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What is Sovereignty?

By W. WILSON.

Supreme; supreme power; supreme legislative jurisdiction; king; emperor; monarch. These are the generally-accepted dictionary definitions of the word *sovereign*. In a society schooled to a monotheistic-monarchist philosophy, any of these definitions may be passed as adequate. But the reality of sovereignty calls for something more on every count. The word belongs essentially to the trinitarian vocabulary, and without the trinitarian 'climate' might, for any useful purpose it serves, be dropped from the dictionary altogether.

Sovereign is *the* sovereign word. A whole definition of it would hold the very pith of social credit—or, if we prefer it, of Christianity. The idea of the truly sovereign State comes as near to the kingdom of heaven on earth as we can envisage. But that does not define anything.

In drawing the distinction between immanent and non-immanent sovereignty, Douglas carries us at a stride over the most difficult part of the territory to be investigated. True, the distinction still leaves sovereignty undefined; but it succeeds in expunging the lie about it. Real sovereignty incorporates the reality of immanence. Non-immanent sovereignty is not 'just another form of sovereignty'; it simply does not exist except in the minds of the wrong-minded, and, if pursued, leads to the Lie Incarnate—death more abundant.

Supreme power, what is it? In the dictionary sense, it is something Hitler had for a little while, and which Edward I had for a lifetime. Why are we more disposed to attribute the word sovereign to Edward I than to Hitler? Was Edward I more supremely powerful, and if so, in what way?

Surely the difference was that Edward I recognised that power will not tolerate a one-way street. There must be give and take. The individual who 'takes upon himself' the whole power of the Realm soon learns that such power, far from being supreme, is peculiarly vulnerable. If, then, we accept for the moment that sovereignty *is* supreme power, we are bound to deny that it is monarchy (using that word literally).

But we still have to find a meaning for supreme power. If the life, either of the individual or the group, is to be 'supremely' operative (most abundant) it must manifest enough equilibrium to give it form, and enough disequilibrium to enable it to grow. This requires that all forces should hold together in a near balance—a condition which, while it may be supremely satisfactory, can hardly be defined by the single word supreme; and, since power must pull in at least two ways at once in order to maintain such a condition, supremacy—if the correct word at all—must apply to control of power rather than to power itself.

So we are brought to a discussion of human power in its positive and negative aspects—of initiative and responsibility.

Initiative is the point at which motive is energised into

action. It is the vital spark which connects the subjective self with the objective world; the operative link between thought and things; the 'psychological moment' as well as the 'energy-impulse' of every purposeful act.

And what is responsibility? It is, I suggest, the control of one motive by another *at the moment of initiative*.

I might feel an impulse to touch a live rail, but at the moment of initiative another impulse comes to arrest the act. Notice that my second impulse is not merely the negation of the first; it would be incorrect to describe it as a desire *not* to touch the rail. It is the desire, *based on certain knowledge*, not to suffer an electric shock.

From this it follows that responsibility is, in reality, a more complex expression of initiative—initiative being, simply, "action out of motive", while responsibility is "controlled action involving motive, counter-motive and certain knowledge as to consequences."

Responsible self-control is the *subjective* complement of freedom, as defined by social crediters. Instead of being the power to choose or refuse one thing (that is, one proposition) at a time (objective), we get the power to originate or not to originate one action at a time (subjective). When these two freedoms operate together in one individual, we have the reality of individual sovereignty—mastery over self and environment.

Initiative is always an individual manifestation. Every purposeful (political) group either forms around or 'throws up' an initiator. Herein is the idea of monarchy and, in this sense, monarchs are as natural to social organisations as are stones to cherries.

Responsibility, however, is a complex of factors which, in the group, tends to separate out among the individuals concerned. One individual will advance one motive, another another, and each will try to empower his own motive. The result, is not control but a clash of forces.

We have seen that the third factor in individual responsibility is *certain knowledge of consequences*. The way in which truth makes us free is by leading us to a responsible exercise of initiative. The effectiveness of the counter-motive which prevents me from electrocuting myself depends directly upon my awareness of the reality of the danger. It seems equally true that society can 'save itself' just to the degree in which it is in possession of the Truth, and that the truth must operate as a canon of social behaviour.

This points to what should be the proper functions respectively of Church and Law. The Church should establish the truth; and provide 'the evidence of things unseen'—the 'electrocuting cables' of the social make-up no less than the beneficent influences. The Law should provide social sanctions for constraining acts of initiative which violate the canon.

We are left, then, with a picture of society so constituted

that any one centre of initiative can be challenged from any other centre, the merits of the challenge being judged in relation to a code based on truth. Which is a restatement of the idea behind the English system of Common Law based on the Natural Law.

It is perhaps worth noting that the distinction between initiative (motive into action) and responsibility (dual-motive with truth as the control) runs parallel with that which we draw between technique and policy. The motives of the technical mind are, broadly, of the former type—desires to do for the sake of doing—while those of the political mind are concentrated upon ends; and, without a canon—a whole directive based upon natural truth—political minds must forever lead society to physical clashes, using technical minds as their not-unwilling tools.

To return to our definition, it would seem that sovereignty in the individual, institution or State, is a condition in which initiative is held in a just balance. It may be described as the supreme utilisation of human power to human ends; but it denies unchallengeable power at every point. A Sovereign is the king of a sovereign State—the individual who represents, in his person, power in equilibrium; the embodiment and defender of the Whole Spirit of his Realm.

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: March, 17, 1948.

Representation of the People Bill

(The Debate continued:—)

Mr. W. J. Brown (Rugby): During a great deal of yesterday's Debate, and throughout the Debate today, I found myself in a position of some difficulty. Whenever an argument was turned upon the merits I found myself disagreeing, as I am about to disagree with the hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Hogg), in the arguments advanced against the Bill. . . . The real issue is—ought we, at a given point of time, in a given set of circumstances, and against a particular background, take away university or City of London representation? I conclude we ought not to, and I will very shortly give my reasons for so saying.

In the meantime, we must dismiss the romantic overstatement and unfounded arguments advanced tonight by the hon. Member for Oxford. He said, amongst other arguments, that the Bill was valueless because, while asserting the principle of "one man, one vote," it did not achieve or attempt to achieve the principle of "one vote, one value." That is perfectly true, and it is equally irrelevant. If it means anything at all, it means that we should never do anything to ameliorate existing conditions unless we can put it completely right at one go.

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman for Rugby (Mr. W. J. Brown) did not realise the point. I did not, in fact, say that this Bill is valueless. On the contrary, I pointed out that its value resided in the fact that it did not attempt to do that very thing, but that it did attempt to apply another principle, representation of subordinate communities.

Mr. Brown: That was the argument I was next coming to, because the assumption underlying it that the House of Commons represents organised communities is as fallacious as the one I have just disposed of. If, in the 20th century,

we were talking about representing communities in this House, our whole approach would be utterly different from what it has been on either side of the House in the detailed Debates on the Bill. We should want to discuss how the miners, the engineers, the cotton operatives, the Civil Service or any one of a dozen other categories, which are more closely integrated and more homogeneous in interests and outlook than any geographical constituency on the one hand, or the City of London, on the other, should be represented. . . .

. . . Here are changes proposed not by agreement but through the operation of a Parliamentary majority. Undoubtedly the Government can carry these changes by the use of their Parliamentary majority, but I warn them that if, at the next General Election, the electoral dice so falls that there is not a Labour majority on that side but a substantial Conservative majority, the Labour Members then in opposition would have no moral grievance whatever if the Conservative majority in that Parliament started to alter the electoral law to their advantage. . . . The point of my argument is a simple one, and it is very germane to this issue. This is a change proposed which is out of line with the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference, and it is to be carried through by the operation of the Parliamentary majority in this House—not by agreement, but the reverse. When we start on that path, we may start it, but other people may finish it. We have seen examples in the last few days of what happens when Governments proceed not on the basis of changing the law by agreement but on the basis of using power to override opposition. We have even seen the parliamentary immunity of Deputies taken away from Czechoslovakian Members of Parliament during the last few days. Great oaks from little acorns grow, and we may think this is only a little thing, but little things like this have a habit of becoming big things, especially in times of acute political or economic crisis.

My conclusion is that whether there was a technical bargain or not, whether it was part of the bond or not, and whether it was part of the verbal exchanges or not, it is in keeping with the modern spirit of Parliament that changes in electoral law should be made by agreement, and after the discussions have taken place through what has become the constant and standard machinery, the machinery of Speaker's Conferences. It is a regrettable misuse, and an unwise misuse, by the Government, of its Parliamentary majority, for the sake of what is involved in this thing—a couple of seats in the City of London and a few seats in the universities—to carry this thing through in the way that it is proposed to be carried through. On those grounds, if this matter goes to a Division, I shall vote with the Opposition tonight.

Sir William Darling (Edinburgh, South): . . . I believe in plural voting, I believe in the business vote. I suggest to the House that unless they are prepared to give increasingly a measure of advantage and support to the business vote, which means businessmen, the series of crises of which we have had far too many, will be multiplied. This belief in the mere counting of heads is unworthy of His Majesty's Government. This belief that the number of heads and not the contents of the heads is important is a disappointment to one who had hoped that the Representation of the People Bill would contain at any rate some new ideas.

There is a complete failure to recognise that a great man, called Graham Wallas, who was once a member of the party opposite, and who wrote, "Human Nature in Politics," supplied at any rate sufficient ideas to make a much better

Measure than this one. . . .

. . . I am an unrepentant supporter of the business vote, and if the electorate of this country do not soon realise that it is not by the counting of heads but by the counting of brains that this country can be saved, then indeed our country is wellnigh lost. I do not understand the theory, especially on the part of the Government, who have as high pretensions and doubtless substantial claims to be more intelligent than most Governments, although I have never understood the argument whereby they say, "Where they sleep shall people vote, not where they produce and create." This is giving the franchise to somnambulists. The argument is apparently, "I sleep in Lewisham—or Southwark—I work in London. It is where I sleep I vote. That is where my intelligence is dull and blunted. I do not exercise my franchise where my brain is intelligent and alert." Graham Wallas would have laughed that out of court.

I am not afraid of the tied Member. I am not afraid of advocating special representation for businessmen before this assembly. Have we not recommended miners' constituencies, represented by miners? Is it not stated that agricultural constituencies should be represented by agriculturists? That is the whole basis of the claim for the Labour Party. I can think of constituencies in which I could live in the knowledge that I would never, by the use of my vote, be able to return a Conservative Member. There are constituencies which for 25 years have been pocket boroughs of the Mineworkers' Federation. I do not object to it, but if hon. Members accept that principle—and there are Members who sit on those benches because of the acceptance of that principle—would they deny it to me if I also asked for the type represented by the City of London to be represented? If miners are to have an exclusive right of perennial representation, whatever Parliament should be elected, are businessmen not to have the same right? There will always be more miners' seats than those of businessmen, I agree. I am willing to accept the logic of the argument, but if we are to have miners' pocket boroughs and agriculturists' pocket boroughs, there is a claim and justification in an intelligent Representation of the People Bill for a pocket borough for financiers and businessmen.

The whole of this Bill is based on a fallacy. There is a search for an ideal political system, an ideal voting system. The search is futile. Why, far from having achieved that, should it provide less representation? Surely, an intelligent Government, anxious to consult the people, a Government of the people, for the people, would want to give more representation? It is their intention to give less representation than before, because they say, "the university vote is an anomaly—away with it. The business vote is an anomaly—away with it." More intelligent men would say, "We will not reduce the representation of the people, we will enlarge it. We will see that these anomalies are lost in a wider, fuller scheme."

. . . There are places and people which are exceptions. There is only one Speaker in the House of Commons. There is only one Archbishop—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."]
—there is only one Archbishop of Canterbury. There is only one Prime Minister—surely that is not disputed. There is only one of many unique things. May I suggest that this great country can afford only one capital, and that that City may well have unique and different advantages from the rest of the community? No other place would grudge it those advantages. I do not see what we gain by giving away those

advantages. London will be something less because of this decision. . . .

. . . What are the gains in this Bill, against which the Amendment strives to express an opinion? We are to gain uniformity and a certain consistency. I am reminded of someone who said that consistency is the hobgoblin of little statesmen and little minds. There are no little statesmen here and no little minds, but there is a search for consistency, and that is all we shall get from this Bill. I feel that the attempt to unify the situation, to get a level of uniformity, is a mistake, and false. In human affairs, fortunately, in spite of what otherwise well-intentioned folk may endeavour, there will always be a glorious irregularity and lack of uniformity, and, in my judgment, it is well that that is so.

This is an unhappy and unfortunate measure . . .

House of Commons: March 15, 1948.

National Finance, Invisible Exports [*]

Sir W. Smithers asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amount of invisible exports for each of the years 1900 to date.

Sir S. Cripps: I give below such information as is readily available:

Net invisible exports, computed after calculating the merchandise trade deficit from records of imports (valued c.i.f.) and of exports (valued f.o.b.) were given in the *Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom* (81st Number, Cmd. 5627, p. 438 and 83rd Number, Cmd. 6232, p. 434) as follows:

Year	£ million
1913	339
1923	348
1924	410
1925	438
1926	449
1927	469
1928	475
1929	484
1930	414
1931	304
1932	236
1933	263
1934	287
1935	293
1936	327
1937	386
1938	323

Figures of invisible exports given in Table I of Cmd. 7324 for 1938, 1946 and 1947 are calculated on a different basis, as described in Cmd. 7324, and they are not comparable with the figures given above.

House of Commons: March 18, 1948.

Social Service (Benefits) [*]

Major Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give a comparison in terms of purchasing power now

Continued on page 5.

[*] Given as instances of a change in the basis of statistics invalidating comparison with previous figures. Readers will recall other recent instances of this technique—notably the change in the calculation of the cost-of-living figures.—EDITOR, *The Social Crediter*.

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Saturday, April 10, 1948.

From Week to Week

"Chemical Corporation of America has just been awarded a \$100,000,000 contract to equip a large fertilizer plant at Sindri.

"Skenandoo Rayon Corporation will supply technical assistance and Lockwood, Greene & Co. will act as Consulting Engineers for a new \$30,000,000 rayon plant to be erected near Bombay, and known as National Rayon Co.

"In return for its know-how in designing and establishing the plants, training key operators, and keeping up to date for a minimum of ten years, Skenandoo is to receive at least [our emphasis] \$250,000, part of it in stock which, in India, frequently pays dividends up to 40%."—*Business Week*, Nov. 16, 1946.

Waal, waal, waal, to think that "America" has conquered India just to exploit it. My, my. There are a few museum specimens of the American Indian left—the Indian Indians had better consult them—quick.

One of the indications of the subservience of British politics to the group of international Jews who dominated the late nineteenth, and the present century is contained in the career of the husband of Sir Ernest Cassel's grand-daughter. If we are to believe a recent magazine (U.S.A.) build-up, Professor Laski's opinion of Lord Mountbatten and his wife is that "He is altogether the ablest man to come out of Royalty in many a generation. He has energy, courage, tact, initiative, and magnanimity. He has social conscience, and his wife has even more." (*National Home Monthly*, February, 1948). His father was a German.

If warnings were any use to the British public, we should suggest that future appointments of Lord and Lady Mountbatten be watched contemplatively.

It is with great regret that we learn that Mr. Gerald K. Smith, the American Christian Nationalist, is only slowly recovering from arsenic poisoning, the latest of several attempts upon his life. By common consent, Mr. Smith is more feared and hated by the Judæo-Communist interests in New York than any other man outside, or perhaps including, official circles. The whole armoury of abuse, lies physical violence, attempts to break up his meetings has been employed against him, the main result being to reinforce his efforts to awaken the American public to the dangers which threaten it.

Whether Mr. Smith's methods would be effective in this country we do not know, and rather doubt. But they are effective in the States, or they would not so greatly infuriate B'nai B'rith and its "smear" organisation, the Anti-Defamation League.

We trust most sincerely that his recovery will be complete and speedy. We are not so naive as to suppose that

his attempted murderers will be brought to book.

"It was perhaps not unnatural that many of the more ignorant of His hearers should apprehend His meaning but dimly, and should go away with the general impression that He was vaguely prophesying a future in which what they considered to be injustice should be righted according to their wishes—in which savage retribution should overtake the rich man, mainly for the crime of being rich, while they themselves should inherit all kinds of power and glory, merely because they were now poor. . . .

"It is little wonder, therefore, that the organisation which gathered round such men, filled, as it was, with jealous hatred of any knowledge superior to its own, should eventually come to regard ignorance as practically a qualification for salvation, and to look with contempt upon . . . those who still retained some tradition of real teaching of the Christ."

—*The Christian Creed*, Leadbeater, p. 24 et seq.

"It must not be supposed, however, that this turbulent and covetous majority comprised the whole of the early Christian movement . . . there was also a steadily increasing body of quiet and respectable people, who, although without any knowledge of its inner meaning, took what they knew of the Logia of the Christ as their guide in life, and this body eventually became the predominant force in what was afterwards called the orthodox party."—*Ibid.*

The proposal made by Lord Hinchinbrooke of a Right Wing International is not novel, but would bear careful examination. The fundamental difficulty is the existence of a pseudo-Right Wing International of the Churchill-Baruch type. Without great skill in design, such an organisation might easily prove to be the final disaster. No group mentality, as such, can assist the present calamitous situation, which is pre-eminently the result of failure to control groups.

From *Democracy and Reaction* (by L. T. Hobhouse, 1904). Quoted by W. L. Burn in *Nineteenth Century and After*, March, 1948, in article "Liberalism, Socialism and Communism." :—

"Collectivism is liable to a corresponding distortion, which appears in particular to have befallen certain forms of Socialism in England. The Liberal and democratic elements are gradually shed, and all the interest is concentrated on the machinery by which life is to be organised. Everything is to fall into the hands of an 'expert,' who will sit in an office and direct the course of the world, prescribing to men and women precisely how they are to be virtuous and happy . . . as the 'expert' comes to the front, and 'efficiency' becomes the watchword of administration, all that was human in Socialism vanishes out of it. Its tenderness for the losers in the race, its protests against class tyranny, its revolt against commercial materialism, all the sources of inspiration under which Socialist leaders have faced poverty and prison are gone like a dream, and instead of them we have a conception of society as a perfect piece of machinery pulled by wires radiating from a single centre, and all men are either 'experts' or 'puppets.' Humanity, Liberty, Justice are expunged from the banner and the single word Efficiency replaces them. Those who cannot take their places in the machine are human refuse, and in the working of a machine there is only one test, whether it runs smoothly or otherwise. What quality of stuff it turns out is another matter. A harder, more unsympathetic, more mechanical conception of society has seldom been devised."

The Jewish Technique of Subversion

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT FROM A PRIVATE LETTER WRITTEN BY A DISTINGUISHED ARAB LEADER IS OF SUCH GENERAL INTEREST AND IMPORTANCE THAT WE FEEL JUSTIFIED, IN THE URGENCY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION, IN GIVING IT A WIDER PUBLIC THAN THAT FOR WHICH IT WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED:—

“Logic is insufficient to predicate action. It is merely a method of combining pure assumption into a sequence of consequences and by its very nature it is incapable of supplying one with the assumption it uses, for human action requires the adoption of some premises before it can be effected. Therefore arbitrary conviction precedes the logical superstructure. The Catholics know this and that is the basic reason why the Jews hate them intensely and work incessantly for their downfall. The Protestants, on the other hand, are so hopelessly muddled by their inconsistent methods of trying to extract a moral code from logic that they have no strong conviction in any direction. For logic has nothing to do with morality—a criminal can be very logical.

“The Jews, aware of this, are enabled to discredit and corrupt all existing structures of religious, social and economic nature. They want this and effect it by exploiting every discontented group without shaking their own solidarity in the midst of anarchy, as happened in Russia. Small groups seek reforms of special interest and are divided into various sections; only the Jews are always agreed on what they want and that is control. Every one else wants to control for some purpose but they want merely control for its own sake, that is to say for *their* sake. This is the thing which appealed to the U.S. Jewry, composed mainly of Russian Jewish immigration. Therefore they have become ardent purveyors of Communist philosophy, and hailed Marx as the Saviour of people everywhere.

“They themselves do not love Communism but rather use it to serve their purpose. They would love any form of government enthusiastically if they were assured of control at the highest level.

“Every Jew was pro-British in the days when d'Iraeli was Prime Minister but today they find the British are not so easy to control as they did the ignorant masses of Russia. This indicates their adherence to the principle of transvaluation, that is, striking at the most vulnerable point in human behaviour, that of sincerity, for instance: they pretend to champion the rights of Negroes, object to segregation and advocate mixed breeding, yet they seek a segregated and separate community in Palestine. They wail at being forced to live in a separate district of their own, and yet are rabid for the establishment of a ghetto-like state, where they can hoard without sharing the proceeds they extract from the people of the world. No day passes without presentation of some play, radio sketch or movie showing the “Great Jew,” the “Suffering Jew” or the “Humane Jew” struggling for the betterment of all. Was virtue ever so loud? They affect concern over anti-Catholic prejudice, while spreading lies and prejudice against the very Church they fear because it is strong enough. In New York they purchased a monthly magazine, the *Protestant*, and they have financed it to malign and smear the Catholic Church. Currently they direct a smear campaign against all Muslims and Muslim nations everywhere for fear that Muslims will resist their infiltration. They cry out for freedom of speech in a voice so loud that it drowns out opposition and creates a steady foul wind,

always blowing from one direction and never ceasing to permit an honest difference of opinion. That is why they love democracy next to Communism, because a democracy is a state without conviction, which can be pushed hither and thither, guided solely by the loudest voice. No wonder Europeans don't understand the American government; the Americans are not insane (and this may apply to the Canadians as well). They are merely unable to recognize the trouble into which they can be projected by this wailing minority voice, and the erratic and indecisive course followed by the democracies' government is a sign that the democracies have not been completely controlled.

“Democracy died with the industrial revolution and the dependence on centralized coal and steel deposits, and will not again be a feasible form of government until it is possible completely to decentralize industry, when each community will become self-sufficient. Communism insists upon freezing for ever the form of society to the age of steel and perpetuating a central control.”

PARLIAMENT—continued from page 3.

and before the war of all benefits paid under social legislation.

Sir S. Cripps: Owing to the changes in the structure of our social legislation between 1938 and now, including many new benefits, it is not possible to make the comparison which the hon. and gallant Member seeks.

House of Commons: March 19, 1948.

Central Office of Information

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter (Kingston-upon-Thames): . . . The two points I desire to put to the House this afternoon are these: firstly, the very big question as to whether it is desirable to have in time of peace, for the purposes of internal propaganda, what amounts to a Ministry of Information. That itself is a big question, and there will inevitably arise from it the secondary question as to whether, if we have what is tantamount to a Ministry of Information, we do not inevitably get that Department involved in party controversy and party politics at the public expense. . . . My observations apply only to activity inside this country.

On the first point, the desirability of maintaining what is in substance, though not in form, a Ministry of Information, in many ways the present organisation is a great deal worse for, if we have a Ministry of Information, we have *ex hypothesi* a Minister of Information who can answer for his Department. This curious Central Office is apparently brooded over with remote geniality by the Lord President of the Council. It is on occasion answered for by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. It was the other day answered for at Question Time by, of all people, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of National Insurance, and, to complete the confusion, I understand that this afternoon's Debate is to be replied to by the Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. It seems, on the face of it, that there are certain administrative and Parliamentary anomalies about collecting this constellation of Parliamentary luminaries to answer not for a Ministry at all, but for what is modestly described as a Central Office.

Secondly, I suggest that this House and the country should be inclined to watch with some vigilance the working of this Office, for the reason: a Ministry of Information or a Ministry of Propaganda is the usual instrument of a totali-

tarian regime and, as such, in time of peace it is an innovation in this country and, therefore, should be treated with careful and close public and Parliamentary scrutiny. Thirdly, it is a somewhat expensive form of activity in these days of financial stringency. The Civil Estimates for 1947-48 indicate a gross expenditure of no less than £4½ million for this office, which is a net increase of £871,000 over the 1946-47 Estimates and, therefore, financially, quite substantial. Its activities are indirectly reflected even further in the fact that the Estimates of the other Departments for publicity, Press and poster advertising, have risen from under £2,000,000 in 1945, to close on £3,000,000 in 1947. . . .

. . . The other matter to which I invite the attention of the House is the tendency of this body to indulge in political propaganda. I have been through a great deal of its productions and find that the general tenor of the material it puts out, the briefs for speakers, advertisements in the Press, speeches, lectures and so on, is such as to suggest to the public that the present administration consists of a number of good and wise men struggling valiantly and successfully against circumstances which they did nothing to create. As in this country one is entitled to believe anything, one is entitled to believe even that, although the comment might well be made, as was made by the great Duke of Wellington when, addressed in these terms, "Mr. Smith, I believe," he replied, "Sir, a man who would believe that would believe anything."

While people—a decreasing number I think—are entitled to believe that, and, indeed, are entitled to put forward that point of view, what they are not entitled to do is to use public money and the machinery of a public Department to put it forward. It is not the view held unanimously, or anything like unanimously in this country. Another body of opinion appeared at North Croydon last week to be not inconsiderable, a body of opinion which regards this as a Government, which, faced with obvious difficulties, has aggravated those difficulties by a policy of financial extravagance, inflationary economics, and the diversion of the national effort from reconstruction into wanton and reckless schemes of nationalisation. What is objectionable is that propaganda should be used, and financed from public funds, for the purpose of putting forward that view, as against the other. I quite appreciate that the officials of this office are in some difficulty when asked to make pronouncements, or speeches, or write articles on this subject. They cannot be paid by the Government to advocate the second of the viewpoints to which I have referred. There is, therefore, a risk that, in discussing these matters, they will take the first line. It is no reflection on them, although it is a reflection on the system which puts them in this position, that they do so.

I wish to quote, as powerful support for that proposition, no less a person than the Lord President of the Council who, when challenged about a brief from the Central Office of Information said, on March 10:

"Almost any statement on this subject is liable to be regarded as controversial."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, March 10, 1948; Vol. 448, c. 1232].

Of course. Why, then, use a public office to put forward statements on the subject which inevitably must be controversial? That is surely the issue with which we are concerned in this Debate.

Let me give another example—the briefing of speakers for a series of talks, organised, I understand, for a period beginning rather appropriately on April 1 this year, on the

subject of the National Insurance Scheme. There was a meeting held at the Ministry of National Insurance to brief these speakers, who, I reiterate, are paid out of public funds, in order that they might speak with apparent impartiality to non-political bodies up and down the country. These speakers were briefed at this meeting partly from a number of Government publications, perfectly properly, and also from three publications, which I have here, issued by the Labour Party on the subject of National Insurance, National Insurance (Industrial Injuries), and Public Health.

These are very competent propaganda publications of the Labour Party; indeed, if they were not, it would be a very great reflection on the highly paid publicity officers of Transport House, and I am certainly not prepared to make it, for I have the greatest respect for their competence. Surely, it is absolutely wrong, when briefing speakers for the Central Office of Information, to brief them with material which, in its nature and origin, must be controversial in the party sense? When I questioned the Government about this, I received a reply from, of all people, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of National Insurance, and his argument was that this was quite all right, but that, if we liked, he would also insert Conservative Party propaganda.

Mr. Daines (East Ham, North): Does not the hon. Gentleman agree that it would produce a more complete picture if, at the same time, he produced a copy of the leaflet attempting to denigrate the whole scheme? Would he agree to that.

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter: No, I would not, because I am going to argue that it is quite wrong that the political party propaganda of any party should be put forward at the public expense. I know that the hon. Member is trying to score a party point which is irrelevant to the discussion. It would be quite wrong for the Ministry of National Insurance and the Central Office to insert the political propaganda of any party, and it is really an intolerably inept answer to say "We will take your propaganda as well as our own." This is a question of public speakers, publically financed going out with the prestige of impartiality to address meetings like Women's Guilds, Women's Institutes, and so on, throughout the country. The answer of the Parliamentary Secretary on that

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occasion, and the mentality of the Government which it reveals, indicate to me how great is the danger of infecting this Central Office with party publicity.

I will pass briefly over several others of these productions. One is a film, which the Under-Secretary may know, called "Ours is the Land," in which a perfectly obvious Labour Party candidate, young, charming and attractive—though he is obviously a Labour candidate for reasons other than those—is portrayed, and in which these words are used:

"They promised us houses in 1935. Look at Paisley and Dunfermline. Now, they have got them."

That is sheer partisan propaganda in a film produced at the public expense and displayed apparently impartially all over the country. Another subject which is also controversial is basic petrol—a subject on which the Under-Secretary will recollect the Government were not able to command a larger majority of their supporters than 27. A long publication has been put out to speakers on that subject and I would only refer to one part of it. It is this:

"Moreover, we have not got enough tankers of our own. Some petrol has to be imported in American tankers for which we pay dollar freight."

If that is going to be put out on this subject, surely there should be some statement on why we have not got the tankers, how many were available in 1945 and how many could have been purchased if the fruits of the American loan had been used for that purpose instead of being squandered on films and tobacco.

Mr. Skeffington-Lodge (Bedford): Nonsense!

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter: It is not nonsense, and if the hon. Gentleman knew the facts, he would not be so quick to say so.

There is just one other matter I wish to raise, and I have warned the Under-Secretary that I propose to raise it. So far as the film production side of the Central Office of Information is concerned, we are entitled to have some explanation, in the light of the Prime Minister's statement this week, for the reasons for the appointment of Mr. John Grierson. He is a very capable producer and his film "Drifters" was a very lovely film. But it is well known on the other side of the Atlantic that there is no doubt whatever as to his affiliations with the extreme Left, using deliberately a neutral term, though both the Canadian and American authorities would use stronger language. The propaganda value of films is enormous as every hon. Member knows, and to have appointed a man with so pronounced views so far to the Left of His Majesty's Government is, to put it again at its lowest, a rash thing to do. It is easy in the production of a film to give a twist and a bias, and an incalculable twist carries an enormous effect to the minds of those who see it, and yet it is awfully hard to notice it in the script. With all respect to the technical capacity of Mr. Grierson, we are entitled to know why a man whose political attitude was so well known should be appointed, who appointed him—we do not know that in the anomalous organisation of this office unless we are told today—and is it intended that he should continue? . . .

The Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (Mr. Gordon-Walker): . . . As the House knows, my right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council has the responsibility for the Government's Information Services in general as distinct from departmental information services, but, with the approval of the Prime Minister, he asked me

to help him from time to time in that work. For some months I have been doing that, though this is the first time that it has been announced, and in the course of that work I have had a chance of looking very closely into the Central Office of Information amongst other things. . . . I have no function in the Central Office of Information. No one but the employees of the Central Office of Information have a function in it, but I have the function to assist the Lord President of the Council in that part of his work which deals with the supervision of Government publicity and to advise and assist him.

First of all, it is untrue to describe the Central Office of Information as a Ministry of Information. It is not a Ministry of Information. The central services operate at the request and under the sponsorship of a number of State Departments. It is not, as it were, a Ministry with a policy of its own; the policy is decided by the various Ministerial Departments who use its services, both at home and abroad. It is, I think, essential that there should be such a common service for the Departments, partly because it is more economic. . . .

Whether or not the Government have the right and the duty to make and to spread information in this way is, I think, the principle which really divides us on this matter. I think it is absolutely essential with modern democracies, that the Government of the day, whatever its party position, has a duty to undertake a far greater field of information work than was ever so in the past. The modern world is extremely complex. The great danger to democracy is that people fail to understand the elaborate processes which are going on around them, especially in a world where extremely complex things, like dollar balances, affect their daily lives. They are in no position even to reach a rational decision one way or the other unless there is far more information at their disposal than was ever thought necessary in the past.

It is also necessary that the Government should, on occasion, undertake work of persuasion. It is essential to get certain recruiting done, for instance, or national savings, or to explain why salvage must be collected; there are certain sorts of work of persuasion. . . .

. . . In that connection, I want to say quite clearly that a very great work of public information has, in my view, been done by the Central Office of Information and other services of the Government in the last two years. I think today people have an infinitely better understanding and knowledge of the problems, than they had two or three years ago, a far better understanding of the complex problems of the balance of trade, the inter-connection of one thing with another, in this very complicated world in which we live. The ordinary people in the street, although we have not done enough yet, know infinitely more of these complex things than they did two years ago, and to that extent we are a better democracy, and we are proud and glad that this work has been done. . . .

. . . I turn now to the question of political propaganda coming in. Granted, for the moment, that we must have a Central Office of Information, or something like it, there is a risk of the line between public information and party propaganda being transgressed. I believe it is easy to draw that line, and that the Central Office of Information have, in fact, with great success, drawn the line between claiming credit for a particular party Government for something done and informing the people. Here I am talking about trying to persuade the people to action. I admit that there is a risk, of which the Central Office of Information are aware, and I

think it right to say that the risk is being avoided.

Everything the Central Office of Information does is wholly in the open. Everything it does is seen by the public, and everybody can see every booklet it puts out; no party or other organisation can affect its lectures, and so on. If there were any hint of bias it would be known at once, and there is no attempt at canalisation into particular parts of the population, or anything like that. The whole thing is completely open. The hon. Member mentioned the very short reference to the direction of labour in "Matter of Fact, No. 5." It seems to me essential that when Parliament and the Government have decided on a thing like the direction of labour, it is the duty of the Government to make that plain and explain it to the people, for it is one of the great things affecting their lives. It would be a dereliction from our duty if we did not so inform them.

I must admit that on the question of briefing speakers on the National Insurance Scheme, the hon. Member is on much better ground. I think it was a mistake to put the three Labour Party publications in the same list with the Government publications. On the other hand, it is right to say that these Labour Party publications are not, in fact, propaganda publications; they set out to describe the workings of the Bill. They ought to have been put down in a different part of the list in order to make quite clear that they were not in any way Government publications. It should be remembered, too, that we are speaking of the briefing of speakers and not the actual speech made to the general public. The speakers are always told that if they in any way show party bias, or if there is any complaint which is substantiated, they will at once be dismissed and stopped lecturing. That must be remembered alongside the other point.

Mr. McCorquodale (Epsom): Who is to judge? Are the Government to judge whether there is party bias in their own favour?

Mr. Gordon-Walker: No, the people who employ them judge. Just as in any problem which arises in a Department of State, the people in charge of the particular public servants concerned are responsible.

Mr. Beverley Baxter (Wood Green): How many have been dismissed for such reasons?

Mr. Gordon-Walker: In the last year there have been 15,000 lectures, with two complaints which were about the organisation of the meetings and not political bias; therefore, the question of dismissing personnel has not arisen.

I was sorry to hear the hon. Member mention John Grierson, in a speech which was otherwise devoted to the principle, because in this respect Mr. Grierson is in the position of a civil servant who cannot defend himself. He was in charge of Government film making in this country in the 10 years before the war, which was, therefore, mostly under a Conservative Administration; his chief work being at the Post Office when the late Sir Kingsley Wood was Postmaster-General. He served the Liberal Administration in Canada for seven years; he has advised the Governments of Australia and New Zealand; and he is now coming back into British documentaries, which he largely created, to do an essential job in the national interest, and in the interest of our films. I have no doubt whatever that he is by far the best man for the job, and that is why he has been appointed. . . .

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