

were abolished. Although money was not in use everyone participated in an all-embracing savings movement, personal saving becoming as unnecessary as it was impossible. Social security was established to such an extent that the exercise of foresight, thrift or risk was forgotten. Uniformity of food, houses, clothes and manner of life, with complete immobility of population enabled the directors to plan consumption with mathematical precision. Here was a civilisation(?) functioning without exchange in any recognisable meaning of that word, all "surplus" production going into the common pool for redistribution according to "the national interest." But the Incas' crowning success was to mould the character of the people to suit the Plan. The Spanish conquerors found the Indians passive, stupid and apathetic to a degree almost beyond description. They neither resented injuries nor reciprocated

benefits. No germ of personality, initiative or comradeship survived. Personal charity was dead. Each family remained indifferent to the misfortunes of its neighbour; sons and daughters regarded the illness and death of parents with complete detachment. Even the children did not smile.

And the outcome of this Planning success? In 1532 a band of Spanish adventurers appeared on the coast, in number so small they could all have been accommodated in three London omnibuses. They were indisciplined, constantly at odds with each other, and their leader was a ruffian who could neither read nor write. But their character had been formed in the unplanned chaos of a Spain which had scarcely fought itself free of foreign domination. By the following November Cuzco and its emperor were in their control and twelve million Planees lay hopelessly at their mercy.

F. D. P.

RESIST COERCION AND REPEAL RESTRICTIONS

"The vice of Socialism in all its degrees is its want of radicalism, of going to the root," wrote Henry George in *The Condition of Labour*, and he made it clear that Protectionism is a degree of Socialism. Of recent years when socialistic proposals have had a virtual monopoly of popular attention a re-statement of the Radical case has been long overdue. For that reason alone *The Abominable No-Man*, by Oliver Smedley, recently issued by Alexander Publications*, is welcome, but the merits of the little book itself are so high that its wide circulation would do much to dissipate loose thinking and infuse a healthy atmosphere of common sense into social controversy. In racy and vigorous style, with dashes of humour that never detract from his evident sincerity, Mr. Smedley has put the Radical case in a form particularly calculated to provoke and inspire. His exposure of current fallacies leads up to a programme of the immediate tasks that demand the attention of Radicals to-day. This programme is entitled "The Cheap Food Policy," but that description falls somewhat short of the ultimate objective, which is "to liberate the British people" and thus "bend the whole course of history."

Mr. Smedley gives some striking illustrations of the Radical character. "Radicals are not 'yes-men.' They are 'no-men'; the abominable 'no-men' of England. They are against the big battalions, concentrations of power, monopolies, vested interests, landlordism . . . They burn with a sense of injustice . . . They are not afraid of holding outrageous views . . . They refuse to sign census forms . . . They get sent to prison on matters of conscience . . . They insist in believing that what is morally wrong cannot be politically right."

Such characteristics make up a consistent character, but Mr. Smedley says, "it is not possible to define Radicalism which may take an entirely different form from one generation to the next." Perhaps this is liable to be misconstrued. Lady Megan Lloyd George is not the only person who in recent years has confounded Radicalism with paternalism.

"Radical: pertaining to the root or origin," says the dictionary, and although Radicals have not always

been consistent the record shows that they have on the whole followed their essential principle more closely than more regimented groups have followed theirs. To attack a social problem at its root is to simplify the whole question. Instead of proposing more interference to offset the effects of earlier interference, it is the Radical task to remove the original interference and provide for equal freedom. The Radical way is, therefore, to simplify not multiply legislation. Accordingly, the earlier English Radicals *repealed* legal restriction upon freedom of speech and discussion, *repealed* legal disabilities imposed on Non-conformists, Roman Catholics and Jews, *repealed* the legal prerogatives of slaveholders, prelates and closed corporations, *repealed* the Corn Laws and other economic privileges granted to sectional interests. They even succeeded for a time in repealing the Income Tax and always sought to reduce taxation and government expenditure to a minimum. To repeal the present clumsy and complex methods of taxation in favour of a simple and just method is obviously an essential Radical task. Although oppression and its ally, privilege, change their clothes according to the fashion of the age, although they are patronised sometimes by the many, sometimes by the few, they never change their essential character and the Radical task is always to penetrate their disguise and fight them. Never have these evils sheltered under a more disarming veil than the Protectionist Welfare State of to-day and nothing could be less Radical than this conception.

Under "Points of Attack" Mr. Smedley reviews Marx's ideas and their influence; Lord Beaverbrook and "the mean and sordid philosophy of Imperial Preference"; Lord Beveridge's propaganda for the Welfare State and World Government; Economic Planning; the "National Union of Bellyachers," *alias* the National Farmers' Union; and Compulsory National Service. Each analysis invites one to read it for the attractive style and then keep it at hand for reference to the up-to-date facts and figures. It is salutary to be reminded how Commonwealth countries by imposing higher duties on imports from America than from the United Kingdom are able to make a fulsome gesture of Imperial Preference while still preventing British goods from entering their ports

* 4 Angel Court, Throgmorton Street, London, E.C.2. 2s. 6d.

to compete with artificially stimulated local industries. Thus Great Britain incurs American resentment without reaping any advantage; everyone suffers with the exception of a few Commonwealth monopolists.

Mr. Smedley has had special opportunity to observe the operations of political farming. "In our present two-party system the Conservative or the Socialist Party have to win agricultural seats if they want power. The only way to do it, they appear to think, is by bribing the farming community. It is in the agricultural constituencies that the marginal seats which decide elections are mostly found." This bribing is done mainly through the Ministry of Food paying the British farmer higher than world prices—in 1951, for example, £254 for home produced as against £138 for imported lamb. As a result all interests that supply farmers' needs—including landowners—continually raise their prices and foreign suppliers combine to raise theirs. For political reasons the full effects of this must be disguised from the housewives by food subsidies. But this entails heavier taxation on all, including the farmers themselves who find their gains are being cancelled out. And all the industrial strength of the country is injured because "the cost of food is the most important element in the cost of all productive processes." "Radicals should have the courage to come out into the open on this issue and attack the 20th Century Corn Laws for all they are worth."

In formulating a positive programme of action, Mr. Smedley starts from the axiom that "the most important people in any industry are its customers" and "an efficient business is one that with no help from the taxpayer or protection from the State is able to make a profit." Before this can be ascertained, however, fictitious costs must be abolished by a return to real money, a freely convertible £ based on gold. Mr. Smedley explains in simple terms how this could be done, not by international conferences and committees, but by a British government obeying public opinion under Radical influence. He then expounds the case for Free Trade for Great Britain, irrespective of whatever restrictions other governments place upon their own people; and he indicates the stupendous effect of such a policy upon all the other problems that are so urgent and have arisen only because of violation of the natural right to trade freely. "There is something pathetic in the lack of historical perspective of those who relate the whole of this biological struggle for freedom and self-expression to a political issue of the British people in the nineteenth century." "Free Trade is morally and economically right for every country in the world, whatever the state of its civilisation or the nature of its industries. There is no exception to the rule whatever." It is heartening to read such forthright assertion supported by fact and common sense argument after so much "Freer Trade" sentiment whose apologetic tone damages the whole case. Mr. Smedley effectively pricks the bubbles of current pretentious fallacies. On "dumping" for example: "Radicals should insist on more and better dumping of everything we want." On full employment: "In his heart of hearts nearly everyone is trying to achieve a very high luxurious standard of living without doing any serious work at all."

Mr. Smedley does not, like so many Free Traders, throw away the force of sound argument by failing

to meet the objection that even under Free Trade and sound money a monstrous disparity of wealth still prevailed. He meets this boldly and shows that the disparity "is not inherent in the private ownership of the means of production so much as in the method of collection of what is called the economic rent of land. Throughout history the means of liberating oppressed peoples has been by a re-distribution of land . . . The Radical solution is a tax on the value of land."

On the influence of Karl Marx Mr. Smedley states that his thinking "has never been effectively countered until the present time when such distinguished economists as Ludwig von Mises and F. A. Hayek are putting their fingers on the fallacies and explaining that the only alternative to Communism is capitalism under the conditions of Free Trade." This is to claim too much. The fallacies of Socialism have been exposed times without number by anti-socialists, but faith in Socialism survives because anti-socialists never meet the desire to provide a solution for the problems socialists try to solve. Socialists may be mistaken, but they are no more mistaken than those who appear to believe that no profound social problem exists. The writers Mr. Smedley mentions display no anxiety to undertake this discussion. Waning faith in formal Socialism to-day is more likely to be due to sad experience of the effects of trying to apply the doctrine.

A more radical refutation of Marx's fallacies can be found in Max Hirsch's *Democracy versus Socialism*. This book probably remains the most methodical and comprehensive analysis of Socialism and its fallacies, ethical and economic, and it completes the criticism by expounding the true remedy socialists were seeking and relating it to the glimpses of truth some of them could see. Marx's theory of value, for all its fallacies, was based on an error of Adam Smith. If earlier Free Traders had detected this error Marx's doctrines could have been refuted more clearly. It remained for Henry George in *The Science of Political Economy* to point out Smith's mistake and at the same time to elucidate the true theory of value by building up from the root axiom of the science. Reference to George's explanation would have enabled Mr. Smedley to strengthen his argument.

These observations, however, are not intended to detract from the merits of Mr. Smedley's book. We heartily recommend it to our readers and trust that its publication will mark a notable stage in the revival of Radical effort.

F. D. P.

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