THE SOCIAL CREDITER

FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

Vol. 44 No. 5

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1964

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"The International Idea"

By C. H. DOUGLAS

(Notes of an Address delivered in London and published in The New Age, January 14, 1932)

I should like to impress upon you that in bringing forward the subject which is covered by the title for discussion, I have no intention of merely initiating an interesting discussion upon a philosophical abstraction. As you are aware, I regard society at the present time as being the battle ground of two fundamentally opposed ideas, at any rate, as they are put forward, and the future of society as likely to be determined by which of those ideas shall prevail. So far as I can see, those of us who are in this room constitute the general staff, not perhaps because of any outstanding qualifications for the task, but because there does not seem to be any other on our side with a clear conception of what it is trying to do. Now one of these ideas, the one which we oppose and which has many forms, has one of its embodiments in the idea that the logical and almost inevitable form that social progress must take, is the breaking down of all differences, social and national, and the setting up of a world state.

But the first doubt which I should like to assist you in casting upon this superficially attractive idea is to direct your attention to the fact that, like all the other analogous ideas of which it forms one exhibit, it is impervious to the assault of fact. The fact that the Irish Free State has split itself off from Great Britain, and that India and Egypt seem likely to go the same way, that there is a strong and growing Home Rule movement in Scotland, that certain States of Australia are contemplating secession from the Australian Commonwealth, that there is quite a strong, if not articulate, division growing up between the Eastern and Western States of the American Union, and between the Eastern and Western Provinces of the Dominion of Canada, that Spain seems likely to split into two separate republics, that of Catalonia and that of Northern Spain, and many other instances of the same type, offers no evidence or argument to the Internationalist.

Now, of course, there is a perfectly straightforward and practical explanation of this propaganda for internationalism, and for practical purposes one does not really need to look further. Hardly a day passes without a leading article in *The Times*, or other papers of the same type of interest, remarking, as though it were axiomatic, that the world is one economic unit, and that no adjustment of the present discontents can be expected which does not proceed from international agreement. These journals are ably seconded by High Clerics. This opinion, you will notice, is never argued; it is always stated as though it were obvious to the meanest intellect, which is, in fact, just about what it is. Now, as I have just said, the simplest explanation of this is that if you only make a subject large enough and involve a sufficiently large number

of people in the solution of it, you can rest assured that you will never get a solution. A democracy of a thousand voters can be personally approached and convinced on any subject within a reasonable period of time, but if you enlarge the franchise to include everyone over twenty-one in a population of 45,000,000 you can be reasonably sure that any general conclusion at which it will arrive, it will arrive at twenty-five years after that conclusion ceases to be true. If you can superimpose upon that by means of a controlled Press, Broadcasting, and other devices of a similar nature, something that you call "public opinion" (because it is the only opinion which is articulate) you have a perfect mechanism for a continuous dictatorship, and moreover, it is the form of dictatorship which is fundamentally desired by the collectivist mentality—a dictatorship which has power without responsibility.

There is, however, another explanation almost equally obvious, and probably equally true, and that is that local sovereignty, particularly as it extends to finance, is a barrier to the supremacy of international finance.

A Jewish financier, expressing his contempt for Gentile mentality, once remarked that the secret of the inability of the Gentile to shake himself free from the dominance of finance resided in the fact that the Gentile was incapable of distinguishing between numbers, things, and individuals. It is a type of mentality which is fostered and ultimately becomes inseparable from people who deal with nothing but figures, and is, in my opinion, the reason why the banker in particular is fundamentally unsuited for the position of reorganiser of the world. No banker, as such, has any knowledge of large undertakings. He thinks he has, because he deals with large figures, and he mistakes the dealing with large figures as being equivalent to dealing with large numbers of things and people. Mr. Brenton has dropped upon a letter from a correspondent, Sir E. O. Williams (incidentally an engineer) to The Times of December 8, and referred to it in The New Age of December 17. It calls attention in a hesitating way to one of the most important ideas I have ever seen in that newspaper, which idea I feel must have crept in by mistake. It is contained in the enquiry: "Can like be equated to unlike, by any necromancy of gold?" You might put the matter another way by enquiring whether there was any similarity between a Beethoven Sonata and a bottle of wood alcohol in New York, because you can buy either of them for 5s.

Now this is the idea which is at the root of the International idea, where it is held sincerely. It is that you can obtain an

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THE SOCIAL CREDITER

FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

This journal expresses and supports the policy of the Social Credit Secretariat which was founded in 1933 by Clifford Hugh Douglas.

The Social Credit Secretariat is a non-party, non-class organisa-tion neither connected with nor supporting any political party, Social Credit or otherwise.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Home and abroad, post free: One year 30/-; Six months 15/-; Three months 7s. 6d. Offices—Business:

5 New Wanstead, Wanstead, London E.11.

Editorial: Penrhyn Lodge, Gloucester Gate, London N.W.1.

Telephone: EUSton 3893.

IN AUSTRALIA-

1.5.1

Business—Box 2318V, G.P.O., Melbourne.
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A Matter of Sanctions

"There is in existence, unpublished, and carefully protected against 'accidents' the main outlines of a Scheme which would accomplish all the social betterments which the realities of the situation at any moment make possible—and that is much more than any Utopian proposal contemplates. That scheme has at the moment no practical value whatever. What is required is a shift of sanctions."

—C. H. Douglas, The Big Idea (1942).

Weigh the possibilities of such a shift under World Communism.

Perspective

At the opening of the 13th convention of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects at Canberra on May 4, the Governor-General, Viscount De L'Isle, said:

"In every city one sees, built or building, the same dreary glass-covered elevated matchboxes, stacked up like a row of tombstones, their skylines decorated by fuel oil tanks.

"Everywhere more and more men and women go to work in vast structures to become pigeon-holed in offices with the same low ceilings, glass partitions, and plastic covered corridors, to which they ascend in the same automatic lifts, anaesthetised by the same mechanical music.

"The entrance halls of these hives greet one with familiar variations on the same limited themes—a fountain or a mechanically executed relief, lit by the same indirect lighting effects.

"Every cloakroom has the same fittings and the same terrazzo floor.

"There is one scale which subdues to itself every plan, both externally and internally. It is the height of the average man and the breathing space he must have, and no more, and this strictly limits, through the rigidity of internal design, the external elevations within a narrow repetitive pattern.

"The remedy for the present state of affairs is indeed hard to find. Yet, while we hesitate, we are declaring in permanent form the impoverishment of our prevailing practice, and are loading future generations with this poverty.

"I think we might begin by calling off the fight between functionalism and aestheticism.

"Don't let us, in the battle for semantics, lose sight of the fact that architecture exists for man, not merely to shelter his body, but to nourish his spirit."

Leave It To Solly

An aspect of the "take-over" was revealed by Peterborough in "London Day by Day" in *The Daily Telegraph*, January 31, choosing the deprecating sub-title "Grove Acadamy". He writes: -

'Sir Solly Zuckerman is to give this year's Lees Knowles lectures at Cambridge. As chief scientific adviser to the Ministry of Defence he is in a better position than most to talk about the adviser's role in strategic policy-making, and this is what he is likely to do.

"The annual lectures are a recognised forum for airing informed views on strategy but Sir Solly's will be awaited

with particular interest.

'Leave it to Solly' has become a well-known cry in the Service departments and the Ministry of Aviation whenever

a weapons project starts to cost too much.

"The leaving process usually results in his recommending to the Minister of Defence that the project be cancelled. The fate of the TSR2 may well be decided by a Zuckerman minute".

The Value of the Services of a Doctor's Wife

The following letter appeared in The Medical Journal of Australia, March 28, 1964:

SIR: After many years of accepting the value of my wife's services to me in my general practice at £10 per week, I have been informed by the Department of Taxation that they are now worth £5. I will not attempt to describe to your readers the amount of work she does and what hours, because this is well known to us all.

I would like to suggest, through your columns, that somewhere in the medical course it might be suggested to medical students that once they have chosen their future partners, it would be to their advantage to advise the lady that if she were prepared to do without the formality of matrimony, she, instead of having herself valued at £5 per week for full-time services, would be no doubt eligible for the ruling basic wage for a straight 40-hour week, with time and one-half for overtime and broken shifts. There would also be meal allowances, three weeks' annual leave and long-service leave. The extra money involved would more than compensate for the illegitimacy of any issue from the above union, and the Department of Labour and Industry would see that a full legal wage was paid.

It is distressing to me to see a Government department encouraging immorality, and I feel that here is a worthy cause for any organisation that concerns itself with the modern decline in ethical standards.

Please accept my apoligies for using a nom de plume, but I am frightened they will take away my wife's fiver.

Yours, etc.,

CASSIUS.

Sydney. March 6, 1964.

THE INTERNATIONAL IDEA (continued from page 1)

elaborate series of statistics regarding the populations of the world and put a committee down at Geneva, or elsewhere, to legislate for them on the basis of statistics. It is an idea which would never be accepted by anyone who had ever run or organised a small business, and its most vocal exponents, such as, for instance, Mr. H. G. Wells, or Sir Norman Angell, have never, I think, been responsible for the organising of a business of any kind. Their qualifications for organising the whole world have never, as one might say, been checked by any kind of laboratory experiment. They are, in fact, in exactly the position of a would-be bridge builder who is ignorant both of the Theory of Structures and the Strength of Materials.

The danger to the world of this idea is instant and practical. There is a world movement definitely conscious of its aims, counting among its adherents many persons placed by social position, prestige, and other conditions, in what would seem to be a most impressive relation to politics and organisation, which is consciously working for just exactly this purpose. With it, or behind it, however you like to regard the matter, are all those forces whose ends are best served by the subjection of the individual to the group. While it will certainly

fail, its backing makes a conflict certain.

I should like to direct your attention, as a more than usually illuminating instance of what I mean, to an article which appears in the November issue of *International Affairs*, which is the journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, commonly known as Chatham House, an organisation which possesses a Royal Charter, and which (as viewed from Chatham House) brings together the best brains on all subjects connected with High politics. The article is entitled, "The Trend of International Affairs Since the War," and the following extracts are indicative of its nature:—

"Either our modern economic internationalism has to be sacrificed, or else we must learn to live our political and our cultural life on the modern world-wide scale, which we have

achieved in our economic life already."

"The other alternative, of course, is that we should bring our political and our cultural life into harmony with our economic life; that we should preserve our economic internationalism by internationalising our social life through and

through, in all its lavers.

"You remember, perhaps, that one of the most famous generals in history once remarked that his opponents were invincible because they never knew when they were beaten. It is my hope that this same kind of invincible ignorance—a really heroic form of ignorance, may carry our generation to victory in our spiritual war for the establishment of universal and enduring peace [!!!].

"If we are frank with ourselves we shall admit that we are engaged on a deliberate and sustained and concentrated effort to impose limitations upon the sovereignty and the independence of the fifty or sixty local sovereign independent States.

"The surest sign, to my mind, that this fetish of local national sovereignty is our intended victim is the emphasis with which all our statesmen and publicists protest with one accord, and over and over again, at every step forward which we take, that, whatever changes we may make in the international situation, the sacred principle of local sovereignty will be maintained inviolable. This, I repeat, is a sure sign that, at each of those steps forward the principle of local sovereignty is really being encroached upon, and its sphere of action reduced and its power for evil restricted. It is just because we are really attacking the principle of local sovereignty that we keep up protesting our loyalty to it so loudly. The harder we press our

attack upon the idol, the more pains we take to keep its priests and devotees in a fool's paradise, lapped in a false sense of security which will inhibit them from taking up arms in their idol's defence.

"In plain terms, we have to re-transfer the prestige and the prerogatives of sovereignty from the fifty or sixty fragments of contemporary society to the whole of contemporary society.

"In the world as it is today, this institution can hardly be a universal Church. It is more likely to be something like a League of Nations. I will not prophesy. I will merely repeat that we are at present working, discreetly, but with all our might, to wrest this mysterious political force called sovereignty out of the clutches of the local national states of the world. And all the time we are denying with our lips what we are doing with our hands,

"But supposing this does not happen? Supposing that the present generation of mankind is defeated in the end, after all, in the strenuous effort which we are making to centralise the

force of sovereignty.

"But Prussia has not ceased to be one of the great States of the modern world. She is still great, because her public organisation... is still second to none. I suggest to you that history is likely to repeat itself here, and that, once again, what Prussia is today, France and Great Britain and Italy, yes, and even the United States, are likely to become tomorrow. For the sake of the peace and prosperity of the world, I devoutly hope that my prophecy will prove correct."

Now if the address from which these extracts are taken had been given at some local Socialist or Communist Forum, and had appeared in, let us say, The Worker, or some other organ of those sections of society which are more obviously suffering from the present state of affairs, one would, if one had felt obliged to notice it at all, have remarked that it was rather poisonous nonsense, and left it at that. Communists, in their periodical appearances in the police-court, might well refer to it. But the speaker was Professor Arnold Toynbee, who was one of the British representatives at the Peace Conference, and, I believe, amongst other things, is, or has been, the occupant of the Chair of Greek at London University, and the occasion was the Conference of Institutions for the Scientific Study of International Relations held at Copenhagen on June 8th, 1931, at which twelve countries were represented, and, in addition, delegates attended from four international organisations, the nature of which was not stated. These Conferences were initiated by the League of Nations Institute of Intellectual Co-operation. The address, therefore, from the auspices under which it was given, is a matter for serious attention. The first point in it to which I should like to draw your attention, is the emphasis that it places on the fact that the work of which the speaker is so proud has been persistently pursued for the last twelve years with all possible energy and in every country, and yet it does not appear to occur to the speaker to question whether there is anything in the state of the world at the present time which would suggest that the results could be regarded as a subject for congratulation to anyone outside the confines of a criminal lunatic asylum. In Europe, the national sovereignty which has, perhaps, been most wholly delivered over to the tender mercies of the League of Nations in the period under review is Austria, and if the state of Austria at the present time is an exhibit as to the state that the whole world will be in when it, too, has been brought under the League of Nations, then I think we can say in all seriousness, "God help the world." You will notice that this peculiar blindness to facts which seems to be characteristic of all persons afflicted with the collectivist mentality is strongly in evidence,

together with the peculiar determination to regard the populations of the world as only salvable through a continuous course of deception, by being made to vote, and to think, and to call for things of which they do not know the meaning or

You will also note that there is not a single reference in this article, and in general there rarely is, in proposals of this nature, any refernce to the remote possibility that so far from nationality being the cause of the world-wide unrest, it is sovereignty, whether national or international, which is resented, and that to replace national sovereignty by international sovereignty is to still further complicate and exaggerate the evil against which the whole world is rebelling. Or to put the matter another way, Professor Toynbee, and others who think like him, are not really interested in removing the cause of complaint at all, they are merely interested in making it impossible for complaints to become effective.

I think it is significant that what one might call "goodclass" propaganda for internationalism has for many years been a passport to political success, particularly in Great Britain. It has clearly allied with political Liberalism, and the support which political Liberalism has always received from International finance is well-known. Strictly speaking, the orthodox tenets of British Trades Unionism are strongly national and anti-international, a fact which anyone can prove for himself by talking to the average working Trades Unionist on the subject of Protection. Yet, the British Labour movement, which has also received considerable covert support from international finance has officially presented a policy of internationalism as a part of its platform, and those Labour and Trades Union officials and politicians who have in the past been most conspicuously successful have taken care to render, at any rate, lip service to the international idea.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to point out to an instructed audience that the conflicts between nations, at any rate, in modern times, are not due to the existence of nations so much as to the existence of conditions which cause friction between nations. To argue that the best way to stop war is to abolish nationality is exactly the same thing as to say that the best way to stop fighting between individuals is to abolish individuals.

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