

# In Pursuit of Liberty

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AN EXAMINATION of any classified directory will reveal the existence of hundreds of associations, unions, etc., promoting a diversity of views, aims and activities. Among them are to be found such durable political animals as the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the Communist Party, the National Front, etc., who occupy the fringe of political life. Also there are such pressure groups as the Bow Group, the Monday Club, New Orbits, the Fabian Society, each of whom press their own particular view as to the direction of the party (to which they are affiliated) should go.

It was a pleasure to be asked to review the manifesto\* of a body calling themselves—rather prosaically—Common Wealth and who deservedly define their objectives as libertarian. Any group of people who describe their aspirations in the following terms merit being taken seriously, and should command both our sympathy and encouragement:

"The libertarian society . . . will be rooted in co-operation and not in coercion, hence it will be classless, making men equal in the right to status and regard. Its social forms will be constantly changing, never static, always moving in the direction of providing a free environment for the maximum development of the individual human personality. We do not attempt to draw a blueprint of libertarian society, for the form it will take will be decided only by itself in the course of the struggle for its realisation. The authoritarian loves to draw blueprints, to seek authority to implement them and to end by imposing them. How can we, distracted by the pressure of today, be certain of what is good for the future human being? He alone can

decide that. In political terms, coercion may never be completely eliminated but the struggle against it will be a continuous process. This will always be true; the final perfect human being will never be born nor, in consequence, will the final human society. Human society is subject to evolution, and the concomitant of perfection in evolution is extinction. For us to assume a state of eventual perfection and to attempt to lay down rules for it, would be not only foolhardy but arrogant."

While the manifesto enunciates for the most part sound principles and worthy objectives, Common Wealth has yet to show from its statements on the pursuit of liberty

and human rights that it understands the full meaning and implications of economic liberty, without which men will remain victims of entrenched legalised privilege and the arbitrary actions of government.

For my money John Stuart Mill's essay *On Liberty* still remains the finest testament on the real meaning as to what freedom is all about, of which the following excerpt is an example. "The sole end for which mankind are warranted (individually or collectively) in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self protection."

Above all else, as Mill pointed out, there will be "No great improvement in the lot of mankind . . . until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought."

## Bizarre Sugar Economics in the E.E.C.

AFTER the headache of trying to solve the problem of millions of tons of surplus butter in the Common Market countries comes news of a similar crisis in the sugar industry.

An article in *The Sunday Times*, May 18, gives further insight into the E.E.C.'s labyrinth of subsidies and protection.

One million tons of sugar a year are expected to be converted into animal feeding stuffs. Already 300,000 tons have been mixed with meat waste or fishmeal since July 1 last year, encouraged by the payment of £60 for every ton of sugar so down-graded. Overall costs will reach £50 million as subsidies for the actual sugar used plus an additional £2.3 million for the conversion operations.

Moreover, surplus supplies of sugar are "used" elsewhere: 23,000 tons by the chemical industry to make glue, and another 700,000 tons dumped on the world market, the latter forcing down prices for producers in the developing countries who would welcome a viable

economic opening for their home markets.

What is the reason for the foregoing? The fact is that the Common Market's agricultural fund guarantees to buy from the sugar refineries 7,400,000 tons a year—20 per cent in excess of domestic consumption the price of which is three to four times the world price,

Thousands are growing beet in the countries forming the Six, but much of it on basically uneconomic land. However, such farmers have little to fear. They are guaranteed favourable prices from the agricultural fund which are well above previous national levels. But no mention is made of the inevitable effect of this on agricultural land prices and rents. Although £200 an acre is spent subsidising 176,000 acres of excess beet growing capacity the farmers themselves receive only about £60 an acre.

Over the last few decades refineries have increased their status in the economy. A paternalist attitude now prevails which enables small growers to sit back and let

\*We Hold These Truths. A Manifesto for Libertarians. Published by Common Wealth, Scamps Court, Pilton Street, Barnstaple, Devon. Price 3s. 6d.

the big producers do all the work under contract.

Although the Treaty of Rome forbade cartels, these exist all the same profiting by creating a scarcity over a frontier by withholding stocks until the prices rise again.

However, the greatest folly of all concerns the sale of sugar on the world market. Only ten per cent of the 70 million tons traded each year in the world is freely marketed. This "overflow" is sold at artificial prices ranging from £100 a ton in 1962 to £12 a ton last year. This year the figure is £40 but whatever the price, the agricultural fund will pay the difference needed to ensure that surplus sugar can be unloaded on to the market. Officials determine the export subsidy and import levies on a weekly basis

depending on the supply situation in the Community. Proposals emanating from Dr. Mansholt, author of the Common Farm Policy, to reduce the surplus were turned down, and few taxpayers realise that they bear the burden of paying the farmers to produce a surplus or to convert it into other commodities.

Only the monopoly interests benefit from such a system, and that of course is the intention.

Britain's own sugar policy is by no means above reproach, but she has the power to change it—at least while she remains out of the Common Market, which is a private club for vested interests for which British consumers would, if we joined, have to pay the entrance fees.

as a method of creating jobs than satisfying consumption, so trades unions resist improvements, monopolists resist exchange and governments claim to be able to create employment by subsidising unproductive industries at the expense of productive industry. Meanwhile Homo Sap. looks on so impressed by the achievements of modern economics that he never ventures to practice some do-it-yourself economics on his own account.

**LOGIC:** the extension of commonsense, which every normal person uses in personal affairs, to spheres where it would be awkward for the V.I.Ps. if others poked their noses; therefore never taught in schools although it is essential to true education and the only real defence against sophistry, propaganda and exploitation by "the hidden persuaders."

**LUNATIC FRINGES, SPLINTER GROUPS, EXTREMISTS:** emotive words used by journalists on band waggons to discredit minorities holding firm convictions which, whether mistaken or sound, might, if given adequate publicity, provoke inquiry into deeper issues, inconvenient for the band waggons. To make the holding of minority views appear ridiculous in itself is an effective method of "argument" as it deters the timid from expressing any view not generally accredited.

**MASS COMMUNICATIONS, RADIO & T.V.:** methods requiring official sanction, by which an organised body of professionals at one end can transmit news, comment and opinion, all selected by themselves, to millions at the other end without allowing the millions to reply, and, by staging arranged controversy on passing or shallow issues, the appearance of free discussion may be maintained so that the millions do not realise that the most essential evidence on basic questions may be omitted. The most important question for everyone is how to get a living and of this only the general public can be an impartial judge, but in the field of mass communications

## *Glossary of a Simple Man*

(H to M)

**FRANK DUPUIS**

**HONEST WORKER, OR STOOGE:** simple type who noticing that all real wealth is produced by effort not by politics, whether as capitalist, employer, employee or self-employed, seeks to benefit himself by benefiting others, i.e., by supplying the public on a free market with the goods and services they require. For this, in the course of his operations, he must pay private rent, monopoly tolls on his materials, taxes on his buildings, welfare taxes on employment and suffer a multitude of arbitrary restrictions; finally, after satisfying the taxman's inquisition into his private affairs he must share half his earnings with the government.

**HUMOUR:** an essentially individual quality which kindles a common sympathy between all persons capable in any degree of thinking for themselves and sufficiently tolerant to be able to laugh at themselves; therefore a refuge for common sense and a constant check on the pretentious humbug by means of which the V.I.Ps. and experts seek to dominate the minds of others; and as it

cannot be taxed, monopolised, nationalised, subjugated by educationalists or detected at frontiers this elusive quality might yet survive.

**IMMIGRATION PROBLEM:** outcome of the flight from less developed countries where taxable capacity is insufficient to allow the immediate effects of unjust taxation to be bribed away by welfarism, to countries where, thanks to technology, politicians can work this illusion and where, by knowing the regulations we can often get by without working, and where the general wage rate must be high enough to induce people to work at all.

**INDUSTRY:** the whole series of operations by which the natural material of the earth is transformed into wealth people require and by exchange placed at their disposition; a process which as machines improve requires progressively less labour to produce any specific article; but in a society haunted by the fear of unemployment and forbidden by the Great Taboo to investigate the ultimate cause, industry is regarded rather