and thus he recognises three principal forms of Gnosticism. The first, which embraces most of the earlier sects, including the schools of Basilides, Valentinus, the Ophites, Saturninus, and Bardesanes, regarded the pre-Christian forms of religion, the Heathen no less than the Jewish, as preparations for Christianity and partial discoveries of the truth. The second, represented by Marcion, regarded Christianity in the light of a system wholly antagonistic both to Judaism and Heathenism; while the third, to which belongs the system of the Clementine Homilies, and perhaps that of Cerinthus, endeavoured to unite Judaism and Christianity together in a common antagonism to Heathenism. In opposition to these attempts at philosophical classification, the historian of Gnosticism, Matter, considers the only true classification to be that which exhibits the succession of events and points out the principal schools according as they arose in different countries. From this point of view he recognised three principal centres of Gnosticism, Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor, and classifies the different sects according as they were formed under influences emanating from one or other of these localities. Under this classification the Syrian Gnosticism is represented by the schools of Saturninus and Bardesanes; the Egyptian by those of Basilides, Valentinus, and the Ophites, with some minor sects; and the Gnosticism of Asia Minor by Cerdon, Marcion, and their successors.*

In the midst of these conflicting opinions concerning the true method of classification, it would be dangerous, at any rate at the present stage of our inquiry, to attempt anything like a philosophical division of the Gnostic sects, a task which is rendered more difficult by the variety of the influences under which the different systems were formed. For the present I shall endeavour to confine myself as nearly as possible to a chronological order of events, commencing with a question in itself the most interesting, and to be answered from sources with which we are most familiar, that of the traces of the existence of an early Gnosticism to be discovered in the books of the New Testament. This inquiry will be prosecuted in my next lecture, from which we shall afterwards proceed to those later developments which manifested themselves subsequently to the close of the Canon of Scripture.

"The earliest distinct indications of a Gnostic teaching contemporary with the Apostles is to be found in the Epistles of St. Paul; chiefly, as might naturally be expected, in those addressed to churches, or persons presiding over churches, in Asia, one of the early centres of the Gnostic teaching." In view of the special interest of this chapter, we hope to reprint it here at an early date.

* Matter, *Hist. Critique du Gnosticisme I.* p. 323 seq.

Grand Orient

FREEMASONRY UNMASKED

by MGR. GEORGE E. DILLON, D.D.

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PARLIAMENT.

(Continued from page 3.)

Mr. E. Fletcher asked the Attorney-General whether he has now reached a decision about the case of Mrs. Monica Felton.

The Attorney-General: I have now received a full report. The advice which I have received from the Director of Public Prosecutions and from Treasury Counsel, whose opinion was taken on my instructions, is that there is at present insufficient evidence to found any criminal charge against Mrs. Felton. I agree with this advice, and accordingly do not intend to direct the institution of criminal proceedings against her.

Treason (Review of Law)

Mr. William Shepherd asked the Attorney-General if he is aware of recent instances where British citizens have indulged in actions which might be regarded as treasonable but where no prosecution has been initiated because of the nature of the only penalty; and whether he will review the law relating to treason.

The Attorney-General: While I cannot give any undertaking that a change will be made in the law relating to treason, the Government are considering whether, consistently with the preservation of the personal freedoms which we in this country regard as indispensable, certain changes in the existing law should be made.

Food (Chemical Additives)

Dr. Barnett Stross (Stoke-on-Trent Central): . . . May I first say, in asking the House to consider the problem, that the words I used were, "Adulteration of Food." I am using the word "food" in a technical sense in the way described and incorporated in Section 100 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938. There the term "food" includes anything added, such as colouring matter, or flavouring. By the term "adulteration" in this sense, I mean for the purposes of the Debate any form of treatment or processing and any particular addition of a chemical substance, as a preserver, colouring agent, bleacher, emulsifier, sweetener, or so-called "improver," on condition that any of these may be harmful to those who consume the food afterwards. This afternoon I used the word "additives." I used it in the way that it is normally used in the trade and by scientists because it is a better term, although an ugly word, than any other we know of, and additive means addition to food, whether harmless or harmful.

May I say to the Parliamentary Secretary that I would like him to have in mind, and I am sure that he and his Department do, that even if additives appear not to be harmful in small amounts, we have to consider cumulative effects and that is the problem which always must be before us. We all know food has been processed, preserved and sophisticated from time immemorial, but in recent years the addition of chemicals to food has very greatly increased. The reason is obvious, it is because the chemical industry is a most elaborate and romantic industry, and there is almost nothing it can not do. A great spate of new substances are becoming available from time to time, and some of them

can be used for all sorts of purposes which in the past we never thought possible.

Both here and in America and, of course, in other parts of the world, where chemicals are added to food, we find there have been a number of deaths and very many more cases of serious poisoning. It is fair to say that in every case there has been a lapse of time, sometimes considerable, before physicians and analysts have been able to discover the offending poison, because no one has known that the stuff had been added. I would remind the House of an outbreak, as long as 50 years ago, the notorious outbreak of arsenical poisoning due to drinking of beer brewed from invert sugar made from iron pyrites grossly contaminated with arsenic. There is an interesting Report in the Library by a Royal Commission which investigated it. People died in Manchester, Liverpool, my constituency, and the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Mr. Edward Davies), and ultimately it was discovered what was the cause. The beer was taken out of circulation and we have not had cases of that kind since.

Another example was in America in 1937, when it was thought that an elixir could be prepared of sulphonilamide. The manufacturers who prepared it found a solvent. That solvent, unfortunately, was poisonous and more than 100 deaths occurred before it was discovered that death was caused by this solvent. It was rather like an anti-freeze mixture and was used for dissolving the sulphonilamide. It has, of course, been forbidden ever since then, and I am sure is not used here.

... By the law as it now stands any manufacturer in this country may add any substance without having to prove that that substance is harmless.

The public receives its protection through the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, and I would ask my hon. Friend these three questions: First, is he satisfied that Section 1 (1, a) of the Act gives him sufficient power to act so as to give the public adequate protection? ... Secondly, is he sure that the defence offered in Section 4 to the manufacturer against whom an accusation is brought is not a defence which can too easily be used?

Thirdly, Section 8, referred to by my right hon. Friend today, gives the power to make regulations to protect the public and to see that none of these substances is added if there be any suspicion. Is this protection fully used? Can he and does he so interpret the Act that the onus of proof today that an added substance is harmless can be put fairly and squarely where it ought to go, and that is on the manufacturer, or producer, or any other who intends to place it in the food? . . .

I do not think it is a happy situation that, when the Ministry has to bring an action against a manufacturer who is thought to be at fault, the case is heard in a court of law, with conflicting points given by experts before an arbitrator who is himself not an expert. Would not it be better to use the technique followed in America where written evidence is given by experts coolly and quietly, without the tension which is aroused by two opposing views which are—I do not want to be offensive—brought by two opposing sides?

Would my hon. Friend also note that the best qualified food scientists are not only skilled chemists, but are also medically trained? . . .

May I give a few short examples? One is regarding

mineral oils which were used during the war, or used to be used to make cakes, when there was a shortage of fats. They were used sometimes as salad dressings, after treatment with emulsifiers. We know today, that use of these mineral oils prevents the absorption of the vitamins A, D and K, and interferes with the absorption of calcium and phosphates. We know today that in pregnancy this can cause in the new-born child hæmorrhagic disease. We know its use is forbidden in America. Will the Parliamentary Secretary tell us whether its use is forbidden as an addition to food in Britain?

We have discussed the subject of bread very often and I quoted today the views of Lord Mellanby, who has now retired from the M.R.C., in which he states that he suspects that peptic ulceration may be due to the use of agene in bread. I think I must leave that simply by saying that we could not convict agene by positive evidence; but we suspect it, and we think that we ought to get rid of it and find a better alternative. Then there are bread softeners, such as monoglycerides which in young creatures tend to slow up growth. Recently we have a suggestion that purified wool fat should be used as a bread softener. Here, again, I think we ought to be very suspicious, and to say that we think that it is a most undesirable practice unless we can get absolute evidence that it is not harmful.

There are sweetening agents like dulcin, which is forbidden in America. Is it forbidden here? Now we know that at dosage levels of 0.1 *per cent.* it causes liver tumours in animals. Other carcinogenic substances, oil Orange E, are used in margarine, and butter yellow, and possess this property. A related substance naphthylamine phenyl B is used in America as an anti-oxidant, to preserve chewing gum. It is related to these substances, and therefore possibly dangerous.

My last word is to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to say something about the danger of insecticides, like D.D.T., in bakeries and dairies, and also on the danger of detergents. We are asking the Parliamentary Secretary to assist food manufacturers by creating some machinery which will put these substances through the mill and test them thoroughly. Then, when we are satisfied that these substances can safely be used, there should be compiled a comprehensive pharmacopoeia, so that a manufacturer can consult it and assure himself that it is all right to use them.

Dr. Hill (Luton): While appreciating the sincerity of purpose and the chemical accuracy which have prompted the hon. Member to raise this matter, it would be a pity if that long and complicated catalogue of substances were to lead to the conclusion, or were to give the general impression, that chemicals are responsible for the problems of food poisoning today. I would urge him to re-read the debate initiated by the hon. Member for Batley and Morley (Dr. Broughton), in which he took a prominent part and placed his finger on the biggest problem of all, the problem of the preventable infection of food.

I hope that nothing which the hon. Member has said, though no doubt true in its general application, will give the general impression that chemicals used in food hygiene have as fearful and awful effects as his remarks in the aggregate would seem to suggest.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food (Mr. Frederick Willey): . . . People have a very natural and proper feeling that what is new and untried may be dan-

gerous, and it is the duty of all of us to do what we can to allay fears and remove suspicions; but as I have said, the matter is complicated and far from easy. The use of chemicals has become indispensable. We cannot afford to see their use restricted. Again some chemical substances, such as iodine and copper, are essential to life, yet toxic if taken in considerable quantities. . . .

We are not without powers in doing this. We have the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, and the Defence (Sale of Food) Regulations of 1943. In fact, we have used the 1943 Regulations to extend some of the powers we had under the Food and Drugs Act. . . .

. . . The question of the use of chemicals in food and food processes is in fact also under examination by several departmental committees. The Food Standards Committee has at present a sub-committee examining metallic contamination, and another examining preservatives, which incidentally will include butter yellow, to which the hon. Gentleman referred. There is also the working party under the chairmanship of Professor Zuckerman which is inquiring into precautionary measures against toxic chemicals used in agriculture. Hon. Members will remember that during the debate we had on safe food, we made reference to the fact that a sub-committee of the Catering Trade Working Party had inquired specially into detergents.

My hon. Friend put forward an interesting point of view about the question of the onus of proof and the method in which these cases should be determined. Because I am a lawyer, he will not expect me to agree with him in what he says. He would appreciate that his point has very serious objections, but I would agree with him that we should use our research to create a limited field of precise scientific knowledge. If we had that, many of the difficulties about which he is apprehensive would not arise, because the courts could interpret these cases if they had available more precise scientific knowledge.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about Section 8, under which we have powers to make regulations. The short answer is that we have made no regulation under that Section, but we have similar powers under the Defence Regulations and under those Regulations we have made the Fluorine in Food Order, which limits the amount of fluorine in acidic phosphates used in food. We have made the Mineral Oil in Food Order, which prohibits, except for very small quantities, the addition of mineral oil to food. The hon. Gentleman mentioned agene about which the House has shown particular interest. There, although for the past 30 years it has been used without any evidence of harmful effects on man, we did pay regard to the experiments that were made on animals, and there were subsequent discussions between the Ministry of Food, the Ministry of Health, the Medical Research Council, and the millers, and we decided that the process should be abandoned when practical arrangements could be made to change over to a suitable alternative method, and when we are in a position to decide which is the best alternative method. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree that we must take every step to ensure that the alternative method is the best one.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned also emulsifying agents. In this country the use of these softeners has not reached the same peak as in the United States, but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the Ministry is watching the situation carefully. He also mentioned dulcin, and I can assure him that

it is not being used in food manufactures in this country, nor is resorcinol being used by the food manufacturers. He mentioned purified wool-fat or lanolin. From my inquiries it seems that this has been tried as a bread softener, when it has been used in minute quantities, but there is no general use and we doubt whether it is in use at all in this country. . . .

Red Army Deserters

An article which makes us wish again that *The Tablet* were as well-informed economically as it indubitably is in foreign politics appears in the issue of July 7, from the pen of Wilfred Ryder, on the background to the negotiations in Korea and the changing character of Red Army deserters. It begins:—

"Western intelligence is chary of releasing the total ex-Red Army population now in the West. But a detailed study undertaken in 1948 shows that by the end of that year there were over 150,000 such persons enjoying Western protection. There is reason to believe that that figure has now risen to nearly 200,000."

The following are further extracts:—

"The young deserters of today stress a single grouse six years after VE-day. They complain that the USSR still maintains an unnecessarily large number of men under arms. The Soviet Union had an army of 4,600,000 men last June before Western rearmament began its current post-Korean spurt; and was spending twice as much on defence as the USA. Oft-repeated promises of more food and consumer goods, with which the people were lured along during the war, seem as unlikely to be honoured now—more than six years later—as when they were made.

"The fact that an increasing proportion of these new arrivals expresses the wish to return home as post-Communist revolutionaries, underlines the importance of the new anti-Soviet 'Freedom Radio' which began broadcasting in March. . . .

The broadcasts give particular attention to Army grumbles. . . . This interest in Army morale matches the consistent impression conveyed by the intelligence survey quoted above; that Red Army deserters nowadays harp on the high rate of Soviet mobilization, the high level of armaments and the disappointingly low rate of consumer goods production—these, they claim, are the two principal subjects of popular complaint today within the Soviet Union itself.

"With this in mind, an appraisal given by an official attending the Four-Power talks in Paris is of interest. . . . "The whole course of the Deputies' talks in Paris,' this official argued, 'shows that the Russians have already found that the balance of power is shifting against them. Their army of more than 4,500,000 has unbalanced the Soviet economy and sown unrest among the people. Four months ago the USA already had 2,900,000 men under arms, and the armies of the rest of the free world brought the total up to 3,750,000. When by next summer America's mobilization is in its stride that of the whole of the West will match and surpass that of the Soviet Union.'"

"Why, then, does the Soviet Union not seize the present opportunity, while she still holds a substantial physical advantage, to launch the war which she may still have a chance to win? This official argues that despite the manpower now at arms, the Soviet Union is in other vital respects unready."