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Systematized Self-Righteousness

In this sober, and well-documented record* of historic Palestine and its association with the Jewish race from the earliest times to the present, one is supplied with an excellent basis from which to judge of contemporary affairs in that country. The Palestine Question constitutes perhaps the most heated and controversial post-war issue in a world bristling with such, and the history of the twenty-eight years' old British Mandate, which came to us as a result of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, is here most clearly and objectively told. If there is such a thing left as an impartially-minded British public—and I believe that there is—they will be much in Mr. Barbour's debt hereafter. The story is grim, and sad, and unspeakably sordid. Grim because all have suffered—Arabs and Jews, and not least, the Mandatory executives, who have squandered years of the prime of their lives, and in many cases actually lost their lives, in that most hateful atmosphere of intrigue and terrorism, struggling, with nothing more substantial or reassuring behind them than the Baldwin Government, shadow-boxing with what their economic advisers assured them were insoluble problems. Twenty-eight years without one gleam of hope or one mitigating incident, spent, apart from the unceasing effort to circumvent the intrigues of Jewish organisations of every kind, largely on disciplining sporadic terrorist outbursts on the part of a sorely-trying people who, rightly or wrongly, saw their native home being occupied and over-run in spite of them, by a mass-immigration about which they had never been consulted.

The whole affair is perhaps the most glaring example of an utterly unreasonable and unstatesmanlike undertaking in the whole of recorded history. Short of mass emigration from his native land on the part of the Arab—a walk-out such as has been practised on more than one occasion from fashionable American pleasure-resorts—it is difficult to see how else he could have behaved, or that it would have led to anything different if he had. He behaved badly, though nothing like as badly as his opponents are behaving now; but in any case he was the aggrieved party. Mr. Barbour's opinion is he might easily have been worse.

But to the present writer the most striking thing in Mr. Barbour's record is the comparison it invites between what was taking place in Palestine during those years and the course of affairs in Soviet Russia. It is the more remarkable since it is a similarity of atmosphere only. There are no apparent parallel factors. The two situations had absolutely nothing in common. The one, presumably, a social upheaval within a great Slav state, an uneasy affair of purges and appeasement, of experimental encouragement of one class and then of another. There was nothing whatsoever of all this in Palestine. There, the Semitic inhabitants of a small

barren land of some considerable strategic value, had been released by World War One from the deadening weight of Turkish rule, to a promised independence, only to find that "provisional rights" to partake in their political freedom and colonise their land had been acquired by a rival Semitic race. In the one case, "Russia" went her own way, and a wild, strange way it was, and is. In the other the struggle was three-fold, directly between the Arab and the Jew, with the unfortunate Mandatory Power, Britain, trying to hold the scales of justice in a fundamentally unjust situation.

There seems to be no parallel. Yet again and again in this book one is reminded of that bewildering and yet unmistakable atmosphere of wilful distortion so clearly exhibited in Rudolph Schlesinger's *Soviet Legal Theory*. Here, in two such dissimilar situations is the same philosophic mind at work. Now, it is a popular belief that the Russian Revolution was, and is, a purely Russian affair. But no one can think that of the present situation in Palestine. For good or ill, it was created, and is maintained by political Zionist Jewry. Theirs is the policy and theirs are the methods used to further Jewish immigration. For chronological convenience political Zionism can be called the child of the Jewish journalist Theodore Herzl, who appears on the late Nineteenth Century scene as something of a visionary, but before the end of his brief career, is discovered in the London of the late nineties, discussing practical ways and means—death duties primarily—for liquidating the British landed aristocracy. It is the same philosophic atmosphere exactly, the same ideology, the same methods for gaining objectives that persist in Palestine as in Russia; the same technique as is to be met with in the dealings of Mr. Molotov, or Mr. Vishinsky, or Mr. Gromyko, and those of Dr. Weizmann, the president of the Zionist Committee, or his hot-headed New York lieutenant, Mr. Ben Gurion.

There it is, unmistakably; not Russian, not Palestinian, but Jewish, what I can only call "systematized self-righteousness"—a flavour, a whiff of the incredible stiffness of the Pharisee. On this extraordinary personal basis it is sought to rear a materialistic creed that "Might is Right" in a quite impossibly ethical sense. It is inevitable, if we are determined to legalize our personal wishfulness and, as it were, to codify it, that we should end by deifying the satanic impulse that lies hidden in all of us, to justify our methods by our objective; making our desire for a particular state of affairs an excuse for overlooking all objections to its achievement. We all know that temptation, we all give in to it often, but it is the Christian's virtue, and his badge, that he has found the *grace* to be ashamed. He has not learned—not yet, anyway—to dignify his stupid, grasping lapses from grace with the title of Philosophy, or to build and buttress them up by erecting a system to perpetuate them—creating a legal school of no-thought out of his own self-righteousness.

* *Nisi Dominus*, by Neville Barbour. (Harrup, 8/6.)

Mr. Barbour's commendably unexpansive style does not lend itself to quotation. Nevertheless he achieves his objective, which is to make the position as clear as so fundamentally confused a position, and one so subject to propagandist distortion, can be made. He does not deny the immense capital development achieved in the country in the period of the Zionist Experiment. But as he says, we must take into account the enormous capital sums involved, reckoned at £80,000,000, or over forty times the annual budget for the whole of Palestine in the early years of the Mandate. On the same basis in England, it would have meant, according to him, forty thousand millions, which might have gone a good way towards entirely re-housing our slum population. Definitely, however, and in spite of much admirable and successful reclamation, the land settlement is a failure; that is, if there ever was anything in the idea of reclaiming the country and setting it out with displaced and redundant persons from north-eastern Europe. As a proposition, that has in any case more "prospectus value" than feasibility, and was added, no doubt, like a flavouring, to satisfy the emotional epicurianism of such as Arthur Balfour and Ormsby-Gore, and the Bloomsbury and *Manchester Guardian* school of "Realists." The facts are these; it is reckoned that of all the immigrants to Palestine in the period of the Mandate, only about 55,000 are settled on the land, and of those Mr. Barbour calculates that only the individualist farmers suggest any permanency. The collectives, though they have done a good job of reclamation, display little sign of roots. Tel Aviv, an entirely new Jewish city, accounts for 250,000, and the rest are mostly spread between Jerusalem and Haifa. In short, four fifths of all this mass-immigration from Europe, which has not inconsiderably convulsed society for the last quarter of a century, has merely gone to create additional tenement and apartment-house congestions, on the European model, in a fresh area of the earth's surface. And in addition, as Mr. Barbour duly notes, the Zionist Experiment, has introduced "anti-semiticism", a hitherto unknown word, into the Semitic Middle East. Further, it has led the majority of the Arab states into an Arab Confederation against the Jew, or at least against what the Zionist Jews may induce the Western Democracies to put over on the Middle East on their behalf. One could almost find it in one's heart to be sorry for the Jew, did he not bring us all, along with himself, such wholly unnecessary suffering.

It has always been, as it were, an article of Christian faith to laugh at the idea that the Jews had anything to do with the French Revolution; or again, that they were in any way responsible, through their New York connections, for engineering the Russian one. But here, I repeat, in Palestine is an avowed and purely Jewish undertaking—the Arabs, and even the Mandatory Power, are merely re-actors in it—and its phenomenal and ideological kinship with Russia is unmistakable and notable—two beetroots could not smell or taste more alike. This philosophical identity is Marxist in origin, and as such, is definitely anti-Christian, against the Christianity whose creed is "Live and let live." On the shifting sands of this Marxist materialism was built up Bismarckian Prussia, predatory and faithless, and now submerged, let us hope, for good. From that same source came Leninism, and it was the German High Command that introduced—with some inexplicable outside help—Lenin and Trotsky into Russia.

Doubtless there still are many missing links in the chain, which we must wait for time to bring to light, but the operating cause is there all right, and active; and it is Political Judaism. Call it Zionism, or the Comintern, or "Soviet Legal Theory", or U.N.R.R.A., or even Bretton Woods, names don't matter; it is the underlying philosophy that is decisive. The important thing for the Christian—if there really is such an animal?—is that the activity continues; a strategic point captured here, a concession there, with the inevitable ultimate objective of centralized World Control. The thing may not be feasible—manifestly, is not—but like Hitler's ambitions, it is very upsetting for us all.

There is nothing directly of all this in Mr. Barbour's book, of course. If there were, it would not be the excellent text-book that it is. Serious students of Middle Eastern affairs, and they are likely to be on the increase in the near future, will be grateful to him for an excellent job, well done. My advice is, get the book before, like so many other things of value these days, it becomes unobtainable.

NORMAN WEBB.

ODLUM v. STRATTON JUDGMENT

(Royal Courts of Justice, July 29, 1946.)

Before:

Mr. JUSTICE ATKINSON.

(Concluded)

The other thing is something that Mr. Swanton said. I think what Mr. Swanton had really come to say was that there was nothing in the winter which ought to have killed a well planted wheat crop. He said that the frosts were nothing out of the way and that it was wrong to attribute it to the weather; it was attributable only to bad sowing. Fortunately we were able to have produced in cross-examination firstly the N.F.U. Wiltshire Record for March, 1942, and secondly an article signed by Mr. Richard Stratton, the defendant in this case, saying: "We are having a succession of hard winters." On the back of this document there is an article by a Mr. Whatley, another member of the Committee: "We cannot be sure at this date that the winter wheat has escaped scot free from Nature's 'scorched earth' policy during these last few weeks. That winter beans have already succumbed seems to be the general opinion. In due course it may be we shall have to examine the wheat carefully and decide how best to repair the winter damage." So much for that criticism.

Then we had Mr. Brimacombe but I do not think he said anything that affects this case. He was called to say that there had been at some time or other some discussion about potash, but it was quite irrelevant.

Then came a strange witness Mr. Tomlinson who appears to be an expert advisor to the Committee. Mr. Tomlinson first went there in July of 1942—or that was practically the first time—after the sale to advise Mr. Hudson and his Manager as to the future rota of crops and the like, and Mr. Tomlinson advanced some criticism about the farm, his main point being I think that it was understocked with cattle. Mr. Tomlinson introduced what apparently was the new line: "Milk had always been No. 1 priority, and therefore there was no

excuse for having reduced this herd," and so on. I am quite satisfied that that theory was wrong.

Then we had Mr. Bridge, the Drainage Officer, who said how much he had done for Mr. Hudson and so on; and finally we had the defendant who again began by saying that they had always had milk as first priority. There was put to Mr. Stratton the cross-examination of the plaintiff which was, of course, to just the opposite effect—that it was because milk had not priority that Mr. Odlum had tried to protest. Mr. Stratton spoke too of there being nothing in the frosts to make any trouble. Then, of course, when he was reminded of what he had himself written and what Mr. Whatley had written, he had nothing more to say about that.

I have read all the evidence very carefully and I am absolutely satisfied that this farm was not in poor condition. I am satisfied that the crops in 1941 and 1942 when the farm was sold were good. I am satisfied that the grasslands were not neglected, that they were good; and I am satisfied that the buildings were more than first class. I am satisfied that the cottages were in very good repair for what they were, small thatched cottages. I am also quite satisfied that the implements were not dilapidated; I have not the least doubt that they were not as good as implements that Mr. Hudson was in a position to buy, but that is a very different thing from saying that what was there was useless and dilapidated. As to weed I have no doubt there was some weed there, but I accept the evidence that there was no more than was inevitable, and the same as to couch.

I think there was gross exaggeration about the drains. There is no doubt that in places they needed attending to, and the reason for that was because help was refused to Mr. Odlum when it was not refused to his successor. But to suggest that because some of the drains could have been better attended to, that justifies or makes fair a comment of this sort, is to my mind all wrong.

I am quite satisfied that the land on this farm was not neglected. I am not satisfied either that it was deficient in potash except—I do not know—but possibly potash might have improved the hay, but there is no reason to suppose that it would have improved anything else.

I think the real explanation of this case is as follows. The Ministry of Agriculture complained of the policy on which this farm had been run and the Committee and Mr. Nichols were entirely responsible for that policy; they determined what should be ploughed and what should be sown; they refused to let the people grow forage, and in that way—despite his protests and in spite of his pointing out the results which would follow—they forced him to reduce his herd to the 55 cattle which were there when he sold the farm. They pretend here that priority milk was their policy from the first. It was not. I am completely satisfied about that, particularly in view of Mr. Odlum's evidence about what Mr. Nichols told him, which was unchallenged. I have the cross-examination of Mr. Odlum and I have the instructions of the Ministry itself in 1942 that there was not to be this change.

I think that in 1942 Mr. Price wrote a most disgraceful and malicious letter to the Minister—a letter which he knew quite well was untrue—in the hope of turning the blame from himself and his Committee on to Mr. Odlum and that the libel was published to boost the Minister of Agriculture; and I do not believe for one moment Mr. Price thought that the farm had been in very poor condition. I am quite satisfied

that Mr. Price has given sufficient evidence of malice in this Court which would have induced any jury, if it had been necessary, to find that this had been published maliciously.

There is one other matter to which I said I would refer, and that is this. I never could understand why Minutes of the meetings of the War Agricultural Executive Committee could properly be produced, and Minutes of the sub-Committees not produced. But I have come across this Minute of the 28th November, 1941, or at least it was referred to: "The Chief Executive Officer placed before the Committee, recommendations from District Sub-Committee in connection with the acreages of potatoes grown on certain farms, and it was resolved: That in view of the failure of the following farmers to carry out the cultivations in a proper manner, the Ministry of Food be recommended to withhold the subsidy," and then comes the name of Mr. G. M. Odlum. Now what the Chief Executive Officer had placed before that Committee, of course, is shrouded under a veil. There is not a word of truth in the fact that there was anything wrong with those potatoes. It was never suggested that there was ever any criticism of Mr. Odlum in respect of his potato crop; he has given us the figures and he got his subsidy. This is just one of those matters where discovery may be of such importance. That Minute was untrue.

I understood from the opening of this case that while the plaintiff did not ask for damages if there had been a prompt explanation and withdrawal or an agreed apology—he did not want damages or even his costs; but I also understood that if he was made to fight the action and incur the great expense that that entails, even if he wins, he would ask for damages. To my amazement it emerged, when Mr. Gilbert Paull drew a bow at a venture, that the Ministry have undertaken to indemnify Mr. Stratton against any costs and any damages which he incurs. Why the country should be made to pay damages which are awarded in consequence of a libel by the Chief Executive Officer of this Committee I do not know. But I cannot think that that ought to affect the sum which I award to the plaintiff in this action. The plaintiff wants a sum which will make it perfectly clear that there is no foundation whatever for this attack upon his reputation. It was an attack upon his reputation as a farmer and the sum which I think I ought to award as damages is the sum of £500. I give Judgment therefore for £500 with costs.

Mr. Diplock: I ask your Lordship to grant a stay of execution for fourteen days pending notice of appeal.

Mr. Justice Atkinson: I am not going to grant a stay, Mr. Diplock. A stay is a proper thing to grant when there is any fear whatever of your not getting back your £500 and your costs. Mr. Odlum, the plaintiff in this case is a well-to-do man of the most honourable type and there is no reason at all why there should be a stay.

Mr. Diplock: I am, of course, entirely in your Lordship's hands.

Mr. Justice Atkinson: If there was the faintest idea of the plaintiff not being good for the money, the position might be different; but to begin with he has had £60,000 for his farm.

Mr. Diplock: If your Lordship pleases. I take it no further.

Mr. Justice Atkinson: No, a stay ought not to be automatic unless there is some reason for it—unless you have

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Saturday, January 11, 1947.

From Week to Week

The Chairman of the Scottish Advisory Committee appointed by the "B."B.C. is Sir Hector J. W. Hetherington. Sir Hector is a Life Trustee of the Carnegie Trust [Waal], Chairman of the Leverhulme Research Fellowship Scheme [Waal, waal], and Managing Trustee of the Nuffield Foundation [Waal, waal, waal].

It is clear enough that the fundamental cause of the possibly fatal disease from which the world suffers is that raptuous folly which can perhaps best be described as Utopianism, but which in essence is simply disguised and uncontrolled will-to-power. The half-baked-worse-than-uneducated women of the Middle West United States, who get their thrill out of life by joining and forming societies to make people do this, that, or the other, from making the British quit India to exorcising the Demon Drink, are the raw material of the Stalins, the Bernard Baruchs, the Schiffs and the Rothschilds, the only difference, a very important difference admittedly, being that the latter are conscious servants of the Devil who promised them Dominion, whereas the former are self-deceived.

Egalitarianism is simply the elementary standardisation of the Planner. To proceed at all, he must assume a standard brick—the 'cahmon' man. The essential to him is not whether there is such an animal, but whether a building can be constructed, with the Planner as Grand Architect of the Universe, which can be kept together. 1947 will probably go some way to answer this question.

Dr. Hugh Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has gone to the Riviera in order to look at the policy of Britain, the Home of the Austere, in a detached way. South of France hotels, cooking and wine are again back to pre-war luxury—at a price. The story that Dr. Dalton was asked by the Customs whether he was taking more than the statutory £75 out of the country is probably just one of those Tory fabrications.

The 'cahmon' men who are kidnapping and flogging British officers and men are not primarily Jews, you know, Clarence. They are "gunmen" or "terrorists"; and all the Jews who are within reach of retribution are unanimous in their condemnation of them. This ought to dispose of those evil-minded persons who are asking why, if membership of an admittedly perverse organisation was sufficient ground for the imprisonment, without trial for as much as five years under

18B, of native born and British descended Englishmen, members of Alien-descended and hereditarily perverse organisations should be preferred for Cabinet posts?

Anyone who wishes to understand the present situation to the extent that it remains rational should keep in mind, as a background to each new development, the fact that the fundamental proposition that (a) Labour is the source of all wealth; (b) Wealth is the object of existence; therefore (c) Labour should rule; is false from beginning to conclusion.

Full employment, however useless the result, is merely a device to produce a bribed majority, having established the equally false premise that a majority has a divine right to appoint dictators.

Tactical successes against this policy are entirely inadequate. However formidable the task, and it is formidable against the spate of false doctrine systematically disseminated by such organisations as the "B."B.C., to name only one agency, the entire conception of democracy has to be recast if the world is to survive. *Demon est deus inversus*. Labour associated in repetition stage-by-stage production has, as such, no political rights whatever which contradict the nature of the function performed. Labour exercised by individuals is properly subject to the right to contract-out. The whole trend of this present Administration is, in the strict sense of the word, Satanic; it is engaged in the inversion of Truth.

The Press is engaged in an attempt to portray the beauties of our current dispensation along lines no doubt inspired by the amazing success of Russia, which for twenty years, in the face of every fact, managed to hypnotise an amazing percentage of "workers" with the myth, which never for a single instant had any realistic basis, that Soviet Russia was and is, a workers' paradise. Although it is not a new book, we can recommend to anyone who has not read it, "I was a Soviet Worker", by Andrew Smith, a name which is obviously assumed, since the writer was a Hungarian. It is the kind of book no one could invent; and one of the most significant features of it is the clear indication of inevitable breakdown.

Noted

The following is from the *Medical World*, of December 13, 1946:—

"When the issues between Trade Union leaders advocating a Closed Shop on the one hand, and the people of this country on the other hand, are more clearly defined, it will become apparent to all that they are the old issues of personal freedom against Kings, or Parliaments or Trade Union Congresses."

The *Medical World* is edited by Dr. Welply, the General Secretary of the Medical Practitioners' Union.

Social Credit Library: Change of Address

Members are asked to note the change of address of the Library:—

Croft House, Denmead, Portsmouth.

A History of the Arabs*

Within a period of a hundred years after the death of Muhammad (623 A.D.) an Arab empire extended from the Atlantic to the borders of India. "About 820 A.D. more extensive authority was concentrated in the hands of one man, the caliph of Baghdad, than in those of any other living person; by 920, the power of his successor was so diminished that it was hardly felt even in his capital city. By 1258 that city itself lay in ruins. With its fall Arab hegemony was lost for ever" although not until 1492 did "the cross supplant the crescent on the towers of the Granada." In historical perspective, "dynasty after dynasty fulfilled the fated cycle; a generation of efficient militarism followed by sloth and corruption leading to disintegration and fall." It appears beyond ingenuity to compress into a few words this account, occupying over 700 pages, of triumphant expansion and catastrophic collapse; together with the manifold strand of technique, learning and philosophy which wound its way from the Persian, Syriac and Jewish mind through the Arab crucible, and came to have its bearing, by way of North Africa and Spain, on Christian European culture. An arbitrary selection may, however, have point.

"To the early Umayyad princes the Syrian desert acted as a sort of school to which they sent their young sons to acquire the pure Arabic tongue and to become well versed in poetry. The public considered him well educated (*the perfect one*) who could read and write his native language, use bow and arrow, and swim. The ideals of education . . . were courage, endurance in time of trouble, observation of the rights and obligations of neighbourliness, manliness, generosity and hospitality, regard for women and fulfilment of solemn promises."

The early conquests set administrative problems of which one result was a form of national, or rather *Moslem* dividend. "Only movable property and prisoners won as booty . . . belonged to the warriors . . . not the land," which, "as well as all monies received from subjects . . . belonged to the community. All such revenue, including taxes on such lands were deposited in the public treasury, and whatever remained after the payment of expenses was distributed among the Moslems." The amount received by individuals varied according to precedence in the new faith, from the family of the Prophet down to even women and children. At a later date, genealogy was raised to a science, partly through pride of descent, but also from the need to determine the apportionment to be received by each and every Moslem Arab.

The example of Abdullah ibn-Mas'ud is worthy of note who, when giving information about the Prophet used "to tremble, exude sweat from his forehead and express himself with deliberate and hesitant caution, lest he transmit something inexact." Also that of the orthodox caliphs whose political correspondence "was so brief and to the point that we hardly have an official note more than a few lines in length." But in the later days of Harun al-Rashid the example of the later poets was not so sound for "in their panegyrics, rather than in their lampoons, the poets performed the same function as the party press today." And "no people in the world are so moved by the word, spoken or written, as the Arabs . . . the rhythm, rhyme and music produce on them the effect of what is known as *lawzoful*

magic"—though whether that phrase is applicable to these political poets is not clear.

Handam Qarmat (874 A.D.) founded a sect which "fundamentally was a secret society based on a system of communism . . . contributions were seemingly voluntary but in reality were a series of taxes each heavier than the preceding . . . They systematically made their starting point the arousing of scepticism . . . emphasised tolerance and equality . . . and developed into a most malicious growth in the body of Islam." Atrocities culminated in revolution, with Syria "drenched in blood." From this root sprang (1124) the *Assassins* who "developed an agnosticism which aimed to emancipate the initiated from the trammels of tradition" and, organised in a hierarchy of Grand Master Priors and Propagandists," reduced assassination to an art. They practised a peculiar technique (comprising drugs and hypnotic treatment) for the reduction of young men and boys to their purpose.

One of the main lines whereby Greek learning was transmitted to Europe may be gathered from this book. In the first century A.D. Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, "orientalised the Platonic philosophy preparatory to its Christianisation." A thousand years later "in the form of Greco Moslem philosophy it was re-Occidentalised by ben-Gabriol (a Jew) "whose main work, translated into Latin as *Fons Vitae* "played (1150) a part in mediæval scholasticism and inspired the Franciscan school." In the twelfth century ibn-Maymun [Maimonides, a Jew] wrote towards the reconciliation of Jewish theology and Moslem Aristotelianism. "Modern critics detect traces of his influence in the Dominicans, Albertus Magnus and Duns Scotus." His contemporary, Avenpace, whom Moslems consider to be an atheist, wrote a treatise "to demonstrate how man unaided may attain to union with the Active Intellect." Against this background Averroes, 'the commentator' of the schoolmen, interpreted Aristotle; and it was in contesting the rationalism in which these commentaries are couched that St. Thomas Aquinas took his stand.

The development of such philosophy is indeed remote from the Bedouin upon whose strength of arm this superstructure nevertheless rested. "In the purity of his blood, his eloquence and poetry, his sword and horse and above all in his noble ancestry the Arabian takes infinite pride." His sheik, "whose leadership asserts itself in sober counsel, in generosity and in courage" and whose "tenure of office lasts during the goodwill of his constituency" he meets on equal footing. "The civilised man, from the Bedouin's exalted point of view, is less happy and far inferior." Moreover, the Bedouin has existed throughout history, and continues to exist; in a form of society which *works*; within, and perhaps by reason of, its limitations.

—H. E.

"How to Cook an Election"

The Economist of December 28 devotes a page and a half to an *exposé* under the above heading, beginning, "Political elections can be simply 'held'; they can also be 'made', 'rigged' or 'cooked'. It is, perhaps, the analogy of cookery which most clearly brings out the difference between elections which are properly organised and those which lack the hand of the skilled manipulator" . . . and so on. *The Economist* is laughing at you, Clarence.

* *A History of the Arabs* by Philip K. Hitti. (London: Macmillan.)

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: December 16, 1946.

London Passenger Transport Board (Political Advertisements)

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter asked the Minister of Transport whether advertisements of a political character are accepted for display on the premises and vehicles of the L.P.T.B.

Mr. Barnes: It is the practice of the London Passenger Transport Board to refuse advertisements of a controversial political nature but to accept those which, for example, merely announce intention to hold a political meeting.

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter: Does that answer mean that the right hon. Gentleman regards the advertisement displayed by the Electrical Trades Union advocating nationalisation of the electrical industry as uncontroversial?

Mr. Barnes: I have not previously been made aware of the point raised by the hon. Member. If he cares to draw my attention to any matter, I will look into it.

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter: Will the right hon. Gentleman give instructions that that advertisement is to be withdrawn?

Mr. Barnes: I shall do what I always do—examine the facts first.

Legal Actions (Costs and Indemnities)

Sir E. Graham-Little asked the Minister of Agriculture the amount of the costs received by the plaintiff in the action *Lindner versus Moon and Another*; the amount of costs incurred in defending the action; and under what authority agents of his, who have been found by a court of law to have instituted proceedings without justification, are indemnified at the cost of the taxpayer.

Mr. T. Williams: The sum of £401 1s. 7d. was paid as the taxed costs recoverable by the plaintiff and the sum of £471 3s. 11d. was incurred by my Department in defending the action. As regards the last part of the Question, no agents of mine were found by a court of law to have instituted proceedings without justification. Owing to certain irregularities of procedure a requisition notice was held by the court to be invalid. As to why my agents were indemnified, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to the hon. Member for Maldon (*Mr. Driberg*) on 1st August, 1946.

Mr. Tiffany asked the Minister of Agriculture why his Department undertook to indemnify the defendant in the recent libel action of *Odlum versus Stratton*; what were the terms of the indemnity; when was it given and by what person's authority; how much money falls to be paid under the indemnity; what public position the defendant held at the time of the libel action; and what public position he holds now.

Mr. T. Williams: As regards the first three parts of the Question, I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to the hon. Member for Maldon (*Mr. Driberg*) on 1st August. The damages awarded amounting to £500 have been paid, but the amount of the costs to be paid cannot yet be stated as the plaintiff's solicitors have not yet delivered their bill of costs. In answer to the last two parts of the Question, the defendant was at the time of the action the Chairman of the

Wiltshire War Agricultural Executive Committee. He has recently resigned that position.

Transport Bill

Major Sir David Maxwell Fyfe (Liverpool, West Derby): . . . We on this side of the House maintain that there are four irreducible minima if transport is to be the true servant of industry. First, there must be freedom of user choice on the part of the user of transport; second, there must be unrestricted power of the trader to carry his goods in his own vehicles, as he does at present under the "C" licence; third, there must be the right and the opportunity of reward for efficient service and efficient running to be passed on to the user; fourth, in times of high production, such as we are looking to, there could afford to be greater elasticity of entry into the industry. What do the proposals in the Bill do? They take over the railways and long-distance haulage, and restrict all other haulage operators. They contain the power to make the consumer take the type of transport which the Commission or the Minister thinks right; and they take away the safeguard of the trader to carry his own goods in his own vehicles. We have seen that the right hon. Gentleman has got his Bill practically idea for idea—I will not say word for word—out of the T.U.C. document No. 2. [see footnote on page 8]. We know that he is aiming at the position where it will be the responsibility of the national transport authority to ensure that traffic is carried by the form of transport which is most economical for the community. In other words, this will be achieved most simply and thoroughly by a completely co-ordinated service, in which the consumer does not specify the form of transport by which his goods are to be moved. The right hon. Gentleman's aim is that consumer choice of transport must disappear at the earliest possible moment. The Parliamentary Secretary need not look so depressed if, when the Minister has taken 90 per cent. of his Bill from this T.U.C. document, we form the opinion that he is likely to take the other 10 per cent. from it, too.

The right hon. Gentleman talked about the Central Transport Consultative Committees. They are only to be set up as he thinks fit. He can abolish them as he likes, and there is no requirement that their conclusions can be published. They are a useful camouflage of complete Ministerial control. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider the aspect of restriction which he desires to impose on "C" licence holders. I appreciate that the Minister and Members opposite do not believe in the study of the customers' convenience, which results in greater orders for the transport operator who does so, but even if they do not believe in that I do object to their "stacking the pack," by removing the trumps by which alone the trader today can protect himself against bad transport, or conditions or prices which he does not like. The check, the safeguard which has existed, and which has always been in the hands of the trader, is hamstrung by the provisions of this Bill. If I correctly appreciated the right hon. Gentleman's speech, he deliberately desires that that hamstringing should take place. Apart altogether from the check, the right hon. Gentleman should know that unrestricted power to run under a "C" licence is essential to a great variety of industries if they are to continue efficiently and, indeed, to go on with their work at all. . . . I want the House to consider for a few moments, the administrative weaknesses of the set-up in the Bill.

First, with regard to its excessive size, it has been a matter of common knowledge, and fairly general complaint, that the main-line railway companies have found, since the Act of 1921 was put into effective operation, that they have had rather more than enough on their plates in dealing with the companies at their present size. It is now proposed that the Railway Executive alone should have to deal with an organisation about three times the size of the L.M.S., or the L.N.E.R. The right hon. Gentleman does not lay down in his Bill—and he did not, in his speech, shed any light on it—the way in which the Commission will bring about the co-ordination between the different Executives and, as I say, we are left with that same functional division which he deplored in the more rhetorical parts of his address. I ask him to consider this point. He has been some 18 months in office and he knows that the number of subjects which he can deal with himself are severely limited. If we are to have this set up of Executives, a Commission and a Minister, with wide powers of interference by the Minister, which I shall mention in a moment, there must be tripulation of staffs if this thing is to work at all, even at the slowest possible pace. Ultimate control is in the staff of the Minister, but before we can get any subject passed up from the various disintegrated Executives of the Commission and passed to the Minister, there must, in fact, be these staffs in triplicate to deal with it, and the necessity for enlargement is increased by the functional disintegration which is the basis of the Bill.

The principal argument for integration, and the only argument which could justify it, would consist of three stages. It would say, first, that we have too much inland transport, too many people, and too much equipment used on inland transport today; second, integration would give economy in the amount of manpower and material which we should use; and, third, we could only get that integration by bringing them under one system of national ownership. If every one of the matters of fact which are assumed in that argument were as true as it is thought, and if the reasoning were as sound as it was thought, it would still be impossible to square that argument with this set-up which the Minister puts forward.

The Executives, under the terms of the Bill, are to be separated from the commencement; the demarkation of function is to be preserved until further notice, which, in the words of the song, means that "it may be for years and it may be for ever." It is beyond the wit of man and the power of exposition of the right hon. Gentleman to explain how the Commission will produce and help that demarkation and bring the Executives together. The only precedent which I can think of for this set up was one which the wise men of Gotham suggested, when, in early summer, they built a fence with the avowed purpose of keeping inside that fence the first cuckoo and hearing its voice.

Let us consider the powers which the Minister takes to himself. . . . It is proposed that the Commission shall consist of a chairman and four other members. The members will all be appointed by the Minister; they will hold office at his pleasure and be paid salaries determined by him. It will be subject to the direction of the Minister in the very wide sphere of "matters which appear to him to affect the national interest," on the reorganisation of development programmes, which involve "substantial outlay on capital account." That, one might think, would give the right hon. Gentleman considerable powers of interference,

but, of course, his desires do not stop there, because he takes under the Bill power to direct the Commission "to discontinue any of their activities or dispose of any part of their undertaking."

In other words, there is complete control by the Minister, and that means that, in operation over the enormous field which I just outlined, he is to be subjected to all the political pressure—and one knows how susceptible this aspect of life is to political pressure—which can be brought upon him. . . . When we come to the Executives, we get another undertaking. The members of the Executives are to be appointed by the Minister, who will approve of their salaries, and they are to receive functions delegated by the Commission, but nothing can be delegated by the Commission unless the Minister approves. The right hon. Gentleman comes to this House and emphasises, almost with tears in his voice, the importance of the Commission, and, then, in the very same Bill, deprives it of the power to command, which alone can give any chance of making this scheme work. The acme of these absurdities is when we reach the transport proposals. I have shown that the very set-up of the right hon. Gentleman is the opposite of integration, but one might expect that, at any rate, he would pretend that this set-up would bring about some reduction in charges to the consumer and user of transport. That must be, on any sane approach to this subject, one of the main reasons for the integration of transport.

But what are the proposals with regard to charges made under this Bill? Within two years, the Commission must submit a charges scheme to the transport tribunal, being either hindered or helped in so doing by the Minister, under Clause 79. There are to be no rules as to the charging scheme. The Commission may adopt such a scheme as seems desirable to them. The scheme may provide for fixed, minimum or standard charges, or maximum charges, which are to run the whole gamut and it may also, under Clause 80 (1, d) allow special terms, which is another name for exceptional rates on which the right hon. Gentleman descanted in his oration. So—and on this I should have thought that there would have been some word of explanation from the right hon. Gentleman—the tribunal may leave the charges or charging system to the Commission itself. In other words—as an hon. Friend behind me mentioned a moment or so ago—one of the great questions has always been, "What is to be the basis of charging? Are you continuing charging on what the traffic will bear, or switching over to a charging on operational cost or on value?" All these matters have been transport problems for years, shouting for consideration, yet the Bill does not contain a word of guidance as to how the charges are to be arrived at, and the right hon. Gentleman spent 80 minutes in which he refused to accept the situation or to answer the question as to what line he will take. I should really have thought that if the Government are coming forward with proposals for the nationalisation of transport, the House is entitled to know the policy of the Government with regard to charges, the vital question which can help or hinder industry in its recovery at the present time. . . .

Colonel J. R. H. Hutchison (Glasgow, Central): . . . All over the world there are precedents for the failure of nationalisation in rail transport. I do not intend to waste the

time of the House in the examination of these. Hon. Members only need look at the records and they will see instances of its failure in Australia, France, Canada and elsewhere.

Mr. Sturmer: In America?

Colonel Hutchison: I wish to draw the attention of the House to one outstanding example of failure in the nationalisation of road transport. Road transport was one of the first of the industries tackled by the Germans when the Nazi system came into force. The parallel is extraordinarily complete. [*] Therefore, I would like the House to follow a little bit of history. This will be a salutary lesson for hon. Members opposite. What happened in Germany under the Nazi system when they nationalised road transport? In 1935, the German railways were owned by the State, along with certain bus companies. A very similar situation will arise in this country as a result of this Bill. Then Germany forced all its road transport into associations controlled by a Minister, and, in order to be able to divide and segregate long-distance transport—notice the parallel—and short-distance transport, it took as a yardstick 31.5 miles. Here we are pleased to take 25 and 40 miles. Having forced all transport into trade associations, the Ministry then proceeded to mobilise and take complete control of the long-distance transport and insisted upon them having a licence before they could trade at all. The only difference in what we are to do is that in our country the long-distance transport is to be State owned. Both were, or will be, controlled.

In 1936, Germany saw that it was not possible to have an efficient system unless they controlled the whole of the road transport and so they treated short-distance transport in exactly the same way as they had treated the long distance transport. Is that also to come here? They found they could not stand up to the competition of those left free. Will the Minister be able to stand up to the competition of those whom he proposed to leave free? There is nothing that inefficiency so abhors as efficiency. Then, the next step was to force the long-distance transport road rates up to the railway rates. Is that the Minister's intention here? Thereupon, Germany drew up an intricate system of rates, which was so intricate that, 10 years later, those very officials who were supposed to operate and understand it, had not yet properly learned and understood it.

In order to be able to support this system that they had inaugurated, they thought unwisely that all that they would need would be a few police to examine the inevitable log books. That, of course, was soon found to be quite insufficient, and so they set up 18 regional transport commissioners, and very shortly it was found that 18 regional transport commissioners were far too remote from contact with the wheels that were turning, and they proceeded to set up 80 district road transport officers, which, even with their staffs, were not enough; and, finally, they appointed 1,500 local road transport officers. The staff that was found to be necessary for all these busybodies numbered 7,000. If hon. Gentlemen opposite will calculate the sort of remuneration for officials of that type, I think they will find that a

[*] Major Sir David Maxwell Fyfe pointed out that the "father and mother of the Bill" was the T.U.C. document No. 2. Taken together with this, Colonel Hutchison's comparison cannot but lead to speculation as to the possible nature and origin of a source common to both the T.U.C. plan and the Nazi plan.

conservative estimate will bring them out in the neighbourhood of £4 million per annum. That is, £4 million per annum to control the road transport system of this country, which needs no control and which even hon. Members opposite have never impugned with inefficiency.

Mr. Mitchison rose—

Colonel Hutchison: So began the next phase—the struggle for priority, and, if hon. Members opposite want to do so, they can read all the evidence at first hand if they will only turn to the evidence of Minister Speer. The situation was so chaotic that even local transport offices broke down, traffic was held up and permits held up while they hunted for return loads, and so the Government then proceeded to pile upon this enormous mass of officialdom an equal number of what they called traffic expeditors. Is it surprising that, in the City of Berlin, an order was issued that no lorry should move more than 2 miles without first telephoning the traffic expeditor if the vehicle was anything less than 75 per cent., full in volume or weight? Even the Germans, docile and regimented creatures though they were and are, rebelled, and so they found "permanent cargoes" and filled their lorries with empty cases so that, to the traffic expeditor, they always looked full.

The inevitable happened. Queues of hauliers were to be seen waiting outside the transport offices for permission to be able to move. The estimate of waste space was something between 25 and 50 per cent. It took from one to six hours to get permission to move a vehicle at all, and from 7 to 30 days to get permission to have even the smallest repairs carried out. I admit that the last part of this chaos came about in the war, but one might imagine that war was a spur to organisation and one knows that nobody ever accused the Germans of being poor organisers. [*Laughter.*] This appalling welter of chaos seems to threaten us here. . . .

The same chaos undoubtedly threatens us here; the same ultimate steps will have to be taken by the Minister. . . .

"Odlum v. Stratton"—(continued from page 3)

anything to say, Mr. Heathcote-Williams.

Mr. Heathcote-Williams: No, my Lord. I am instructed strenuously to resist any stay in this case. I was going to refer to what your Lordship has said in commenting on the conduct of this case on the eighth day.

Mr. Justice Atkinson: I have not said nearly all I felt, you know, about this case.

Mr. Heathcote-Williams: Your Lordship may recollect that on the eighth day of the hearing when my friend Mr. Slade opened he said that there was no suggestion being made against the competence of Mr. Odlum.

Mr. Justice Atkinson: Mr. Slade said right at the beginning there was no plea of truth to any of the innuendoes, and following that we have heard a succession of personal attacks upon Mr. Odlum, of I think, a most disgraceful kind.

Mr. Heathcote-Williams: I am instructed strenuously to resist any stay, my Lord.

Mr. Justice Atkinson: No, I shall not grant a stay.