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What is Wealth?

(An Address to The Contemporary Club, Dublin)

by MARTEN CUMBERLAND.

Mr. Chairman, members of The Contemporary Club:—When a man is asked to chat, informally, to a group of intelligent people, in the hope of starting something in the nature of a discussion, he must attempt to be provocative. But I don't think that means he has to be flippant—and still less, inane.

The title of this little talk being, *What Is Wealth?* it may occur to you that the subject is so vast in its scope, so tremendous in its range and its implications, that nothing useful is likely to emerge . . . And that may well be so. But one feels that courtesy alone calls for this preliminary assurance: one has, at least, spent one's life studying—from every angle—the material one is dealing with . . . For some forty years not a day has passed without one being deeply concerned; and as a thing called *progress* has become redder in tooth and claw, one's concern and one's apprehensions have grown livelier . . . My first statement is this: The artist identifies Wealth with Joy. He says, quite simply, that Wealth is something you enjoy, and that you get it—or, in a scriptural sense—*know it*—only when you enjoy it. Plainly there is a joy of anticipation; but that is only fulfilled by gratification.

Fruition then is an essential part of the normal man's enjoyment of wealth. To put that another way, enjoying and gaining wealth are one and the same thing. What we call normality is an important aspect here: a morbid gloating over wealth never enjoyed is not a gain, but a loss that will probably mean insanity. The psychotic who starves to death and is picked up under a railway-arch with banknotes sewn in his rags has never gained or enjoyed wealth. The frenzied power-lust of a monopolist, who wishes to make himself important by interfering with the lives of others, is something that does not represent 'making good,' but only making money. Psychologically speaking it is a form of fetishism.

And the same thing applies to the new poor—the Leveller—the politician of envy and hate. He desires merely to play the same tricks as those rich who are always with us. Communism is the poor man's Fascism; and Fascism the rich man's Communism. You pay your money, but you don't take your choice. You get what the Leveller thinks is good for you. These people profess a loyalty to Russia,—where Nevsky Prospekt pleases and only man is vile. They rush in where Marx and Engels feared to tread. They claim to have ideals of abolishing poverty—in time—and a few

dozen five-year plans. But sincere action could start eliminating poverty tomorrow: its existence is artificially created.

The Leveller betrays himself by stating that he desires to *come to power*. For power, as Lord Acton pointed out, is a criminal's word. All power corrupts, but the arriviste is corrupted before he gets there; and remains corrupt, whether he arrives as Dictator, or is merely a fellow-traveller travelling hopefully. . . .

The real point is that all political parties destroy wealth—withholding it by price-fixing, and by taxation, direct and indirect. Actually these people are not in power: they all borrow money—which places them—and us—in the power of those from whom they borrow. A dog-fight is one thing: Wealth and Joy quite other things. And the under-dog is not likely to gain by a perpetual dog-fight.

Yet, of course, Joy is a subjective value, insensible of scientific measurement . . . differing with each individual. So the ascetic hermit living in the desert on water and a handful of dates may know a plenitude of joyful living beyond the dreams of economists. Asceticism is an important aspect, but one has time only to offer a single suggestion: which is that asceticism is a very personal and individual Joy: it is not a concept that is valid for large western communities, and it is not workable in our highly-elaborated civilisation. Austerity then, thrust upon a community is suspect. That pertinent and searching question, *Cui bono?* will raise its pretty head. A gospel of the joys of going without preached, to a community living under an economy already failing to serve human needs, is obscene. Poverty is one thing; misery another—a fact clearly recognised 400 years ago, when we had a civilisation. The withholding of wealth is of course its destruction; and, over and above moral considerations, are the ineluctable laws of biological survival. First a system must work. Systems that would make us moral by legislation not only fail, but they are invariably unethical. As Chesterton said, "Prohibition doesn't prohibit."

There are two things, and only two things Man can do with the fruits of this earth: he can enjoy, or destroy. So far, all through recorded history, mankind have not hesitated in making their choice. All civilisations, in their technical progress have declined morally and aesthetically, into a wholesale organisation of wealth-destruction. And the cultures of ancient Egypt and Mexico (with its advanced socialism) were entombed beneath the pyramids so painfully erected by their slave-labour. We no longer produce pyramids but only jet planes; and, of course, the Bomb. But we are—as we all agree—far more efficient than our ancestors.

It will have been noted—perhaps with dark suspicion—that one began a talk on the nature of Wealth, and its

gaining, by a reference to the artist. Savages once regarded the artist as an inspired lunatic: modern thought has deleted the word *inspired* from this indictment.

Nowadays terms like 'crook' or 'racketeer' become increasingly vague; but one thing would appear fairly certain: in a short time the artist will be the only person formally recognised as anti-social and criminal. This will have to be. The artist is the one type of individual who, whilst unable to impose his will on others, cannot by his nature and vocation take part in the destruction of wealth. Already, except as a humourist, the artist is prevented from writing for our 'news' papers—which are, of course, edited by the advertisers.

The attitude of modern society towards the artist is curiously confused, and ambivalent. On the one hand he is despised as an idler, a voluptuary, an immoral trifler—an eccentric who not only affects contempt for Authority, but goes to such extremes as to despise business success.

On the other hand art and artists make news: the Warfare State, when the bombs fall, hide away works of art—described as national treasures—and declare them to be priceless. This evaluation of course refers to the work of artists who are dead—and possibly very dead—nevertheless it denotes an uneasy apprehension that in some queer way, the vision—the perceptions and sensitivity of artists—have, or had, some value for society.

And so, around the appellation of 'artist' there gathers certain arcana of pretentiousness: and a pompous claim—essentially vague, since it can't be measured, finger-printed, weighed, or even equated with a given amount of purchasing-power.

One would like to reject all pretensions associated with the term *artist*. One believes that all men and women are born artists—even if, later on, the girl turns into a W.R.E.N. and the boy into a social planner. They came into this world sensitive, perceptive, imaginative—and joyous artists. That is, children—all a wonder and a wild surmise.

The child in the London garden, playing at "being afraid of bears," was obviously an artist. Dreaming, lying, pretending, mimicking, dressing-up, dramatising oneself—these things are art. And, all these things—even lying—may be accomplished by the adult as well as the infant.

Mr. Herbert Read has, in fact, demonstrated that quite frequently the child can prove itself literally an artist—and sketch or paint with remarkable skill. The 'mute, inglorious Milton' is a little boy lost; perhaps a tired business-man or woman,—fatigued, less by a struggle towards real achievement, than by the realisation that nothing recedes like success, and that the making of money destroys wealth.

Let us lay our cards on the table, face upwards. Quite frankly one believes that human life is either an art or it is meaningless. Whistler affirmed that there was never an art-loving people, and no doubt he was right. But there are people we describe as savages who have tried hard to elevate their way of living towards a ceremonious and formal art, and whose cups and bowls, shields and spears, and the caves they lived in, have been joyously decorated and wonderfully embellished. There have been great periods when anonymous craftsmen and artists have been honoured, not for their servility or for their money-success—but for raising

stone and wood, ivory and gold in a lovely fancy to the greater glory of God.

We go to museums sometimes—if they happen to be open to the public—and we gaze on what are called 'treasures.' These are the pots and pans, the combs, snuff-boxes, fans, saddles, sword-hilts, coins, peasant costumes—in short, the common furnishings and possessions of peoples who did not despise Art.

Will anyone in the future pass through a turnstile to look at our containers, slacks, comic strips and paper promises to pay on demand? One may doubt if these things will endure for a decade. They are not designed by artists. They are not made with joy by a guild of craftsmen, but turned out by factory-hands merely to sell. When sold their purpose is accomplished, for someone has 'made money.' Whatever that means—for, though money talks it has an impediment in its speech. These are days when the customer is always wrong. So wrong that he must, periodically, be bombed into submission—the People's Bomb being delivered in a plain van at his doorstep. The gifts of science, which it is more blessed to give than to receive. . . .

It is odd—or isn't it?—that this epoch of complete inadequacy should be called the age of efficiency and science. Those who apprehend the true values of science and respect them may suspect that the authentic scientist has little to do with this great game of beggar-your-neighbour. Probably, as in the world of artists, those scientists given the most publicity are those with the least competence and the least integrity. A great man has no need of the cautionary injunction: Absent thee from publicity awhile.

However this may be the wistful hopes once built upon scientific research are fading into despair. Our modern Science is a synthetic mountain that brings forth a mouse—substitute.

One would like here, to pause for a moment, and offer two or three quotations . . . They are chosen from the writings of men held in high repute; and they are juxtaposed from a desire to indicate wealth-gaining values in their different aspects . . . Such values, one suggests, must, if true at all, be true both for the individual and for society.

Communities, of course, have not come together or been held together originally, under compulsion. Men gathered from choice . . . for mutual aid and benefits . . . and, until today, the civilised individual had always freedom to contract out. People persecuted in Florence might move, if not their property and credits, at least themselves, to Naples or to Holland. A French family, with unorthodox religious views, might settle in England; artists who were conscientious objectors to industrialism might live wherever they imagined they could discover conditions most beneficial to their work. A passport was a convenience, not a necessity. Since credits were transferable abroad, permits to travel—if required—were not inane. It seems scarcely necessary to point out that such freedoms of choice are of paramount importance, and, without them, civilisation affords no benefits to large numbers of people.

My first quotation is from Spinoza who said: *Pleasure is man's transition from a less state of perfection to a greater. Pain is man's transition from a greater state of perfection to a lesser.*

Rather similarly perhaps the biologist might speak of an harmoniously-functioning organism and of structure responding to function. Which is what we mean by success in life whenever we happen to talk intelligently.

To these thoughts one would juxtapose the following words from Norman Douglas: *The antagonism of flesh and spirit, the most pernicious piece of crooked thinking which has ever oozed out of our deluded brain.*

That might be offered for the pondering of decadent puritanism and for all those who hate and fear Joy, and who now rule a great and cowed people. There's nothing noble, or ennobling in the miseries of scarcity-economics.

Also one offers these words of Walter Savage Landor: *To render idleness sweet and sacred the heart must have a little garden of its own, with its umbrage and fountains and perennial flowers—a careless company. Sleep is called sacred as well as sweet by Homer, and idleness is but a step from it. The idleness of the wise and virtuous should be both, it being the repose and refreshment necessary for past exertions and for future: it punishes the bad man, it rewards the good . . . We should never seek amusement in low thoughts . . . When the mind loses its feeling for elegance, it grows corrupt and grovelling, and seeks in the crowd what ought to be found at home.*

There is, one suggests, little hope for a people who have no feeling for elegance of mind and body . . . Or for people who, in an age of illimitable machine-power, translate leisure into the moralistic laziness, or the economic unemployment. A great part of what is called "work" today is either servile drudgery, or a senseless activity that we would gain by stopping. Those who tell us to go to the ant ignore the fact that the ant sleeps for half the year.

Not insignificant is the thought that a hatred of Joy invariably leads to stupidity and insensitivity towards real values. Quotations from Landor and Douglas remind us that paganism is not necessarily materialism, and that aesthetes like these—like Pater, Richard Jefferies and scores of others—arrive at values that differ, socially-speaking, very little from true Christianity and its teaching. All men of goodwill revolt from doctrines of usury as usual and organised destruction of wealth.

Concerning the mystique of the State—of ant or man—Ludwig Lewisohn has written: *An evil sophistication tries to identify liberty with the liberty of the sovereign state: let the state be secure and mighty, let the citizen be enslaved.*

These opinions one regards as wise and noble; and one imagines that they are in the tradition of true literature, philosophy and culture. By way of contrast here are two quotations—one from Bernard Shaw, the other from Arnold Bennett. The quotation from Shaw represents—one believes quite fairly—the quintessence of his social philosophy.

No government of a civilised State can possibly regard its citizens as born free. On the contrary, it must regard them as born in debt; and as necessarily incurring fresh debt every day they live; and its most pressing duty is to hold them to that debt and see that they pay it. Not until it is paid can any freedom begin for the individual. When he cannot walk a hundred yards without using such a very expensive manufactured article as a street, care must be taken that he produces his share of the cost.

Well, the Bernard Shaws have conquered, and the world has gone grey with their fears. What strikes one most forcibly about this quoted passage is not its ignorance but its perversity. The word *expensive*, used by a master of words, strongly suggests lack of integrity.

Ex-pense signifies something weighed out or paid out. The essential meaning of the word *cost* is that of a support or prop—to any undertaking. The second word carries with it no *necessary* implication of money; but *expense* always does so.

It must be remembered that a writer of genius knows such things as this, not merely by familiar study but by profound instinct. He knows that there are really no synonyms: that no two words ever mean identically the same thing.

Expense then, is a financier's word. Which means its usage is generally deliberately obscure. It is coined—or forged—by people who create financial debt and use it in power-politics. We owe the financiers a debt we shall never be able to repay—they will see to that—so long as we allow them.

Change Shaw's word *expensive* to *costly*, and you at once ask: "Costly in *what*?" And, since the answer is necessarily, *costly in effort*, we at once see that science, the Machine, the labour-saving devices, which we inherited from our inventor-ancestors have, potentially, made jobs like street-building less costly. It is then less costly—in human effort—to build Bond Street than to make a cart-track over a Kerry mountain. So we may ask why, something ever less costly should become ever more expensive.

But Shaw and Wells, the Fabian Society, the London School of Economics, and the rest of them, all ignore our wealth-gaining potentialities and would enslave us by artificially-created debt and by overt and covert wealth-destruction.

One has mentioned perversity. How does it come about that men, and often decent, kindly men, proclaim with a queer accent of joy, a gospel of despair? When, for example, confronted with such a philosophy as Social Credit, why do some announce, apparently in ecstasy, that it has failed, or must fail, or that it is too good to be true?

One is, of course, not speaking of those hired to destroy, but of the others: of those to whom a failure to move forward into something better must mean personal ruin. Their passionate protest against hope is not to be explained by a glib phrase, such as 'masochism.' The world is not entirely ruled by the sadomasochist ambivalence.

Perhaps the truth lies in an examination of mediocrity. The feeble mind feels safe only if it imagines there will be no change. Mediocrity detests whatever seems to him new, or even unorthodox. Told that an iron ship will float he shudders. He doesn't want proof. It has to be thrust upon him. Even then he will deny the phenomenon for as long as possible.

Such reflections appear to be significant for two reasons. Firstly they indicate that the slogan of 'Art for art's sake' is as wise as one would expect, considering the wisdom of those who used that slogan. Secondly it illuminates and challenges the statement that Man cannot learn from ex-

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Saturday, June 27, 1953.

From Week to Week

If there is one important principle of human association enunciated by Douglas which more than another has received universal confirmation during the years it is that concerning the necessity of agreement on policy and the breaking of the unit in association until unity of policy is reached: "It is essential to obtain agreement on policy, and if in any association such as a nation, it is not possible to obtain agreement on policy, then it becomes imperative that the association should break up into smaller units, until in any unit the policy is agreed."

The phrase "such as a nation" is not, and was not intended to be, a qualification of the general principle. The question put publicly at the close of Douglas's Liverpool address in 1936 envisaged the then position of the British nation. Douglas was saying that, so far from its being desirable to make the national problem into a world problem, if it could not be solved on the national level reduction, not increase, of scale was indicated. Later, he applied the rule even to the Secretariat, which, as is well known, is a much smaller unit than any nation. Every association for a common objective must have a common objective—one common objective, and that one sufficiently distinct to prevail, as an inducement to co-operation, over all other objectives entertained by persons who, from their nature, entertain a multiplicity of objectives concurrently with that which is the avowed object of their association.

In the events of last week in Korea, the United States of America and Western Europe, which may by the time these words are in print have resolved themselves into newer patterns-of-the-moment in a developing situation, it is the evidence they afford of the inherent unworkability of world-planning that is important, not the spectacles and sensations.

"The principles of association for a common objective are as capable of exact statement as are the principles of bridge construction, and departure from them is just as disastrous."

Whether "Operation Stable Door," as the recall of American troops on leave in Japan to take over guard duties is called, correctly describes more than an incident, or whether "the carelessness of the United Nations High Command in allowing South Korean soldiers to remain in the majority as guards in the prisoner camps" (*Sunday Times*) is just that, it is clear that the vast concentrations of power which the planners desire to make vaster fall apart from some inherent necessity.

It should not pass unnoticed, and indeed has not done so, that the case of the two people convicted of war-time espionage in 1951, offspring of Jewish immigrants into America, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, is of a pattern. We have not heard before that the much vaunted system of execution upon which the Americans pride themselves was so inferior to our own in humanity that from three to five attempts had to be made before the victim could be pronounced dead. This is the last touch to as fantastic a campaign as we can remember, involving foreign states (if Great Britain can still be deemed to be extra-American), the Vatican, and the newspaper press of the world. How many letters Ethel and Julie exchanged while in Sing Sing we do not know; but they are deemed worthy of publication in book form. Oh! These books! Even if authentic (upon which doubt has been cast), they certainly do not "throw light on the background of the case" as, for example the *Sunday Express* asserted—unless the selection published in that paper was made for some totally different purpose. To show, for example, that even atom-bomb spies can be fond of their own children (in a way), or that they can write like Oscar Wilde at his worst. The story of the orange pip which grew to a tree (8 inches) bloomed, flowered and bore "small" oranges on its branches from a crack in the Sing Sing concrete reminded us of the bare olive branch sprouting in Wilde's hand as he walked with it to the Pope. Will Sing Sing and judicial electrocution now be elevated to Belsen rank as gentile abominations?

About 200 people attended Mr. Manning's "Lothian Lecture" at Liverpool. We are informed that difficulty was at first experienced in finding the door to the hall (one of the lettable rooms in a down-town office block). A titled Liberal (or ex-Liberal) contested the approach with our observer. Most of those present were Liberals (or ex-Liberals), and it was whispered privately that "Social Credit" might be a good mount for the Liberal Party—quite soon now! That *would* be killing two birds with one stone, wouldn't it? Philosophical Liberalism—i.e., the doctrine that what is true of the individual, that he develops best in conditions of freedom to experiment, accepting full responsibility for the result, extends to the individual in association (society)—is as congenial to Social Credit as is philosophical Conservatism, the doctrine that the positive gains thus realised should not be forfeited for nothing. But there has never been a more resolute opponent of philosophical Liberalism than the "Liberal" Party, which is the party of financial and industrial exploitation pre-eminently.

SELF DEFINITION. "The other step, rising above the moral dissolution that might invade a man who cultivated an indiscriminate sympathy with every form of life, made it clear that sympathy and justice themselves are only relative virtues, good only in their place, for those lives or forms of life that thereby reach their perfection, so that integrity or self-definition remains first and fundamental in morals: and the right of alien natures to pursue their proper aims can never abolish our right to pursue ours." (George Santayana—*Persons and Places*. p.176.)

(continued on page 8.)

PARLIAMENT

House of Lords: June 10, 1953.

Processed Foods

(*The Debate continued*).

Lord Hankey had given Notice that he would move to resolve, That Her Majesty's Government should reconsider the use of agene in flour for human or animal consumption. The noble Lord said: . . . I wish to put what I have to say in a historical framework, and for that I rely mainly, though not exclusively, on the standard work on the subject—namely, *The Englishman's Food*, by the late and deeply lamented Sir Jack Drummond of which the noble Lord, Lord Teviot, has spoken so eloquently, and Anne Willbraham. I do not want to say much on early days, but there is one point which I think may be rather amusing. As early as the reign of King John, prosecutions, especially for false weight, were frequent. The normal punishment was either the pillory or being dragged through the uneven and dirty streets on a hurdle with the offending food tied round the neck of the culprit. I am sure your Lordships will agree that our ancestors knew how to make the punishment fit the crime. . . .

So surreptitious was its [agene's] introduction that it is not even mentioned in the first edition of *The Englishman's Food*, published in 1939, and I myself, who was watching these things closely because I was horrified by the fact that up to 60 per cent. of our would-be recruits for the Army were being rejected, had never heard of agene until twenty-five years later—1946, when Sir Edward Mellanby published the fact that when fed to dogs this flour produced nervous disorders and, if continued, canine hysteria and eventually death. The Government of the United States, after repeating and extending Mellanby's experiments, made the use of this flour a penal offence, and Canada did likewise. Both countries, however, permitted the use of another chemical "improver," chlorine dioxide—of which more anon. For a few years the British Government did nothing but discuss the matter; but in 1950, after the usual haggling between the trade and the scientists, to which my noble friend referred, they at last decided to ban agene but to permit chlorine dioxide, which they warned us it would take a long time to provide. So long, indeed, has it taken that to-day, seven years after Mellanby's warning the banned and consequently discredited agene is still in general use and chlorine dioxide, as I shall show in a moment, is suspect.

Now I come to the technical case against agene—with some trepidation in the presence of medical experts, but I shall found all I have to say on published reports by admitted experts. A pioneer among the professional public critics of agene in this country was Dr. Coghlan, of Hull, who in June, 1940—some six years before Mellanby's experiments were published—informed the Ministry of Health of experiments he had made on human volunteers which led him to suspect, astonishing as it seemed to him, that the national health was being endangered by its use. He seems to have been snubbed for his pains. But to the layman the long letter he published in the medical Press on April 2, 1952, in which he describes his experiments in

detail, provides presumptive evidence of a tendency for agene to induce coronary thrombosis and other diseases of the heart and the circulatory system, and suggest that certain reactions, which he describes in language too technical for me to summarise, set up ideal conditions for ulcer formation.

This disturbing indictment was supported by official statistics, showing that the death rate from heart diseases, including cerebro vascular diseases, between 1921, the year of the introduction of agene, and 1949 increased four times. Since then, I understand, there has been further evidence that the death rate in this category has increased. I have checked this. One of the diseases he mentioned, coronary thrombosis, is spoken of in many medical reports as the "twentieth century disease," the "modern scourge," and a "challenge to medical science and preventive medicine." But heart and vascular diseases are not the only complaints in respect of which agenisised flour is suspect. On July 8, 1950, the medical Press published a Report by Dr. Pollak, the Physician in Charge of the allergy clinic at the Middlesex Hospital, showing that there are many people who, while tolerant of flour made from the wheat berry, become the subject of allergic symptoms on eating bread made from agenisised flour. He added that, in consequence, bleached flour products were routinely prohibited in the clinical interests of patients.

Again, as recently as March 21, 1953, the *Lancet* published, with a leading article, a paper by two distinguished doctors, C. G. Sheldon and Allan Yorke, describing in detail carefully controlled experiments and observations over many months in the case of a woman afflicted for a long time with serious skin disorders associated with loss of appetite and mental depression. Their unescapable evidence was that chemically treated flour was the cause. Nitrogen chloride—agene—was the original cause of the trouble, but chlorine dioxide was found to produce the same symptoms, which in both cases ceased when chemically treated flour dropped out of the diet. That is why I said that chlorine dioxide was now suspect. . . .

This wise and moderate report asks the question: "Is this a case of allergy, or merely the first recognition of a common disorder?" With the valour of ignorance I put my money on the latter—recognition of a common disorder. . . .

Now I want to turn to agene abroad. Your Lordships may or may not have noticed from a Question which was answered recently—and I want to thank the noble Lord, Lord Carrington, for his promptitude in furnishing the information—that of eighteen nations in Europe and North America, including United Kingdom and Eire, nine permit the use of agene, and nine ban it. Some of the nations who have not banned it do not use wheat as their staple cereal, and so probably it was not worth their while to impose a ban. It so happened that yesterday, when I was in Paris, I met the ambassador of one of those nations and asked him a question. He said that the peasantry all ate the rye bread or other kinds of black bread, but that in the towns there was a struggle going on between those who preferred the white and those who preferred the other. He did say, however, that, although they had not banned it, they did not use it, which is what I expected to find.

If agene is as dangerous as some believe, the countries

that do not permit its use ought to be much freer than the countries who do use it, from the complaints which it is suspected of promoting . . . and after losing myself in a maze of international figures, which the World Health Organisation is beginning to disentangle, and with a little guidance from Somerset House, I have compiled a few figures comparing the position in the United Kingdom with that in France. From these figures, it seems that the number of deaths from diseases of the heart and other circulatory diseases have risen between 1938 and 1949. That is the longest interval in which I could be sure of like figures. In the United Kingdom there has been a rise from 148,980 to 202,750, and in France from 104,820 to 115,080. That is a rise of 53,770, or 36 per cent., in the United Kingdom, as against 10,000 or 9.8 per cent., in France. If the comparison could have been extended to 1950, our figures would have been a great deal higher; the increase would have been over 40 per cent. The French figures for that year were not available. Even so, on the 1949 figures our percentage increase is not far off four times that of the French.

Perhaps I ought just to mention that, compared with the total numbers of deaths from all causes, the deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the United Kingdom were about 26.6 per cent. in 1938, and 34.4 per cent. in 1949—that is, a rise of 7.8 per cent. There was a gap in the French figures, I suppose owing to the war, and at the present time I have been unable to get their figures. In France, the percentage of deaths from these diseases in 1949 was 26.6, compared with our figure of 34.4. In any event, if agene was not the cause, perhaps the speaker for the Government will tell us what are the differences between the circumstances of the two countries which caused the discrepancy. I should be glad if my statistical calculations could be checked by experts. I feel that that statistical investigation ought to be followed up. . . .

Lord Horder: . . . The noble Lord, Lord Teviot, mentioned cancer, sinking his voice as people do when they speak of it. Then I waited—I am interested in cancer—for the association, causatively speaking, between cancer and something which is down for discussion to-day. It did not come. We are waiting for an answer. With what causative agent can we associate the incidence of cancer? We should be only too pleased to get that information. I am very glad that Lord Hankey passed to the member of Her Majesty's Government a question which I could not myself answer—namely, if the increase in coronary thrombosis is not due to agene, what is it due to? I wish I knew. We all wish we knew. . . . Agene was given up by America rather more than two years ago, and there coronary thrombosis has increased still further during the two years in which agene has not been used. . . . I am not one of those who have been convinced that agene has produced any illness in human beings. . . .

Viscount Hudson: I am sorry to interrupt the noble Lord, but other noble Lords cannot hear a word he is saying.

Lord Horder: May I repeat that the two doctors who reported this case of (may I use jargon?) dermatitis put the issue very fairly: was this a rare case of allergy—that is, an expression on the part of the skin given by a highly sensitive individual to a particular toxic agent—or was it the first time we had begun to get hold of some nervous trouble produced by allergy remaining latent over these years and

now suddenly discovered? The noble Lord, Lord Hankey, said he preferred the second conclusion, because it fits his thesis. It fits my thesis, with no less knowledge, to choose the first. It was an uncommon case of allergy. . . .

You certainly should not hurry the changing from one chemical to another, as the Americans have done. They were dragooned into it. The Americans are very sensitive. Somebody said that agenised flour gave dogs canine hysteria; the men went home and told their wives, and there was an outcry. Now they must not use agene any more, and they have not used it. They have switched to another chemical improver, concerning which we still do not know whether the devil they have now got is better or worse than the devil they had. . . . I am not unaccustomed to looking for snags in matters of nutrition and the way in which the Government guard or do not guard the health of the nation; and I am satisfied with the present position.

Lord Teviot: My Lords, before the noble Lord sits down, may I ask him a question? He has been speaking to a great extent—in fact, wholly, I think—on the subject of bread. With his great knowledge and experience of diet as a professional man, is he satisfied that with bread containing improvers, such as agene and all these various chemicals to bring about a colour or a particular taste, there is no danger to the public health? I shall be interested to hear what his opinion is on that subject.

Lord Horder: My Lords, all these various chemicals leave me a little in a difficulty. There has been only one chemical used in this country since 1921 or 1925, and that is agene. I hope, and my hope is shared, I know, by the administrators, that if and when that chemical can be replaced by a physical process which makes the bread as acceptable as agene now makes it, the agene will be discarded.

Viscount Bledisloe: My Lords, I do not propose to occupy your Lordships' time for more than a few minutes, but I wish to say perfectly plainly to the noble Lord who has just sat down, that I, for one, strongly disapprove of so-called "improvers" of any description whatever. . . . The noble Lord who has just sat down—and I hope he has not definitely joined the Labour Party—happens to be my own medical adviser and has been for at least thirty-five years.

The Earl of Onslow: A great compliment to you both.

Viscount Bledisloe: That is just what I was about to say. I want to quote words which the noble Lord uttered to me in that capacity at least thirty years ago. He said "Don't take medicine unless absolutely necessary. Do give poor old nature a chance; she is always ready to comfort human ills if we do not obstruct the process unduly." I took down those words when he uttered them. I have endeavoured ever since, so far as I can, to follow his advice. As I approach my eighty-sixth year—although, if I may say it quite candidly, a seven months' baby, and having suffered many physical vicissitudes, during my long life—what I want to ask him is this: In giving nature a chance, as he advised me, surely we ought to give the products of nature a chance, without undue adulteration or sophistication. . . .

[*Lord Boyd-Orr* spoke.]

[*Lord Douglas of Barloch* spoke.]

[*Lord Jessel* spoke.]

Lord Semphill: My Lords, I should like to join with noble Lords who have already spoken in this debate in congratulating my noble friend Lord Teviot for initiating it. He made a splendid opening speech. I should also like to congratulate my noble friend Lord Hankey, who followed him. As I saw it, the noble Lord, Lord Teviot, pointed out that if the food chemist, in his desire to produce only attractive and easily selling food is allowed to add other substances to our staple articles of diet, without regard to the chemical or biochemical reactions which may take place, harm will result. I myself feel that the food chemist has too much power. This fact is made evident by many eminent people. . . .

Lord Balfour of Burleigh: My Lords, I should like to draw your Lordships' attention to the wording of the Resolution which has not yet been moved. I venture to hope that the Resolution will be moved, because most noble Lords have spoken to it, and it will then draw the cloak of order over a disorderly condition, even more disorderly than your Lordships generally permit. The wording of the Motion is:

"That Her Majesty's Government should reconsider the use of agene in flour for human or animal consumption."

I do not see how the noble Lord who is going to speak for the Government can possibly oppose that Resolution. If he does so, he will be committing the Government irrevocably and forever to the use of agene. . . .

Viscount Buckmaster: . . . I believe there are two basic facts from which we cannot escape and which justify us, not only in making inquiry into this problem, but in being uneasy. The first fact is that almost every article of food we touch or eat is adulterated in some way or another. It has foreign substances added to it, or contains chemicals, if that is the right word to use. If we take the breakfast table, we find the apple has been gassed, the kipper has been dyed, the marmalade is coloured and the margarine is tinged with dyestuffs—Unilever's tell you that they put some substance in it to make it a nice orange colour. The noble Lord, Lord Horder, spoke of only one chemical being used. I am not a chemist, and I do not know how "chemical" can be defined. I call aniline dye a chemical. I call putting aniline dye into margarine—

Lord Horder: I was speaking of bread.

Viscount Buckmaster: I am obliged to the noble Lord. I do not think he would dispute that chemicals are added to almost everything that is in common consumption to-day. I do not say that that in itself is harmful, or that it has proved to be harmful, but I do take my second basic fact, which is this—and it is also a fact from which there is no escape: that not only has death from cancer markedly increased, but cancer of the stomach exceeds every other form of cancer there is. . . .

Lord Carrington: . . . As Lord Hankey pointed out . . . there was published in the *Lancet* last March a paper which described one case of a human allergic reaction to bread made with flour which had been treated with agene or with chlorine dioxide.

Lord Hankey: Will the noble Lord also deal with the case at the Middlesex Hospital which I quoted—the case mentioned by Pollock? He said that there were so many people involved that they actually stopped the use of agene, in that part of the hospital at any rate.

Lord Carrington: I have made inquiries about that case and there seems to be a dispute about the facts; but perhaps the noble Lord will speak to me afterwards.

Lord Hankey: I have the documents here. I had much of it checked by an expert to make sure that I was not dropping any bricks.

Lord Carrington: I may say that I also have checked my facts, very carefully, and the only evidence the Ministry of Food have of any ill-effects is of one case—the case referred to in the *Lancet* last March. Perhaps at this moment I may emphasise that, in the period of thirty years during which agene has been widely used in this country, this is really the only authenticated case which has been recorded of human allergy associated with agene or chlorine dioxide. As the authors of the paper have themselves pointed out, the question remains:

"whether this is a rare case of allergy or merely the first recognition of a common disorder."

I would remind your Lordships that it is not at all unusual for people to be allergic to all sorts of quite common things. For instance, some people are allergic to strawberries, pollen, cat fur and all sorts of things like that. I do not think that this case of allergy should be considered a cause for alarm, and we do not intend allowing it to force us to take precipitate action. . . .

Lord Hankey: Yes, but I should like to correct one point—that is, the story that the wholemeal bread will not keep. It keeps perfectly. I believe that it keeps as well as the other bread. I can tell your Lordships that I went to Egypt just before January, and there was wholemeal flour in the house. We never eat anything but wholemeal cakes, and things like that. There had been wholemeal flour in the house since before Christmas. I came back in the second week in February, and that wholemeal flour was still perfectly good. I could give many examples from Spain and other hot countries. I believe that to be just one of the tarradiddles of the trade.

Lord Carrington: Those who advise me on this "tarrididdle" disagree strongly with the noble Lord, Lord Hankey. It is the second time that his advisers and mine have clashed. I assure him that my advice is that the wholemeal bread does not keep so well as the National loaf. I cannot take it any further—

Lord Douglas of Barloch: I may say that I am another witness to this. I get wholemeal bread from a commercial source and it keeps perfectly for a week or more. The ordinary white bread of commerce, as everybody knows, goes stale or mouldy in a day or two; and the dustbins of London are full of it.

Lord Carrington: I am not surprised that the noble Lord, Lord Douglas, is supporting the noble Lord, Lord Hankey.

The noble Lord, Lord Teviot, asked be whether it would be possible to put the date of the canning of foods on the tins, so that people would know when the food which they were buying was tinned. I do not think that anything very useful would be achieved by this, because a date stamp of this kind would not be a guide to the condition of the food in the tin. . . . I should not like it to appear that Her Majesty's Government are out of sympathy with the terms

of Lord Teviot's Motion. I have not said that the Government love chemicals and processed foods and intend to encourage their use. On the contrary, as I hope I have made plain, we intend to go on doing all we can to increase the supply of fresh food. At the same time, as I tried to point out, some processes and the addition of some chemicals are necessary if we are to feed the 50 million people in this country. But with the safeguards I have outlined I do not think there is any cause for disquiet, and I hope that the noble Lord, Lord Teviot, will feel it possible to withdraw his Motion and the noble Lord, Lord Hankey, not to move his.

Lord Hankey: . . . Before I withdraw my Motion, I should like to be assured that the reply we have had and for which I am most grateful means that the Government will reconsider the use of agene in flour for human or animal consumption. I should like to have that assurance from the noble Lord to put on the records of the House.

Lord Carrington: Yes, my Lords, I can give that assurance. As I explained in my remarks, we will abandon the use of agene as soon as a suitable substitute is found. . . .

FROM WEEK TO WEEK— (continued from page 4.)

"The modern Jew recognises verbal intelligence, but not simple spirit. He doesn't admit anything deeper or freer than literature, science, and commerce." (ibid p.230.)

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The "indiscriminate sympathy," on which the 'Mustn't be anti-anyone' propagandists have battered, probably exists as a result of the reformation break-down in the hierarchy of moral values. The 19th century T. H. Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* illustrates the antithesis to Santayana's argument. "It is no time to enjoy the pleasures of eye and ear, of search for knowledge, of friendly intercourse, of applauded speech or writing, while the mass of men. . . are left without the chance. . . of making themselves in act what in possibility we believe them to be. . . the responsibility of everyone for everyone else, acknowledged by the awakened conscience: these together form a moral situation in which the good citizen has no leisure to think of developing in due proportion his own faculties of enjoyment." Green uses the puritan propaganda word to *enjoyment* to attack 'self definition.' He replaces the attempt to ascertain what is right, and do it, with the mental masochist's paradise of being a cart-horse. What better morality-medicine could the planners have concocted to wash down their destruction of all civilized living, to encourage the abdication of all power to the chosen 'central body'?

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WHAT IS WEALTH?—

(continued from page 3.)

perience. Men learn—thousands learn—but the artists and philosophers who expose new truths are opposed by perverse genius in action on the one hand, and mediocrity inactive upon the other. There can never be any hope in school-instruction or education until these things are informed by the essential wealth-gaining value of Art. The instinct of the born artist is a very wonderful and deeply moving thing, and one does not envy a society that possesses no apprehension of this fact.

There is, in Japan, a certain peculiar fish which is kept in a tank to warn villagers of coming earthquakes. By its sensitivity the animal apprehends, some hours in advance, that an earthquake is coming. And its distress provides a warning, so that villagers get out of their houses and take what precautions they may. But one thing is essential if that fish is to function usefully: its tank must not be electrically insulated. Shut off from whatever contacts its sensitivity responds to, this fish is just as other fish, a poor watchman, an ineffectual angel, a helpless interpreter, of natural phenomena—one might say,—a hopeless artist—merely, in short, a poor fish.

Our last quotation, from Arnold Bennett, has to be made from memory, since the book in question is rare and unobtainable. One can, however, quote from memory with sufficient accuracy.

Bennett's words are very absurd. But they are quoted, not from any desire to 'pillory' this author. They are offered, firstly because, despite their absurdity, they represent mental processes becoming frighteningly familiar. And secondly to show how a very decent, fair, and shrewd man can write nonsense—although a good technician—when once his values have gone wrong.

Bennett wrote, approximately, this: *A bomb fell in Lane's library: but not much damage was done—only twenty-seven pounds' worth.* Being a just man Bennett would admit, on reflection, that this is very bad writing. And being, in intent at least, an artist, he would agree that bad writing is a very bad thing indeed, a thing that may lead, and often does lead to consequences that are catastrophic for society.

Even if we go more than half-way to meet our author (and he has no right to demand this)—even if we say the destruction *must* have been in books—not a bookcase or a carpet—even then £27 is not a measure of value. It could represent one fairly valuable manuscript or a thousand paper-covered tattered novels.

But the confusion between money and wealth has reached a point bordering on idiocy. The "million-pound flood damage" is not confined to hack journalism. A learned historian tells us the Great Fire of London "cost England 4½ Millions." He adds a learned footnote saying the 4½ millions must be multiplied by 16 to give us contemporary purchasing-power. And, writing in 1939, and publishing in 1945, he appears to think he is giving his readers a clear view of the wealth-values involved.

He might as well say that an article is as large as a piece of coal and as long as a piece of string.

(To be concluded.)