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COMMUNISTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Text of Lord Vansittart's House of Lords Speech (*House of Lords, March 29*).

(Continued)

My next instance is concerned with an episode on March 9, when the Reverend Leslie Weatherhead said publicly that we ought to send their Royal Highnesses, Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, to Moscow, to convey to Stalin our sincere good will. And that passed in the Press without a murmur! It was a most impertinent and ignoble suggestion. Stalin has broken forty treaties and has killed off thirty million people in peace time. One would have thought it a little more fitting for Mr. Weatherhead to wish to express good will to the victims, and their surviving relatives. But they, again, passed almost unobserved. That is the tendency—to look the other way. In that, we are—some sections of us at any rate—rather like the Swiss who only the other day refused General de Lattre de Tassigny permission to go into Switzerland because he was going to assail Communism there.

This is a struggle in which there is no neutrality: there is only courage or cowardice. We sing "Fight the good fight with all thy might"—one of the finest religious songs ever written—but I do not think we do. We fight at half strength, with a sort of shandy-gaff faith in our own case. In any case, this half heartedness leads to some remarkable laxities in other directions. I will begin with one of the less important examples. Who was it who sent the venomous, treacherous Mr. Johnson to Moscow to look after our futile paper, *British Ally*? And who followed him up with the callow Mr. Dalglish, bursting with uninvested calf love? And who was it sent to Prague the shapeless Miss Rides—one of the most unprepossessing exports that I have ever seen? And, alas! not unrequited. And who was it who sent the amorous and convertible Mr. Bidwell to Warsaw? How he bit his own country, like all the others! This was not a case of Samson and Delilah; it was a case of Delilah and Little Tich. But who picked Little Tich? Somebody must have been responsible. It is perfectly human to make mistakes. One in a way is all very well, but to go on making them like this seems unpardonable. It is gross carelessness which we cannot afford.

While on this topic, perhaps I may be allowed to make a constructive suggestion. I think we should be well advised now to save the taxpayers' money by cutting out that paper *British Ally*. It does no good. The Russians are already cutting its circulation for us, and in any case it goes only to chosen recipients and they probably, to save their skins, stuff it straight into the waste-paper basket. So I say to the Government: Cut it out, and in return crack down on *Tass* and the *Soviet Monitor*; and you will certainly save on the swings a hundredfold what you have not lost on the roundabouts. And do not stop there. There are other iron curtain agencies here which spend their time in sending out

the most venomous misinformation about this country. We should make it clear that we will not tolerate this. Alternatives if you feel that you must go on with this futile *British Ally* for heaven's sake send out men skilled and seasoned in cold warfare, and not pink pups who have not even had distemper.

It is still too easy to get into this country. I have the greatest sympathy with our authorities on this score. If they are too easy-going they get into trouble with people like me, for example; and if too stern, they run into tragedies like that in which an unhappy Yugoslav recently cast himself from an aeroplane rather than return home. It is a terrible dilemma. But I must none the less maintain that charge to some extent; and as I always proceed from concrete things I will give your Lordships one case of less importance. There was in this country a Hungarian called Mr. Zoltan Roman. He was a prominent member of the Hungarian Communist Party. I should have thought on the whole that he was a rather doubtful quantity. He held a prominent position in the Hungarian textile department and then he was made Minister to Pakistan. Instead of proceeding via Alexandria he elected to go via London, a distinct loop. He then opted to stay here. He stayed with another Hungarian called Mr. Imre Molnar, who was also a prominent member of the Hungarian Communist Party. They obtained permission not only to stay but to work. Mr. Roman, anyhow, was recently travelling, I think, for the Compensation Trading Company of 140, Park Lane, which was founded by Messrs. Robert Benson and Lonsdale. They said apparently that they had been allowed to stay because they had been vouched for by people in the Board of Trade. That may be all right, but what I would like to know is who vouched and on what authority?—because I have a very good and legitimate reason for asking.

There are in this country a number of Hungarians who are passionately anti-Communist and pro-British to their fingertips. I cannot find one of them who was consulted in this matter, and those that I have consulted have told me that, if they had been consulted, they would not have recommended that course. I think we are wrong to neglect elementary precautions of that kind. The planting of agents under the guise of apostasy is the oldest and simplest trick in the world. The Russians make a practice of it. In fact, they have schools for teaching ostensible apostates. I know the addresses of many of them. One was at the former Hotel Imperial in Carlsbad. They send ostensible apostates wholesale into Western Germany and they push them in also elsewhere. I am the last person in the world to wish to refuse asylum to any genuine refugee from any form of totalitarianism, but I think we have reached a point when we must be cautious about those who, having made a good thing out of Communism, ostensibly change their minds.

Even then I would be prepared to make exceptions in absolutely sound cases, but in borderline cases the British public must have the benefit of the doubt. Then our answer must be: "I am sorry. You have made your bed and you must lie on it, even if it should turn out to be the bed of Procrustes." While I am on this matter, I make one further suggestion. Your Lordships will have observed that in Italy very great Communist penetration has occurred by the simple device of allocating all trade with the iron curtain countries to Communist firms in Italy. That cannot happen here, but at the same time, the personnel of the trading associations, and even of commercial houses, engaged in that sort of business ought to be the subject of constant vigilance. If the Government draw those coverts from time to time I do not think they will draw a blank.

While it is still too easy to get into this country, it is also sometimes too easy to get out. I wonder how it came about, for example, that a bunch of British-born Communists—I have their names but they are of no interest to your Lordships' House—were allowed out to the Gold Coast where they raised considerable trouble. For that matter, I also have wondered in the past why the "Yellow" Press of West Africa was allowed to go on with those incitements to violence for so long until an explosion occurred. I do not wish to deal with that matter now. In all this, there is no sign of that stern spirit by which cold wars are won. In all the fields that I have traversed so far, there is no breeze stirring. There are only sluggish streams, and the sun goes down on nobody's wrath.

Next, I pass to naturalisation. In my official days this was the province of a section of the Home Office. I presume that that is still the case. I always said that that was too narrow a basis, and I urged an inter-Departmental Committee, with the Home Office, of course, in the chair, but attended also, at the minimum, by members of the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade and the fighting Services. That was not accepted. Of course, the Home Office do consult other Departments, but that desultory consultation is no real substitute for the permanent work of a Committee such as I have suggested. I have no complaint whatever to make of the Home Office. On the contrary, I found them good colleagues. I consulted them sometimes; sometimes they consulted me. Most of the time I was in the same position as anybody else; I used to wake up and see that so-and-so and so-and-so had been naturalised. Sometimes I knew nothing about them. Sometimes I did. I can remember at least one instance where I learned only six months afterwards that a man had been naturalised, and if I had known sooner I should on no account have approved it. Another reform I have urged in the past was brought up before your Lordships only last week—I refer to the suggestion that those who sponsor aliens should be prepared to have their names made public. I have sponsored quite a few myself without any qualms, and I am always prepared to answer in public for what I have advocated in private. That would have a certain effect in deterring any levity in recommendation. That does occur sometimes, believe me. There is sometimes a little too much of the atmosphere of "Oh, Schmidt or Applebaum or What-have-you is a very good fellow. I will get up behind him." No harm is intended. He is a perfectly good chap so far as they know, but it happens that people are sometimes sponsored by those who have no adequate knowledge of the roots which go back into Europe and which require considerable study. So you occasionally find your Stanleys and your Fuchses slip through the net.

I think those accidents could be prevented.

Mention of the Fuchs case brings me naturally to M.I.5. Normally I should not have mentioned that Department in public. In my time I would have thought it anathema to do so, but the Fuchs case has been followed by such a spate of ill-informed criticism that from considerable experience I feel conscientiously obliged to offer a few words of sober and discreet rectification. Above all, I take this occasion of deploring very deeply the bandying about in public of the names of high officials connected with that Department. That, believe me, is absolutely dead against the public interest. That has occurred so much in this case. Only last week I heard one of the most prominent names made the subject of an exceedingly poor pun in "Much Binding in the Marsh." So low have we come! Having said that, I venture to suggest, with very great respect, that I think the Prime Minister was mistaken in saying that we could not avoid accidents of this kind without some force equivalent to the Gestapo. That statement might leave a certain misapprehension in the public mind which I would like to rectify to-day. To start with, no comparisons with the Gestapo or any other secret police are possible. As we all know, M.I.5 has no executive power; it can only report to the Ministers concerned, and if they deem action appropriate it will be taken by the Special Branch of Scotland Yard.

We have never had a secret police in this country, and I hope we never shall. I venture to say that we have the ideal system for a free country. But these accidents can be prevented, though not by police methods; other qualities are required, and I should not be indiscreet enough to discuss in public what they are. One thing I can say without indiscretion is obvious—that a requisite is sufficient personnel and, therefore, sufficient funds. Here I am on familiar ground. Throughout the long years that preceded the war, I was the intimate personal friend of the heads of our Security Services. We had no secrets from each other, and we shared our apprehension at the oncoming war. When that war came it is only fair, particularly in the light of much of what has been said lately, to remind your Lordships that M.I.5 was equal to the occasion; the Axis agents were "taped," and picked up quickly.

Equally, it is only fair to this House, to this country, and indeed to M.I.5 itself, to repeat what I have already once said in this House—namely, that in the event of another war, M.I.5, through no fault of its own, would not be equal to the occasion. For every Axis agent that there was in those days there are now a hundred Communist agents. This country has been infested by hostile missions, masquerading as diplomacy, and by all the agents that radiate from them; it has been plagued by bogus friendship societies which exist mainly for spreading sedition; and it has been infiltrated by a whole host of fellow-travellers and double-crossers, who present the greatest problem of all. In other words, our security services are confronted with an impossible task, and if war came, I think it more than possible that not only would they be overrun, they would be swamped.

I am quite used to having my advice disregarded—I take that all in good part; but I have it on my conscience to say to-day, that if we continue to drift along as at present we may be courting disaster. If we were really wise, we should reduce all our missions behind the iron curtain, beginning with Moscow, to the level of consulates, and insist upon a similar reduction here. In that way, we should greatly diminish the area of espionage and sedition and all the rest

of it. I do not suppose such a step will be readily contemplated, but it would be in the national interest if we did it. Even that would not be enough in the case of the worst offenders. Take Hungary, for example, which has not only treated this Government with the utmost insolence but has treated British subjects with brutality that defies description. Let us make an example of them. I say, break off both commercial and diplomatic relations and let them whistle for the Western trade that they need so badly. I would apply much the same criticism to Czechoslovakia. At the very next "crack" out of the box, the next piece of insolence from them, I would apply the same medicine. But that is a digression.

I said just now that M.I.5 sufficed in 1939; but it only just sufficed because within my experience it has been the Cinderella of the services. It has been under-staffed. I wonder how often in my time I asked for just a little more help in this vital branch of national defence. There was a time, indeed, when recruiting was difficult—though I am not going into details about that. Again, I am not speaking from gossip or hearsay, but of my own knowledge of circumstances and events, when I say that I have known good men go in and come out because they did not think the prospect good enough. Perhaps I may leave it at this, my Lords: that we want the best security; we may want it badly, even desperately; and to get the best, we must make security a career worthy of the best. I am happy to say that there have been considerable improvements since my time, but I doubt still whether they are enough. To my mind, the numbers are not adequate, and to that extent the Prime Minister is right. Simple sums will show that. For example, to watch a man for twenty-four hours a day requires three men working in shifts of eight hours.

(To be continued)

NOTE:—Conformably with the limitation of space available, we give publicity in this issue to Lord Stansgate's attack on Lord Vansittart (described in at least one quarter as 'ill-conceived'), concurrently with the continued publication of the speech made five weeks ago which occasioned it. Undeterred by the discouragement of the House of Lords, Lord Stansgate (formerly Mr. W. Wedgwood Benn, a Liberal who joined the Labour Party in 1927) recorded in the clerk's book in the House of Lords a "protest" against the refusal of the House to censure Lord Vansittart's speech of March 29. We are endeavouring to present the chief speeches of this episode in their entirety.

According to *The Times* of May 4, "Lord Stansgate had given notice that if Lord Addison's motion ["That the previous question be now put" in the House of Lords Debate on May 2 (See p. 5)] were carried he would enter a protest. In accordance with Standing Order No. XXXV, his protest was entered yesterday 'before the hour of 2 o'clock,' and was signed before the rising of the House. This procedure, which is peculiar to the House of Lords, has been followed four times in the last 40 years, the last occasion being in 1931. Lord Stansgate's protest gives the grounds for his disagreement with the House as follows:—

"Because by its vote the House declined to censure the speech of Lord Vansittart on March 29 last;

"Because the said speech lacked dignity and good taste; neglected and defied the accustomed rules concerning the mention of governments of Foreign States in amity with

his Majesty; and because the said speech contained slanderous statements, made without sufficient supporting evidence, of private individuals who have no redress at law;

"Because such conduct, if persisted in, will be hurtful to the dignity and reputation of this House, and may even bring into question the Privilege of Parliament."

PARLIAMENT

(continued from page 8.)

Several Noble Lords: Hear, hear.

Viscount Stansgate:—and it is perhaps not for me to make a suggestion; but I think it would be extremely unwise if this House were not to impose restraint upon itself. I do not think it will do any good to the prestige or the power of this House. People may say: "Yes, but if the noble Lord feels strongly about this, why should he not have an opportunity of speaking?" With that I am in entire agreement. This is the place to debate these national dangers, as the noble Lord sees them. He can go out and make his speeches in the country. He can write his books. If he wished—I do not know whether he has done so—he could pass any information that he has to the security authorities. The noble Lord was invited to do that by the Lord Chancellor. It would be the first duty of anyone to do that. But if he thinks that the material which he has is not suitable for expert examination, let him use it in debate. The only thing he must not do is, having carried on his campaign with fervour and belief in the country, to come here and use this place as a platform for privileged libel—

A Noble Lord: Slander.

Viscount Stansgate:—which he is afraid to repeat outside. That is the simple issue. That is the issue in defence of the Privilege of this House. This is not an ordinary political Motion. It is an appeal on a point of Order to each of your Lordships. Do you think that I am justified in moving to regret that the noble Lord

"Did not use due care in the exercise of the Privilege of Parliament"?

I have thought the matter over, and I do not think he did. When I am asked on that point of order, I shall say "No." Your Lordships must judge for yourselves. I beg to move.

Moved to resolve. That this House, ever jealously regarding the Privilege of Parliament, is no less zealous to provide against its abuse, and regrets that the Lord Vansittart, in the speech which he made in this House on March 29 last, did not use due care in the exercise of the Privilege of Parliament.—(*Viscount Stansgate*).

(To be continued)

REALISTIC CONSTITUTIONALISM

(Notes for an Address to the Constitutional Research Association at Brown's Hotel, Mayfair, May 8, 1947)

by C. H. DOUGLAS

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Saturday, May 13, 1950.

From Week to Week

According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, three candidates for the post of Israeli Minister in London are in the running—Dr. Moshe Smoira, Mr. Isaac Olshan and Mr. Zvi Swartz. Both Mr. Justice Olshan and Mr. Swartz are of the London School of Economics, where Mr. Olshan was a contemporary of Mr. Shertok (Sharrett), Israeli Foreign Minister.

History is replete with instances of collective insanity, although to do poor human nature bare justice, it is quite possible that collective organisation led by insane administrators may be a better description for many of them. Indeed, the instigators of such lunacies as the Crusades, and their true origin in the propaganda which forced the barons to mortgage their estates and to equip themselves for physical and territorial ruin as an alternative to social disgrace, are now easily identified; in fact, the technique is still highly successful and in use on the largest scale.

But there has probably never been anything quite like the dollar gap, *etc.*, racket. Nothing shakes it. Every country in the world is laughing at the British, except the British. "The Americans" complain that Europe in general, but "Britain" in particular, is not spending enough Marshall Aid dollars to provide Americans with pleasant holidays "to close the dollar gap." "Many of them" says Representative Mansfield of Montana "are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on projects or industries that could not possibly measure up to the tourist industry as future dollar earners."

You see, it doesn't matter what you make or what you do, or what you get or how you live. You were born into the world to close the dollar gap, and don't you forget it. And don't overlook your future.

We do not recall, in recent years, a more competent appraisal of a once-major political party than that of Mr. Frank Chodorov in a recent issue of *Human Events* under the title of *Obituary on Liberalism*. Any extensive paraphrase of it would be an injustice to its concise structure; but a comment on its major proposition, that the essence of Liberalism or Whiggism as a philosophy, is best (we should prefer to say, most briefly) expressed in the statement by Thomas Jefferson; "That Government is best which governs least."

Mr. Chodorov's elaboration of the philosophy of Whiggism follows closely, and is doubtless modelled on the work of the Victorian giant, Herbert Spencer. In regard to this we think too much attention cannot be paid to the emphasis on the virtues of negative action.

We have many times in these columns made reference to the significant propaganda for unlimited positive policies, not excluding that pursued so consistently by the Gadarene

swine.

But it is in the clear distinction which is drawn between the philosophy of Liberalism, and its politics that the major value of this appraisal seems to us to reside. As the essayist expresses it:—

"The decline of liberalism, the dilution of its philosophy, began with its success. As its advocates acquired political influence and power, the doctrine of negativeness gave way to positiveness. The about-face was supported with plausibilities, but the real cause for it must be traced to the human inclination toward the enjoyment of power, both for the exhilaration that comes from its use and for the accompanying emoluments and adulation.

"The liberals argued, after they had come into power, that if the social good prospered by the removal of restraints, it was because those who effected the removal were instigated by the highest motive; hence, the good these men had accomplished by negative action would be vastly augmented by what they would do positively. It is not the laws that are bad, as the earlier liberals maintained, it is the bad law makers who frame them. So, they introduced laws to ameliorate some condition, and when the results proved unsatisfactory, they introduced laws to rectify the results; and every law enlarged upon their powers."

Corruptio optimi pessima. We have often expressed the opinion that in their time and place, there was much in the professed sentiments of Whigs and Liberals with which no decent minded man could quarrel. But we cannot recall a single instance of practical "Liberal" legislation which could be said to be the policy of the original or let us say, Spencerian, philosophy. Whether *post hoc*, or *propter hoc*, we do not know; but it is certain that Whiggism has been the chosen and amazingly successful instrument of Jewish Grand Larceny.

Mr. Morgan Phillips for Australia?

Recent press reports in Australia, have stated that Mr. Morgan Phillips, Secretary of the British Labour-Socialist Party, has been approached by the A.L.P. to take a political appointment in Australia. It is suggested that the A.L.P. contemplates a drastic reorganisation and a vigorous educational drive as a prelude to the next Federal Elections.

Writing in the Melbourne *Argus* of March 3, Mr. Geoffrey Hutton comments on the proposal to bring Phillips to Australia and provides the following information: "Born in Aberdare . . . went to London School of Economics on a Labour Party grant, and was trained for party administrative work, has a wide knowledge of Marxist and anti-Marxist Labour literature."

Mr. St. Barbe Baker

We regret that in the article "Notes on World Soil Erosion" which appeared in our issue of April 29, the name of R. St. Barbe Baker was given as R. St. Barbe.

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PARLIAMENT

House of Lords: May 2, 1950.

Parliamentary Privilege

Viscount Stansgate had given notice to call attention to the speech of the Lord Vansittart, in this House, on Wednesday, March 29 last, in which contrary to the accepted usage of this House, he made imputations upon the conduct of a member of this House, namely the Lord Bishop of Bradford, without having given him prior notice thereof; and, in which, further, without due regard to their truth or falsity, and without sufficient investigation, he made serious allegations against the character and conduct of certain persons or groups of persons by name, who, owing to the Privilege of Parliament, have neither remedy nor opportunity to vindicate or defend themselves; and

To move to resolve "That this House, ever jealously regarding the Privilege of Parliament, is no less zealous to provide against its abuse, and regrets that the Lord Vansittart, in the speech which he made in this House on March 29 last, did not use due care in the exercise of the Privilege of Parliament."

The Marquess of Exeter: My Lords, I beg to rise to a point of order. As one of the oldest members of this House, I venture to ask your Lordships to bear with me for a few moments before the next business, which may give rise to some contention, is proceeded with. Before proceeding further, however, I think I should apologise to the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, for my rather unusual intervention—but perhaps he realises that his Resolution is somewhat unusual also. I would humbly remind your Lordships that, through custom, and confirmed by Standing Orders, there is no Chairman of this House in the accepted sense; therefore it lies with your Lordships to order proceedings so as to conform with the traditional dignity and restraint which has almost always marked our deliberations. I propose to ask your Lordships to order that Standing Order No. XXVIII (Asperity of Speech), which may have bearing upon the situation which has arisen, be read by the Clerk at the Table. I have been able to find only two occasions, in the years 1871 and 1872, when this Order No. XXVIII has been read in the last 150 years. I beg to move.

Moved, That Standing Order No. XXVIII (Asperity of Speech) be now read.—(*The Marquess of Exeter*.)

On Question, Motion agreed to: the said Standing Order read accordingly, as follows:

"To prevent misunderstanding, and for avoiding of offensive speeches, when matters are debating, either in the House or at Committees, it is for honour sake thought fit, and so ordered. That all personal, sharp, or taxing speeches be forborn, and whosoever answereth another man's speech shall apply his answer to the matter without wrong to the person: and as nothing offensive is to be spoken, so nothing is to be ill-taken, if the party that speaks it shall presently make a fair exposition, or clear denial of the words that might bear any ill-construction; and if any offence be given in that kind, as the House itself will be very sensible thereof, so it will sharply censure the offender, and give the party offended a fit reparation, and a full satisfaction."

Viscount Stansgate: My Lords, I assure your Lordships, especially in view of the warning which has been read at the instigation of the noble Marquess, who is one of the most senior members of this House, that I shall give no cause for offence to your Lordships—indeed, I think it is rather the other way round. As your Lordships can well

imagine, I find it a matter of the deepest regret to propose any Motion which criticises a fellow member of your Lordships' House, and I beg your Lordships to believe that I do so only because I sincerely believe that it is necessary to defend the interests of the weak and helpless.

On March 29 we discussed great things, the bearing of a free people in defending their liberty and the duty of Christianity to bring its mind to bear on the torturing problems of the day. These are topics worthy of debate, and I hope we shall resume their discussion. My Motion to-day, however, has nothing whatever to do with the substance of the debate on March 29. If you read the Motion, your Lordships will not find the word "Communism" occurring from beginning to end. My Motion might have arisen on any subject. It concerns the bearing of members of this House and the effect of their bearing on Privilege, and the possible effect on Privilege of abuse by members of this House. I should perhaps apologise to the right reverend Prelate, the Lord Bishop of Bradford, because in giving the general picture it was necessary to mention what had already been mentioned in debate, that no notice was given to the Church about this attack. I hope that the right reverend Prelate will forgive me, but a question of Privilege was involved and the matter had to be raised at once. Needless to say, it was not my business nor desire to defend the right reverend Prelate, who I am sure can well speak for himself.

It is not necessary to warn old Members of Parliament about the value of Privilege. It is the life-blood of Parliament. To employ the glorious cadences of Hebrews XI; By Privilege Parliament defeated the despotism of the King; By Privilege Parliament defends its Members from Ministers, as in the Sandys case. By Privilege we may defend ourselves against bureaucrats who put themselves above the courts. And I hope your Lordships will not criticise me for adding that it may be necessary by Privilege to defend ourselves against the tyranny of the Party machine. Privilege is very precious. Privilege is the living heart of a free Parliament. It could not be destroyed by frontal attack, but it might be injured by an insidious misuse and undermining; and it is to prevent that that I have put down my Motion.

I hope your Lordships will consider that the part of the Resolution regretting that the noble Lord, Lord Vansittart "did not use due care," is worded in a moderate way. The operative clauses are that the noble Lord acted without due regard to "truth or falsity" and "without sufficient investigation." My first and indeed my only duty is to produce evidence, if such exists, to prove that those statements are true, and if those statements are true, then I shall claim your Lordships' assent to this Motion. I ask your Lordships to observe that this is not a general political Motion; it is a point of order. All of us judge points of order severally and generally. We are all Speakers in this House, and therefore the true way in which to look at my Motion is as a point of order. What is meant by "due regard to their truth or falsity"? It does not mean that it is sufficient for a noble Lord to come and say, "So far as I know, this is true," or "To the best of my knowledge and belief, I have stated the truth." "Due regard" means that a speaker who knows he is speaking under the Privilege of Parliament must exercise the most scrupulous care to see that the facts he lays before fellow members are in every respect accurate.

I shall not detain your Lordships for more than a few moments as this is a point of order, and although there

may be other instances which would support my complaint I will take four or five. Some of them your Lordships may think are trivial, but you will have to decide individually whether in these cases due care was exercised. I first looked in the noble Lord's speech for evidence to support the charges that he made. I found very little. I have no means of private inquiry, and I took the ordinary step of using the telephone and asking people, "Is this true?"

I will give your Lordships the result of some of my inquiries. The first case I take is that of the Bureau of Current Affairs. I have heard of it, but I know little about it. It appears to be an educational institution run without profit for the purpose of giving educational services—pamphlets, lectures, and so on—to those who require them or wish to buy them. Although it is not run for profit, naturally it depends for revenue on the sale of its services.

If your Lordships will look at the noble Lord's speech, you will see that he said these things about the Bureau of Current Affairs. I have the text here, because I want to be exact, although I do not want to weary your Lordships; I have not the least desire to be inaccurate, and if I am wrong I shall be corrected. The noble Lord said, first of all, that the Bureau of Current Affairs employed a pamphlet writer who is a Communist—he is called Kenneth Syers. The noble Lord used a wealth of rhetorical flourishes with which I can deal later—that is all a matter of taste. He said that this Communist had written a pamphlet which was "a lot of muck" and a combination of mendacity and ignorance. That is what these people were trying to sell to the public. I do not know whether you can libel an economist. I keep clear of them myself. I rather share the view of, I think it was Walter Bagehot, who said:

"No one is really sorry when a political economist dies."

At any rate I do not know whether you can libel a man who writes a pamphlet; but if you call a pamphlet "muck" and say that it is a combination of mendacity and ignorance (I read it, indeed I went to the Balkans two years ago in order to inform myself, and I think the pamphlet is rather good, but I am no judge) that would be held in the courts to be libellous. Having said that, the noble Lord makes a slip and says:

"This society is supported by the Pilgrim Trust."

It did not take me a minute on the telephone to inquire from the Pilgrim Trust and find that that was not so. The Pilgrim Trust is a fund generously donated by an American, Mr. Harkness, for useful educational purposes in this country. But it took the noble Lord four days, between the Wednesday and the Monday, before the statement appeared in the newspapers that a mistake had been made about the Pilgrim Trust. I am sure it did the noble Lord credit that he corrected the mistake, but it is a pity he did not use due care in ascertaining the facts before making his statement.

My second case concerns the Office of the Festival of Britain. I do not know whether your Lordships realise the rather grim prospect before us. Next year we propose to invite well-to-do foreigners to share the glories of our climate and the merriment of the public mood in what we rather exotically call "The Festival of Britain." This organisation is doing its best. In his speech the noble Lord said—again if I do not use the exact text your Lordships must excuse me, as I am trying to save time: "I am sure there is nothing in this; I know there is nothing sinister in it; it is just darned silly"—that is a little touch I like. But the operative words are that he says the office is being

"used for the dissemination of a pamphlet by a gentleman who calls himself Jiri Hronek."

He is quite well known. He is the secretary of the International Institution of Journalists, and is a Communist. The noble Lord says the office is being used for that purpose by Mr. Hronek, who is one of the worst enemies of our country. What does "dissemination" mean? There was a sower who went forth to sow. The noble Lord says it is being used for the popularisation of Communist propaganda. The first observation I have to make about that is that it is bad for trade. People who come here to spend money do not, as a rule, like Communists, and it may be that they will go elsewhere instead of coming and joining with us in the gaiety of 1951. The second observation I have to make on it is that it is untrue. That is the point.

Seven days later his Lordship told us that something had been found in Savoy Court, which I believe is the office of the Festival. I rang up Mr. Barry, which his Lordship never did—I was informed that the noble Lord made no inquiry at the office. I do not know Mr. Barry. He seemed on the telephone to be a very affable man and was most ready to give me information. He said that there was not a word of truth in the whole story. What really happened was that somebody had posted a copy of this pamphlet to the office. We might all suffer from that; it is a thing which happens to us all. The man who received it in the office did what many of us would do with such a pamphlet—namely, put it in the wastepaper basket. That was the basis of the charge that the offices of the Festival of Britain were being used for the dissemination of Communist propaganda and the popularisation of the works of this notorious Communist. I cannot say that that is having due care in the exercise of the Privilege of Parliament, or to truth or falsehood.

If time permitted, it really opens the way to further inquiries. How did the noble Lord get the pamphlet? Has he, in fact, got the pamphlet? Who gave it to him? Who is this person who obligingly goes to the wastepaper basket and provides the noble Lord with this material? Will the noble Lord give us the name when he speaks?

Lord Vansittart: I will give you everything when I speak—I will give the "works."

Viscount Stansgate: We have come to a strange pass, my Lords, when we are now to be treated to debates based on a collection of material from the wastepaper baskets of public offices. However, that is a matter which is not really material. The material point is that the information was false—that office was not being used for the dissemination of Communist propaganda.

Your Lordships may not think that my third case is particularly substantial, but it interests me, because I have long been in Parliament and I am an earnest student of Parliamentary matters. My third case concerns some company called the Compensation Trading Company. I do not know anything about that company. I rang them up and a voice answered—I think it was the voice of a foreign gentleman. He said that what was in *Hansard* was not true, and would I go to the office to investigate for myself. I said that I had not the time, nor was I a capable investigator, and that is where I left the matter. The interesting thing about the charge is this. There is a Hungarian Communist called Roman, so far as I can remember. He is "of dubious quantity," says the noble Lord. He is employed as an agent or representative of the Compensation Trading Company,

whatever that may be. It will not help him in his business to be told that he is a dubious quantity and a Communist. Then the noble Lord says: "Who vouched for this man? I ask the question because I have a very good reason to ask." Really, my Lords, are we not only to have these personal attacks in your Lordships' House, but to be told that these attacks are made on the basis of some information which is not given to us beyond the remark, "I have a very good reason to ask"? I dare say it is important, but I do not think it shows much due care. Certainly it is a development in Parliamentary technique which I think will interest all students in both Houses.

I now come to the next case. I should perhaps give an exact quotation here, because it is very important. The noble Lord said:

"I come to another field in which there is some infection"—

that means Communist infection—

"and that is the Church."

The right reverend Prelate the Lord Bishop of Bradford is here, and he will no doubt speak for himself, but I am interested in the question from the Parliamentary standpoint. After the sentence I have just quoted there are two or three columns of decorative abuse of various clerics. I dare say they deserve it, but I do not know, and I am not going to say. There are the words, "Communist . . . gyration" and so forth, and after we have been treated to this there is something about the Dean of Canterbury, which I will mention a little later. We turn the page and we see:

"My next instance is concerned with an episode on March 9, when the Reverend Leslie Weatherhead said . . ."
 "My next instance," of course, means "next instance of Communist infection." Dr. Leslie Weatherhead appears to have made the suggestion that there should be a Royal Mission to Moscow. It may have been very foolish; the suggestion is not new, and I do not comment upon it. But how is it described? Having been told that Dr. Leslie Weatherhead is an instance of Communist infection, we are told that his suggestion is "impertinent and ignoble." What does "ignoble" mean? It means "Inspired by the basest motives." How can one say that due care has been taken. This eminent divine has already taken what steps he can to clear himself, though it is difficult to catch up with this sort of thing—I do not know whether Dr. Weatherhead succeeded in clearing himself. I strongly object to people being persecuted for opinions. I am all for public security, but I am also for free opinion. I say that a charge of this kind is a most amazing charge, and that charge alone would justify the Motion that I have laid. Think of the injustice done to this gentleman. For years people will say—it will be a nuisance, to put it no higher—"Dr. Weatherhead? Is that not the man who was denounced by Lord Vansittart in his great anti-Communist speech?" It is a smirch, and a smirch which the noble Lord has no right to inflict under the protection of Privilege.

I now come to the last case. This is a difficult case, and I am not sure that I shall be able to convince your Lordships on it. However, I will give you all the information most of which you may think will tell against me. I come next to the case of a Society called the Council of Clergy and Ministers for Common Ownership, a body which was founded in 1942 and which included members of all Parties. One of its earliest meetings was addressed by a Communist, a Commonwealth candidate and my noble friend Lord Ammon. I asked my noble friend about this and he is still not ashamed

of it. This Society also advocated friendship with Russia. At that time the safety of this country depended upon the incredible gallantry of the Russian armies. This Society was attempting to put into practice, in a Socialist way, the belief of its members. It may have been wrong, but it was a real attempt to translate religious belief into action.

The Secretary of the Council was a Mr. Cope. I have never had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Cope, although I hope to do so. Mr. Cope was a priest. Of course he is not a Canon, but you cannot expect Lord Vansittart, who is very busy, to be an expert in Crockford's *Clerical Directory*. The Reverend Mr. Cope was a parish priest in Worcestershire. When this attack was made the first thing that happened was that his successor, the vicar, the churchwardens and the church council met together and said: "We are Liberals, we are Conservatives and we are Labour men, but we resent this attack on our old vicar, for whose ministrations we remain very grateful." I received a letter from a vicar at Stanford-le-Hope who said that he

"hoped I would not think it an impertinence, but he wished to acknowledge Mr. Cope's service in his parish."

The head of the university where Mr. Cope works as tutor, Sir Raymond Priestley, immediately issued a protest against this attack, and that protest was followed by others.

I have done what I can to make due investigation, as the noble Lord should have done. Now I come to a difficult point. In 1942, this Society was founded. It issued a series of pamphlets—they were known as *Magnificent pamphlets*. The first was called *Christianity and the class conflict*. The pamphlet examined the Marxian dogma from the Christian point of view, and I may say that I was entirely in agreement with the foreword to this pamphlet, which said:

"The arguments are well worth the careful consideration of all who, in these, apocalyptic days, have the duty of trying to declare the Mind of Christ as to the judgment which has come on the world."

If we cannot have Christian clergymen examining what they call "the state of the world," what hope is there? It may not be the only hope, but certainly the greatest hope would be in such a Christian examination. I read that pamphlet several times, and I cannot make out how far it refutes and how far it approves the Marxist prognosis. I have not been able to find anything about the killings of opponents and "giving the loot to the boys."

This is pedestrian language I am using, but I am soon going to rise to the rhetorical flights of the noble Lord himself. I have not been able to find in the pamphlet anything about the "loot" and "the boys," but I have found one sentence which is perhaps the weakest part of my case. It says that at a certain stage of this class conflict (this is jargon we all know very well, and terminology with which we are all familiar) there may be resistance. Then it says—and these words will seem horrid to your Lordships—that it may be necessary "to liquidate" the opponents of the new order. There you have it—"to liquidate." Now what does "liquidate" mean? It means a lot of things. If you look in the *Oxford English Dictionary* you will find the commercial meaning of the word, but we know perfectly well that it can have a sinister meaning. I take a great literary authority, and I will read what he says:

"When Millerand tried to lead he was liquidated."

"Liquidate" is Lord Vansittart's expression. I do not think it can exclusively mean to shoot or kill, but as it happens

Mr. Cope took the precaution in his pamphlet, after the word "liquidate," to say what he meant. He said: "That is, disfranchise or imprison." They are harsh measures, but not shooting and killing.

Now we come to what is built upon the foundation which I have described as fully as I can. On this foundation—and your Lordships have all the information at your own disposal—the noble Lord makes the remark which I will quote in a moment. Your Lordships have heard about this man and what he was. I might have added that the pamphlet was written in 1942, has been out of print for six years, and is not now obtainable. I thought when I heard the noble Lord's speech that this was some Communist "poison" which was being currently distributed, but I found it impossible to obtain a copy until Mr. Cope was good enough to send me one.

This is the language which the noble Lord used, in the House of Lords:

"... a particularly murderous priest called Canon Gilbert Cope"—

he is not, of course, a canon—

"... openly advocated the killing off of his political opponents and the distribution of the loot among the boys who did the job. . . . Anybody who knows anything about this man Cope must have known that he was a potential killer . . ."

I am not a lawyer, but I cannot imagine a grosser criminal libel against any man. Yet we are asked (for we are all judges—we are all sitting Speaker to-day) to give the privilege of Parliament to the noble Lord in the use of words of that kind against a man with whose political opinions and beliefs most of us in this House disagree. I hope that when the noble Lord answers—we shall be interested to hear all the new material he has, but it might be a good idea for him to deal first with the old—he will give a simple answer to the question whether he showed "due care." That is all that is in the Motion.

I have now finished with what I may call the police court part of the case, and I should like to make one or two general observations. So far as Privilege of Parliament is concerned, of course, we are not governed by the rulings in the House of Commons, but May in his description (rather than definition) of Privilege refers to Privilege in the High Court of Parliament. You may say that Privilege is one, as applying to both Houses of Parliament. The subject is graded into matters of taste; matters of order; what is permissible language; and who are protected people; and from these to libel and criminal libel. That is the gradation. In matters of taste everybody must be his own judge. I am rather a follower of Lord Vansittart, in this matter of taste: I am against convention and I am all for the original touch and the uncensored gag. I am against convention. I went to the Academy the other day and came back more than ever an admirer of Picasso. That is a matter for each individual himself. The trouble with the noble Lord, Lord Vansittart, is that he imagines that he is the only person who loves his country, and that nobody else can defend it. Like Bottom the Weaver, he says, in effect, "Let me play the lion part. I will roar and make the Duke say, 'Let him roar again.'" Unfortunately, as your Lordships will remember, Bottom was cast for a much humbler rôle.

On matters of taste I have nothing more to say, but I turn for a moment to the question of prohibited words. I am not suggesting that we are to follow the House of Commons, but I am suggesting that this is a matter which

will have to be considered. There is a list of prohibited words—we know them all. I have never tried to use them myself, though I have spent 35 years arguing with the Chair, not always successfully, but I have never believed in the use of violent language when speaking in the House. I suggest that if Lord Vansittart had made in the other place the speech that he made here recently he would not have completed more than two or three sentences without being pulled up by the Speaker; and if he had refused to withdraw he would have been suspended. What about protected persons? Of course we all know that the name of His Majesty must not be introduced for the purpose of influencing the debate, and that there must be no criticism of judges, except on substantive Resolution. But what is often forgotten is that May says:

"any kind of opprobrious references be cast in debate on sovereigns or rulers over or Governments, of countries in amity with His Majesty"—

that is to say countries with which we are not at war—

"or their representatives in this country."

I think that that has been very widely overlooked in this House. I am not suggesting we should adopt that rule here, but it is rigidly enforced in the other place. It has been infringed here again and again. The noble Lord has made references to the President of the Austrian Republic and to King Leopold of the Belgians. The reference was made in 1946 to the President of the Austrian Republic—but it is immaterial and I have not the references here.

Several Noble Lords: What was the reference?

Viscount Stansgate: It does not really matter. But the noble Lord will not deny references in the last debate to the Head of a State.

Lord Vansittart: Which Head of State was it?

Viscount Stansgate: Mr. Stalin.

Lord Vansittart: Did the noble Viscount expect me to be laudatory?

Viscount Stansgate: I did not expect the noble Lord to praise Marshal Stalin, of course. But the noble Lord has absolutely no experience, or a very short experience, of Parliament and, so far as I can judge, no Parliamentary instinct. I expected at least that he should obey rules which have been imposed on the House of Commons all these years.

Several Noble Lords: He is not in the House of Commons.

Viscount Stansgate: This is a matter which some time this House will have to decide. The House of Commons has fought a long battle for Privilege and that House is in a very strong position. It leaves mainly to the Speaker the defence of Privilege and the prevention of its abuse. The Speaker is doubly buttressed. First he is elected to Parliament, and then, in Parliament, is elected to the Chair. His authority is unchallenged; and at the beginning of every Parliament the Speaker secures confirmation of Privilege from the Crown. These things fortify the position of the Commons, and yet if they think it necessary to impose upon themselves such restraints as I have described, they have done so because they found it necessary to protect Privilege by preventing its abuse. I have not been here myself more than a short time—

(continued on page 3.)