THE LATE Dr. Johnson described patriotism as the last refuge of a scoundrel, which, if examined carefully, does not imply that all scoundrels are patriots, or that all patriots are scoundrels; our interpretation of the remark should be that many scoundrels do take refuge under the banner of patriotism. The late Horatio Bottomley is a classic case of an unscrupulous politician posing as a John Bull patriot.

An example of the misuse of patriotic sentiment is the current demand that the Government impose selective import controls while haranguing the public with a "Buy British" campaign.

The fact that protectionist policies nearly always undermine the standard of living of the unprotected consumer, while, at best, giving only a temporary respite to the home producer, in no way deters protectionists from pursuing their selfish demands. Manufacturers and organised labour join in making vociferous demands on Parliament, lobbying the Government for favours for their industry. It is their specious case that "our lads'" jobs are being sacrificed by the importation of goods made by the use of "cheap labour". Or "our industry" is being crucified by the "unfair" competition from "subsidised" foreign manufacturers "dumping" their "cheap goods" on to Britain's exposed shores. When subsequent investigation reveals that the imports are being sold at prices which cover their costs of production, and highly skilled overseas labour is being paid
higher real wages than its U.K. counterpart and—as though to add insult to injury—the manufacturer, importer and retailer are all making handsome profits into the bargain, the attack is switched to the importer. He, it is said, only employs a fraction of the number of persons that are employed by the domestic manufacturer. No argument is too silly, too illogical or too incredible to be harnessed to their cause.

One of the main weaknesses in the protectionist case is that the importing house is only the agent in the transaction between willing buyers and willing sellers. The real importers are the millions of U.K. consumers; it is they who determine what is to be imported, not the foreign producer, who merely adds to the available choice.

Another weakness in the arguments of manufacturers and employees seeking protection is the assumption that it will provide them with higher prices for their goods and higher wages for their workforce without significantly reducing the value of other workers’ pay packets. Consumers in general, and other employees in particular, will not be protected from paying higher prices for goods shielded from foreign competition.

Beggar my neighbour policies, pursued regardless of the consequences they have on the living standards of others, end, to quote Peter Jay of *The Times*, with British citizens exchanging with each other their increasingly shoddy goods. Taking in each other’s washing is a poor and uneconomic way for the inhabitants of a trading nation like Britain to live.

Farmers, textile manufacturers and others who, together with their respective employees, are pressing for controls on imports, would do well to ponder the consequences of such measures. In seeking the right to live out of the pockets of their fellow nationals, the protectionists among us will soon discover that before very long all pockets will become threadbare and, for some, empty. If that dismal time comes to pass it will, as John Donne reminds us, be a case of “But I do nothing upon myself, and yet I am my own Executioner.”

N.B.
France's Plan to Stop Land Speculation — and Development

A BILL designed to stop land speculation in urban centres is now before the French Parliament. President Giscard d'Estaing's coalition Government is, however, not united on its merits and so far 500 amendments are down for discussion and murmurrs about the sacredness of landed property are much in evidence.

The scheme is, as perhaps might be expected, a variation of the development levy, the application of which awaits the initiative of the land-owner.

The principle itself is simple enough, reports The Guardian, October 8. The size of buildings in municipal centres will be restricted to 100 square metres of living space for 100 square metres of land being developed. This applies whatever the height of the building so that the higher a developer goes so proportionally will his actual building base shrink—thus a single storey building would occupy 100 metres of land and a two storey building of the same total capacity, 50 metres of land. (In Paris a base of 150 square metres of occupied space for every 100 metres of land is used).

For the right to develop beyond these imposed limits the developer will have to pay heavily. Thus the municipal treasury will, in theory at least, profit from any extended development and in proportion to it.

If the Government had announced a fine for every developer who exceeded the prescribed building limit it would have amounted to the same thing—a deterrent—just like Britain's system of local taxation.

Many of the opponents of the Bill within the coalition see it as the thin edge of the wedge—an attack on the land owners—and they have worked on the fears of the fourteen million private owners in France, hinting at a probable extension of the scheme into the suburbs and rural areas. But as in "land reform" in Britain, one does not have to be a land owner to oppose the idea. It has too many inherent deficiencies within itself to make it acceptable—particularly by those who desire a more thorough-going land tenure reform.

A group of opponents of the Bill led by the Gaullist deputy M. Andre Fanton, says The Guardian, is to introduce an amendment which proposes an annual tax "based on the owner's declared value of building or land." It sounds as though there is some doubt here whether it is a land tax or building tax that is proposed, but The Guardian's reference to the idea as being "far from new" suggests the possibility of an annual land-value tax.

An interesting feature of this amendment is the incorporation in it of the idea of owner-valuation which has frequently been put forward by advocates of land-value taxation and for similar reasons. The instigators of the amendment argue that an owner hoping to minimise his taxation would be faced with a choice of either overvaluing his property in order to keep down potential capital gains tax or undervaluing it so as to reduce his annual tax.

Similarly, if a government had the option of purchasing at the owner's own declared value, as is the idea in the self-assessment land-value tax, this would operate to keep the value high—but also to keep the annual tax high.

Honesty and objectivity in valuation would thus prove to be the best policy.

The French Parliament's pre-occupation at the moment is to close the thousands of potential loopholes behind a basically simple idea.

But any tax that awaits the initiative of the people upon whom it is inflicted before it operates and fails to harness the self-interest of the taxed in doing what the legislators want, is doomed to flounder in complexities, anomalies and injustices, and to ultimately fail as our own land legislation along these lines invariably has.

USSR

Food, Power and the Peasantry

Russia's leaders need no lesson in economics in spite of their disastrous agricultural failures. According to an article in the Sunday Times, October 12, they have had a practical demonstration in their own country by their own people of how to increase profit per worker seven-fold and wages four-fold while at the same time cutting costs. But more important than the plenty this would bring if universally applied, is communist dogma. To undermine this could lead to the emancipation of the workers and this must never happen; rather shortages and the shadow of famine than freedom. Says the Sunday Times: "The danger for the Soviet bureaucracy lay in what the innocent Khudenko thought was zveno's (the link system) greatest attraction. It could increase productivity so much that at least twelve million people could be freed from labour of the land. This is not an idea that has ever endeared itself to Soviet leaders. The collectives have in fact been very useful in tying down twenty-five million people in small isolated villages.

"Till this year no peasant had the right, any more than he did under the Czars, to an internal passport and he still cannot leave without the authority of both his farm and the police. If the price of agricultural self-sufficiency was the liberation of the peasantry, the Kremlin wanted none of it."

Khudenko, the economist who proudly demonstrated the virtues of his non-collective entrepreneurial experiment which gave payment by results, was sent to jail where he has since died.

Collectivism on the farms, harnessed to unbelievable bureaucratic incompetence, has led the USSR to run once again to a capitalist country for salvation.

Those who have been seduced by the cry for state ownership and control should ponder the ultimate price to be paid.

Once the wrong road to land reform has been taken, other reforms take the same route and there is little hope of turning back.
Landlords, Labourers and Capitalists

FRED HARRISON

Up to the eighteenth century, land was not owned privately in the sense in which we understand it today. People—from the highest lords to the lowest peasants—claimed the right to exercise ancient use rights to land, be it arable, forest or waste. In that century, during a period spanning three or four generations, the greatest robbery ever perpetrated was effected: the people were robbed of their economic rights to land by a ruling class which actually harnessed the law to help them!

How “the rule of law” was used to destroy ancient laws is an inadequately studied development in our history. That is why the eighteenth century is still erroneously seen as a period of consensus rather than the century of conflict that it was.

Two aspects should particularly interest those who are sufficiently angry about the robbery to want to understand—and help to rectify—what happened.

First, how the law was used as an ideological instrument, bestowing legitimacy upon acts which rendered millions landless, vulnerable to the land monopolists and at the mercy of the owners of capital in the towns to which they were forced to migrate.

Second, why it was that the peasants unwittingly conspired in this process, by viewing the law not as an ideological instrument but as something of value to them, to which they owed allegiance.

Research into such matters as these by a Warwick University team has been published by Penguin. E. P. Thompson, best known for his The Making of the English Working Class, concentrates his study on the foresters. Here, in the forests of England, the conflict was between those who wished to feed their families and the noblemen who yearned for good hunting.

Thompson’s associates concentrate on various aspects of eighteenth century “law breaking”: smugglers, poachers, rioters, and so on. One of the key processes of oppression concerns the redefinition of crimes. Where hunting a rabbit was once an acceptable way of putting food on children’s plates, now this act became transformed into an anti-social crime and it was done as a necessary part of the systematic process of redefining property—property, that is, in land. It was a two-fold process of narrowing down the number of people who enjoyed access rights to land, and of hardening up these rights to ensure exclusive possession and enjoyment. Ancient obligations were skillfully defined out of existence, as the peasants were systematically impoverished. (For those wishing to see this process in its historical context, see the newly published book by Frank Huggett; chapter one deals boldly with the European peasantry, how it was shamefully exploited to ensure an idle existence of luxury for those who formed the thin upper crust of what purported to be the most advanced of civilisations known to mankind.)

However, we need to beware of the way in which The Great Robbery is interpreted by modern historians. Thompson, for example, labels it a “capitalist” process. At several points the commutation of ancient use-rights into private ownership is classified as “capitalist”; on page 223, he refers to the “capitalist nature”, and elsewhere to “the capitalist law of nature.” Thompson, who calls himself a Marxist in the old tradition (whatever that may be), rubs home his propaganda against capitalists by referring emotively to forests having been “well fertilized with blood”. The cavalier treatment of land use rights is equated by Thompson with capitalist speculation.

What in fact was happening was the result of two pressures which were not causally related. One of these was the desire of a small class to arrogate to themselves the exclusive use of land adjoining their castles and manors for their social and political enjoyment: prestige, rather than profit, status, rather than the marketplace instincts of the entrepreneur motivated them. These motives were not congruent with rational behaviour advocated by those wanting to participate in a capital-based market economy. Indeed, by the time of the industrial revolution at the turn into the nineteenth century, the tensions between the landowners, and the capitalists who wanted to develop into a capital-based economy, were very strong indeed; the landowners, who dominated Parliament, frequently put forward obstacles to industrial development.3 We need to see the difference between the historical process of land appropriation (one should perhaps say misappropriation) and the separate process of capital formation which laid the foundations of the industrial economy; for much of the current political debate—the conflict between Socialism versus Capitalism—is confusingly entangled with misunderstandings which have their historical roots in the processes outlined above.

The other pressure was an economic one; the agrarian revolution had arrived. To be fully exploited for the benefit of all, a change in the structure of use-rights was necessary, to ensure secure possession for land users. That the peasants hung on to their use-rights, is not surprising. “The foresters clung still to the lowest rungs of a hierarchy of use-rights,” writes Thompson. Their livelihood “depended upon the survival of pre-capitalist use-rights over the land”.

And given the complex structure of those use-rights, change was necessary if capital was to be invested in land and agricultural machinery, in order to increase agricultural yields.

We know what sort of change

2. The Land Question, Thames & Hudson, £1.50. F. E. Huggett.
occurred. “During the eighteenth century one legal decision after another signalled that the lawyers had become converted to the notions of absolute property ownership, and that ( wherever the last doubt could be found) the law abhorred the messy complexities of coincident use-right,” writes Thompson. “The rights and claims of the poor, if inquired into at all, received mere perfunctory compensation, smeared over with condescension and poisoned with charity. Very often they were simply redefined as crimes: poaching, wood-theft and trespass.”

Henry George proposed a fiscal reform—the taxation of land values—which would have solved the problem of the eighteenth century. For such a land tax would have had a dual effect: (1) permit exclusive possession based only on use rights—a development strictly in harmony with the processes which went before; (2) securing for the community, access to land and a large slice of the benefits of the new techniques and technologies which were producing—or capable of producing—greater yields. Each citizen of the community would have had an equal claim on the benefits of that tax; and the aged, and the poor (if there had been any) would have had the right to claim support from the community which would not have been stigma- tized by the status of charity: it would have been their’s by right. The sense of community would have been developed, and Britain would have been a better place in which to live.

**The Chickens Return To Roost**

ROY DOUGLAS

“Now everybody knows that money is dropping in value the trick no longer works.”

Theresa is a slightly naughty story about an employer who asked his secretary whether she would entertain an indecent proposal if he offered her £10,000 as an inducement. When she replied affirmatively, he then asked her whether she would give the same answer if the inducement were £100,000. “Certainly not!” she retorted, “What sort of girl do you think I am?” “I know what sort of girl you are,” answered the employer, “we are merely haggling over price.”

Rather similar considerations beset questions of public policy in relation to unemployment. It is really a question of price. Anyone with any sort of conscience hates the idea of people being unemployed; while large numbers of folk are apprehensive that, one day, they may become statistics themselves. There are some known techniques by which unemployment may be cut down dramatically. As Samuel Brittan writes,* “The abolition of unemployment pay would certainly reduce drastically the unemployment rate, and so would the reintroduction of the Press Gang. Neither is a good idea . . . ”

Hitler and Stalin both had their methods for abolishing unemployment, and even the democracies found one during the early 1940s. Most of us would not be prepared to pay those prices. In addition to these devices which are possible but distasteful, there are other methods which some wild souls have proposed, which anyone with any kind of nous perceived to be impossible—such as abolition of trade unions, and wholesale direction of labour.

Outside the range of the calamitous and the impossible, there are several famous devices for reducing or abolishing unemployment. The celebrated White Paper of 1944 listed four:

(a) influencing the location of new enterprises in areas of high unemployment;
(b) encouraging mobility between areas and occupations;
(c) retraining of labour;
(d) using government spending, taxation and monetary policy to maintain ‘aggregate demand’ or ‘total spending’ at high enough levels to maintain employment.

Whether the first three of these devices have been particularly effective or not, it would be hard to show that they have done very much damage. Device (d), however, has been turned into something which the drafters of the White Paper quite clearly neither envisaged nor intended: chronic, accelerating inflation as a means of maintaining full employment. Inflation, of course, is vastly older than conscious full-employment policies (the Romans inflated, but they didn’t aim at full employment) but what has made people tolerate inflation in post-war Britain more than anything else has been the idea that it was in some way necessary for the preservation of employment.

Samuel Brittan’s Paper is the first of a series issued by the Centre for Policy Studies, a body of which Sir Keith Joseph is founder and Chairman. The author’s argument is pitched, perhaps, at the reader with more-than-average knowledge of economics; but the dogma which emerges is lucid. Inflation does not materially assist full employment. Or rather—and this is the real vice and danger of the thing—inflation may well have assisted full employment to quite a substantial extent at first, but now it does so no longer. Once we got rid of the bathwater at the cost of pitching out babies as well, now we don’t even get rid of the bathwater, but we lose an awful lot of babies. The success of gentle inflation in the far-off 1950s turned on a sort of confidence trick. People stepped up their demand, not really appreciating that money was dropping in value. This helped to mop up unemployment. Now everybody knows that money is dropping in value, and the trick no longer works. If ever there was a moral lesson in which the Victorians would have delighted, this is it. You can’t fool all of the people all of the time.

If this is a foretaste, the Centre for Policy Studies Series will be an important contribution to the economic thought of our time. The next volume, perhaps, will not merely tell us of the devious path by which we got into the woods, but how we find our way out again.

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*Samuel Brittan, Second thoughts on full employment policy. Centre for Policy Studies, £2.00.
"No amount of tinkering with the free market by experts in prescriptive economics, by politicians who aim at protecting vested interests, by do-gooders who wish to level out society by taxing the rich to help the poor, will ever achieve their end. They are even more likely to achieve the opposite."

The Impotence of Man

FRANK MCEACHERAN

with laws to observe which are not man-made but belong to the natural order, not prescriptive but descriptive, (like the laws of any other science) and if we fail to adjust ourselves to them we meddle to our own ultimate ruin.

At the base of the economic structure are the two primary factors of production — land and labour supplemented by their offshoot the labour saving tools we call capital. Corresponding with these now three factors of production are the channels through which wealth is distributed, Rent for land, Wages for labour and Interest for capital.

It is inherent in the social structure that the economic rent of land should accrue to society as a whole, there being no possible justification for excluding any person or group; that wages go to the individual as worker and interest to the individual as capitalist. There is thus one collectivist element i.e. land rent, and two which are individualistic i.e. wages and interest. Behind this lies the free and natural market which by competition and supply and demand, decides what the level of production and exchange shall be. And no amount of tinkering with this situation by experts in prescriptive economics, by politicians who aim at protecting vested interests, by do-gooders who wish to level out society by taxing the rich to help the poor, will ever achieve their end. They are even more likely to achieve the opposite. The world is so constituted, socially and economically, that if you allow the natural law to function then you will get not only a free society but a rich one and a just one. in which, in the long run, revolution and war would make no sense, and in which, to return to our first analogy, men would breathe freely. It
is no exaggeration to say that all the seemingly intractable economic problems of modern society born both of the social maladjustments referred to and of the very misguided attempts to deal with them, would disappear.

The appalling state in which the world now finds itself is due as much to the interference of governments as to the incompetence of men. We might even say the over-competence of governments, for, unaware of their own impotence, by sustaining land monopoly, imposing taxation, tariffs, subsidies, controls, etc., on an unwilling society, they have brought about such a disorganisation of society that economic collapse might well be the final outcome.

The genuine economic tradition is not Proudhon, Karl Marx and Lenin, but Adam Smith, Ricardo and Henry George. We may add that one lasting contribution of the Russian writer Solzhenitsyn, author of The Gulag Archipelago, will be found to have been made to the world in his assertion that things went wrong in Russia not with Stalin, nor even with Lenin, but with Karl Marx himself who first really set the world afire with the belief, totally erroneous, that the State, by nationalizing the "means of production" could rationalise economics and bring into the world the just society.

The sort of argument we are following sets a natural limit to what the State should do and this is precisely what the world has forgotten. Our doctrine is a tremendous one of negation, which says to the State "so far and no further." On the economic level the sole business of the State is to collect the rent of land, known technically as the economic rent, and nothing more, because this is the material basis of a just society.

At the present moment the State collects much more, whether in the shape of taxes direct or indirect through the central government, or in the shape of rates by county authorities. It collects enormous sums to pay enormous bills, and repays enormous sums in "redistribution" in attempts to make good its neglect to implement equal rights to land rent and to make good the appropriations of privilege and monopoly. It employs in so doing a gigantic body of bureaucrats who might well have been engaged in the actual production of wealth and services. As the poet says:

"They fight by shuffling papers, they have bright dead alien eyes, They look on our labour and laugh-ter as a tired man looks at flies."(2)

The point at issue as regards human impotence is that the laws of economics themselves tell the State how far it should go, just as the waves, according to the legend, told King Canute. If the market were really free and all forms of production and communication were run by individual enterprise, the State would be able to get down to what is really its sole business, the establishment of justice, the maintenance of law and order. The rent of land of course would be much smaller than the enormous taxation of the modern State, but then the role of the State would be far more limited. Thus the claim of Albert Jay Nock in his book Our Enemy The State(3) "That society would rise to its highest level of power, the State sink to its lowest," would come into its own at long last. We could then talk of the state without a capital letter, because it would have become what the liberals of the nineteenth century meant by government, and not a State, a very different conception.

Christ laid down on a famous occasion that men should render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's. Translated into modern terms this means that there are spheres of life and action with which the State should not concern itself, a doctrine which, as we know, has only too often been flouted, both in past years in Europe and in contemporary times in most of the Iron Curtain countries. Gradually society in Western Europe achieved toleration in religious matters and later in matters of art and literature, freedom of the press dating in England from the end of the eighteenth century. Thus we can say that in Western countries in modern times it has been more or less firmly established that religion and matters of conscience should be left to the individual and the same to a very large extent in the sphere of art. This is not the case, as we know in the Iron Curtain countries, where the power of the State has invaded both religion and art and sadly curtailed activity in many spiritual spheres. Now a sphere of life which has almost equal importance with religion and art is that of education and here we have seen, in the last century, the growth of the doctrine that education is the concern of the State and not of the individual and this not only in communist countries. This is a fundamental error, although not without its raison d'être. In the poverty stricken conditions of the Western world during the last century it is obvious that without State interference a multitude of people would have received no education at all, just as in the case of medicine they were frequently deprived for reasons we have amply explained. State education in Western Europe is, of course, not fundamentally a means of propaganda as it has become in the communist countries, but we ought not to forget that the liberal attitude depends in the last resort on the liberal tradition of private education. This should operate as a warning about the sort of atmosphere which might later develop if, through the abolition of free education, the liberal tradition might be forgotten. The story is well known of a Soviet delegation to Westminster, the leader of which asked the Minister of Education what general line the State imposed on the teaching, say—of a revolutionary like Shelley. The answer, which the Soviet delegates would not believe, was "no line at all." Long may this attitude prevail.

(2) G. K. Chesterton—Poems.
INTRODUCTION

TODAY it is commonly believed that free trade can be preserved, extended and restored only through international treaties. Cobden was often presented with this argument and, unfailingly, he rejected it. What, he often asked, is the purpose of a government who actually permits protection resorting to an international remedy? Far from being a resort to a remedy, it is a most effective resort to a means of greater international protection. No, he stated, both the ill and the remedy exist at home.

The European Community is possessed now in theory of an authority to determine the trading arrangements of its members. The theory may one day be tested when a fundamental deadlock is encountered between Westminster and Brussels. Alternatively a deadlock may be avoided by the member countries putting into practice their ideal of a European Community. Often we read of all night sessions of bargaining between the trading ministers of the member nations. At the conclusions of such meetings the nine ministers return to their capitals to proclaim the great advantages which they have gained and the slight disadvantages they have conceded. This exercise may be considered an ordinary example of political persuasion, but it cannot be pretended that the European Community taken as a whole, has benefitted by their bargaining. Indeed this Community would have gained, or lost, no less perhaps had the Ministers spent the night gambling in Monte Carlo.

The Anglo French Commercial Treaty 1859-60

In 1859 the relations between Britain and France were becoming strained and to create a harmless mutual interest Cobden agreed to negotiate a bilateral Commercial Treaty. He agreed on one condition, all the concessions to trade with France should be granted also by Britain to the rest of the world. For he knew that a mutually exclusive treaty would, by excluding the interests of the rest of mankind, create a most dangerous common interest.

In France Cobden witnessed the strength of their protectionists. They were more powerful than the interests which he had displaced in Britain. Yet the concept of free trade had been introduced to modern Europe by the French economists less than 100 years earlier. Although the French Revolution had destroyed all the liberal traditions of France, they had been implanted in the minds of a group of English and American statesmen and thinkers during the second half of the eighteenth century. Later these principles flowered amid the rise of liberalism during the nineteenth century in Britain.

IN Piedmont, during the 1830's, science and liberal enlightenment were regarded as the works of the devil and those, like Cavour, who studied them were labelled by the secret police and by the Court as dangerous men. Cavour therefore looked beyond the confines of Turin for other examples and concluded that England had most to teach him. He studied the history of England and of Ireland. He applauded the British Constitution, whose institutions and conventions he took as models. He also studied the rise of English Liberalism and became an ardent believer in the freedom of trade.

After he had made a visit to England in 1843 he wrote an extensive article on the issue of the Corn Laws. "When an economic system", he wrote, "is recognised as being contrary to reason, justice and equity, when its best defenders are reduced to using argument of convenience and opportuneness, such a system is sapped at its base; the least unforeseen shock, the least extraordinary circumstance will overturn the whole edifice."

He also spoke on the same issue to the Society of Political Economy in Paris shortly afterwards. He avowed that he would uphold the principles of free trade in Italy and a seasoned listener sarcastically remarked, "Ah Count, those plans of yours are of a kind men concoct at the door of a minister's office, and throw carefully out of the window as soon as they have got inside." Cavour replied almost angrily, "That may be your policy, Sir, but for my part, I give you my word of honour, that if ever I rise to power, I will carry out my ideas or relinquish office."

In 1850 his idealism was put to the test when he was appointed Minister of Commerce in the government of Piedmont. Ranged against him and against a weak government were firmly entrenched protected interests. Direct measures designed to dismantle the protected system were bound to fail. Perhaps the enthusiasm of that meeting in Paris had allowed Cavour to overlook one of his earlier writings in which he had stated, "In the system of the Universe there are two orders of things utterly distinct from each other—the order of principles and the order of facts." Reluctantly he adopted the device of international commercial treaties, because although they would not restore free trade, they would at least reduce the level of protection and they would secure access for trade between Piedmont and the large trading empires. In proposing one such treaty to the

2. Cavour by E. Dicey p. 123.
3. Cavour by E. Dicey p. 46.
House of Deputies at Turin in 1852 he reveals a radical desire for direct reform at home.

"I believe these arguments to be just, unexceptional, and evident... I think I have proved that duties which are protective of the soil have the effect of inflicting a tax upon the consumers to the benefit of the growers, and especially, I will even say exclusively, to the benefit of the proprietors of the soil. This, Gentleman, is a crying injustice, which is impossible to justify by the light of reason. Property, to be respected, must not enjoy any favours, which are not the necessary and legitimate consequences of the economical arrangements of the country... I believe that property is the groundwork and the foundation of social order; but it is precisely because I wish to see the principle founded on a solid basis, and because I wish it may be able to resist the attacks of Utopists and demagogues, that I wish to see it rest upon the solid foundations of justice and equity and not upon the quicksand of privilege and monopoly."

His term as Minister of Commerce was short and in 1852 he was appointed Prime Minister to attend to political rather than economic questions. Before entering public life he had written on the relationship of economic science and political government.

"We do not pretend to assert", he wrote, "that political economy either can, or ought to aspire to regulate the movements of the political world. The principles it proclaims, the facts it attests, the truths it brings to light, are necessary elements in the consideration of every problem connected with the social order but they are not the only elements nor the most important ones. There are others of an infinitely higher order, which are entitled to be considered. Political economy, as a science, relates exclusively to the production of wealth, and to the means by which it is distributed. But wealth is not the only object which mankind in its social capacity ought to search after; it is not the sole acting principle of nations, and the acquisition of it does not constitute the special duty of government. Society has been established by man, not merely for the purpose of satisfying his physical wants, and of increasing the amount of his physical enjoyments by the accumulation of the products of industry, but also, and more especially, for the purpose of developing and bringing to perfection his moral and intellectual faculties. Political economy is not entitled therefore to assume to itself any absolute dominion in this lower world. It ought only to occupy the second place, and be as it were the younger sister of these arts and sciences which determine the laws upon which the development, the intelligence and the morality of nations depend."

Cavour did not mean that in the realm of politics the scientific principles of Political Economy could be contorted to answer to any political caprice. He predicted that the rise of Communism and all movements tending to that extreme would pose the greatest hindrance to the clear-minded study of Political Economy. Nor did he imagine that these forces can be effectively countered by scientific argument alone.

"The Philosophers and the political economists," he wrote, "may easily refute in their studies the errors of communism; but their labour will be in vain, unless all honest men, putting into practice the great principle of universal benevolence, act upon the hearts of mankind, as science acts upon their minds."

Drawing together the predominant elements of Cavour's life—his innate liberalism, his respect for science and his indomitable desire for the unification of Italy—Professor Botta uttered a most fitting memorial; "Cavour made self government the object of legislation, political economy the source of liberty, and liberty the basis of nationality."

M. TURGOT

During the second half of the eighteenth century France moved steadily towards a Revolution whose seeds had been sown many centuries earlier. In 1774 Louis XVI, aged only twenty two, appointed M. Turgot as Comptroller General of Finances (who held more power than our Chancellor of the Exchequer). Within twenty months Turgot had introduced economic and political reforms which answered to the pressing needs. For a brief time the dreadful progress was arrested and entirely different possibilities were opened. The young King then faltered, fell victim to an evil conspiracy, dismissed Turgot and allowed his precious reforms to be reversed.

* * * * *

Turgot learnt the principles of Political Economy early in life from M. de Gournay whom he describes in these two passages.

"He was free from self interest, from all pride, without slavery to his principles... he lived only for, and aspired towards, the public good, he delivered his sentiments in a simple manner; they were emphatic only by virtue of the reasons for them, which he had the art of placing within the reach of all minds with a luminous precision."

And, the critics of M. de Gournay were:

"accustomed to receive successively all opinions as a glass reflects images without retaining any of them, accustomed to find everything probable without ever being convinced, to ignore the intimate connection of effects with their cause and to contradict themselves continually without being aware of it or
placing any importance on it—these men are only astonished when they meet with a man inwardly convinced of a truth, and deducing from it consequences with the rigour of an exact logic. They let themselves listen, they listen next day to propositions quite contrary; they are surprised not to see in a thoughtful man the same flexibility. They do not hesitate to call him a fanatic and a man of systems. If the arbitrariness or the folly of making everything bend to his ideas instead of applying his ideas to things, is the characteristic of the spirit of system, assuredly Mr. de Gournai was no man of systems.”

M. de Gournai was a contemporary and a fellow spirit of the celebrated Dr. Quesnay. Whilst sharing complete agreement over the principles of political economy, neither Gournai nor Turgot ever associated themselves with Quesnay’s group. Yet these two are generally labelled along with the followers of Quesnay, as Physiocrats (those who acknowledge the Rule of Nature). It is necessary, however, to distinguish the followers of Gournai, because the former had no interest in theoretical speculations, whereas the latter so multiplied them after Quesnay’s death that the truth of their profound and simple principles were for all purposes buried.

Before continuing with M. Turgot’s exposition of political economy, it is necessary to remove another unnecessary misunderstanding which has been sown by economic writers. Without number they have concluded that the original French Economists were a quaint collection who subscribed to such flat-earth notions as the one that the farmer is the only source of wealth. In fairness they have been helped in such an absurd conclusion by loose translations of the French originals. But Turgot never held such a belief, for to have so done, he would have to close his eyes to the existence of gardeners, fishermen, quarry men and miners. For him to assert that the farmer was the only source of wealth is as absurd as an idea today that British Leyland is the mother of all production.

During his official duties Turgot was more concerned with restoring freedom of trade within France than across its frontiers. Internal trade was beset with monopoly, privilege and corruption and it is not surprising to read that Turgot had to deal with famine and food riots; for these are the natural consequences of such a selfish system.

His exposition of Free Trade, evidenced by the two passages below, was as impeccable as his treatment of all the branches of political economy.

“I believe indeed that ironmasters, who think only of their own iron, imagine that they would gain more if they had fewer competitors. There is no department in commerce in which those who exercise it do not seek to escape from competition and who do not find sophisms to make the State believe that it is interested at least to exclude the rivalry of foreigners whom they easily represent to be the enemies of national commerce. If we listen to them, and we have listened to them too often, all branches of commerce would be infected by this spirit of monopoly. These foolish men do not see that this same monopoly is not, as they would have it believed to the advantage of the State, against foreigners, but is directed, against their own by those fellow subjects—sellers in their turn—in all other branches of trade.”

“Whatever sophisms the self interest of some commercial classes may heap up, the truth is that all branches of commerce ought to be free, equally free, entirely free; that the system of some modern politicians who imagine they favour national commerce by prohibiting the importation of foreign merchandise, is a pure illusion; that this system results only in rendering all branches of commerce enemies one to another, in nourishing among all nations, a germ of hatred and of wars, even the most feeble effects of which are a thousand times more costly to the people, more destructive of its wealth, of population and of happiness, than all those paltry mercantile profits imaginable to individuals, can be disadvantageous to their nations. The truth is that in wishing to hurt others we hurt only ourselves.”

Protection applied internally or against the freedom of foreign trade is an economic disease. It cannot be regulated by a government or a bureaucracy as they wish, because it infects the whole economic organism and thereby enlists entrenched support. To allow protection to exist “on a limited scale”, “for a temporary period”, or “for strategic reasons” are often the illusory reasons retailed by politicians. But protection is no respecter of mankind or of nations and can run until every individual becomes, in his economic dealings, an island unto himself, and an enemy of all his fellow men.

Turgot regarded the power of taxation as the most effective means of destroying economic injustices and restoring a just distribution of wealth. He abolished the Corvée (derived from cura via, or care of the roads) system whereby all road building was carried out by forced and unpaid labour, replaced the oppressed with professional contractors, and levied the taxation from the source reserved by Nature. The roads (in Limousin) were transformed, the people were relieved, and the value of the adjoining land soon increased in excess of the tax placed upon it.

Turgot first studied theology at the Sorbonne and at the age of 23 he delivered an address in Latin which opened with this passage:

“Placed by his Creator in the midst of eternity and of immensity, and occupying in them but a point, man has necessary relations with a multitude of things and beings. At the same time his ideas are concentrated in the individuality of his mind, and in the supremacy of the present moment.”

Turgot abandoned his theological studies and trained as a lawyer. At the age of 26 he became a Master
of Requests, or a Magistrate. Eight years later he was appointed Intendant, or provincial governor, of the province of Limousin. During his administration, which lasted thirteen years, he introduced whatever reforms he felt were needed and which his delegated authority permitted. His single aim was to enhance the public good. He adopted for this purpose a policy of explaining all the reforms to his subordinates in great detail and thereby inspiring in them a zeal equal to his own.

In 1774 he was appointed Comptroller General of Finances by Louis XVI. Before he accepted the office at such a time, he explained the economic condition which he would inherit and the opposition which his reforms would attract. The young King assured him of his wholehearted support, even if need be against his own Court. Soon Turgot became the most effective minister of that administration and hardly any aspect of government escaped his attention. In January 1776 Turgot presented six proposals to the King's Council and to Parliament. These proposals were framed to destroy a whole hierarchy of corruption. The Council and Parliament objected strongly. Nonetheless, the King found the proposals derived from principles which were not answered in the arguments of the Council or of Parliament. He ratified them and wrote to Turgot in March, "The more I think of it, my dear Turgot, the more I repeat to myself that there are only you and myself who really love the people."

A conspiracy to unseat Turgot was concerted between various members of the Court and Marie Antoinette, the young Queen. The King succumbed and in May dismissed Turgot. The Liberals, notably Voltaire and Condorcet, were shattered, not only by the dismissal but also by the reversal of those six proposals. So too was Turgot, for he feared for the safety of the King and his nation. Within seventeen years the King was guillotined and the nation had undergone a bloody revolution.

Although Turgot died in 1781 at the age of fifty four, and therefore did not have to live through the Revolution he had predicted its coming in this passage which he had written at the age of twenty three.

"Unhappy are those nations in which false principles of government have acted their legislators. . . . Almost all have neglected to keep open the doors for the improvements of which all the works of man have need, or have neglected to make the means of these easy. . . . The only remedy for abuses that remain - Revolution - is one sadder than the abuses themselves."

Frank McEachran

1935, with one year in between travelling in Italy, Greece and Russia.

Mr. McEachran's interests were philosophical and literary and his publications include The Civilised Man, The Destiny of Europe (both Faber and Faber), The Life and Philosophy of Johann Gottfried Herder (O.U.P.) and, more recently, two volumes of an anthology of European poetry of a strongly individualistic tendency entitled Spells (Basil Blackwell).

Frank McEachran was seventy-five and although officially retired, continued to teach at Shrewsbury right up to the day before his death—forty years after he began there. He was utterly devoted to the philosophy of Henry George and contributed papers to three International Union Conferences, Karl Marx and Henry George, Karl Marx and Henry George—Thirty Years After, and . . . Will Not Find Easy Acceptance, the last being presented at the conference in the Isle of Man in 1973.

Only a few weeks ago, Frank McEachran sent in some “collected papers” for possible publication in this journal.

Among his pupils at Shrewsbury, none of whom failed to hear at some time or another the message of Henry George, regardless of the subject matter under discussion, were Christopher Booker, the well known journalist, and Richard Wainwright, Liberal MP for Colne Valley.

Frank McEachran’s enthusiasm for the economics and philosophy of Henry George rubbed off on to several of his colleagues at Shrewsbury and some years ago resulted in the present writer paying a visit there to enjoy their hospitality and to address a group of sharp-witted sixth formers.

"Kek" as he was affectionately known to his friends was a profound thinker and a great individualist yet modest and even shy for all his talents and abilities. His passing recalls the words of Henry George, “Strong heart and high endeavour, the world needs them now.”

V. H. BLUNDELL.

*Freedom the Only End, Johnson Publications Ltd. £1.10p.
H. GEORGE AND THE POPE

SIR, — The May/June issue of Land and Liberty (p.42) carries a review by S.C.B. of a book on Henry George. The book under discussion is Henry George in Europe by Michael Silagi. After a long review the writer S.C.B. ends with this: “An interesting aspect revealed by the author is the origin of the Papal Encyclical Rerum Novarum devised as a counter to Georgist ideas.” This is not and cannot be true. The economic writing and philosophy of H. George were examined, and nothing inconsistent with Christian social doctrine was found in either. What may have confused the author Michael Silagi is the fact that on the publication of Rerum Novarum, Henry George criticised Pope Leo XIII on the matter of private property which the Pope was defending against Communism. What shocked George was that no distinction was made between land and other types of property—that no definition of land ownership was included in the Encyclical. So really the boot was on the other foot. George questioned the Pope’s social teaching. Despite this the Catholic Church officially clears Henry George, thus apparently endorsing his distinction.

As an ardent admirer of Henry George, and a Roman Catholic, I hope you will find space to publish this letter to clear the record.

Yours faithfully,

MARIE McCrone
Laxton, Northants.

BANK CREDIT AND INFLATION

SIR, — In claiming that I am in error in stating that banks can lend more money than they hold as deposits, Mr. Oliver Smedley seems to be failing to make a necessary distinction between practice and theory. I bow to his superior knowledge when he says that in the last fifty years banks have never done so, but this is not the same as proving that they never have nor ever could. Oddly enough, the rest of Mr. Smedley’s argument supports my contention, not his own: I am referring to his point that I have forgotten that one bank’s advance is another (or even the same) bank’s deposit.

If we analyse the theory behind lending, we at once become aware that a bank’s lending powers would theoretically be infinite if it could always be sure that every one of its advances were deposited with its own branches, because it could then indulge in a self-cancelling process of debts and credits without reference to its deposits at all. As a matter of fact, the big Banks are, if taken corporately, virtually in this position today since as far as advances and deposits are concerned they already take in one another’s washing. Their only loss in this relatively closed system is the leakage of funds to banks abroad through foreign trade which eventually—and I stress the long-term nature of the process—could lead to a loss of reserves for the country as a whole.

From this we can deduce a general law, which is that in a closed system credit (and debit) can be infinitely expanded. But, just in case the reader should think the millenium has arrived he should also bear in mind that the number of individuals or corporations found to be credit-worthy in any system is markedly finite. If then the banks do not indulge in infinite credit, it is partly because they have only a relatively small number of creditworthy customers, and partly because they dare not get out of step with the other banks which alone have the ability to demand payment for inter-bank debts. With these two admittedly stabilizing provisos, banks can operate their credit-systems wholly independently of their deposits, again provided, of course, that they have sufficient deposits to engender confidence in the public in the first place. All this springs from

the basic fact which I previously emphasized that credit and debt, being self-cancelling, can have neither an effect on inflation nor on the amount of money in circulation. On the other hand, were this infinitely-sliding scale of credit and indebtedness not possible, then credit would in a sense be acting like money and depending for its value on its quantity. But at this point the wheel of the argument comes full circle and justifies the point which Mr. Smedley generously credits me with: namely, an understanding of the crucial difference between money and bank (or any other) loans. Since he admits this distinction too, he must logically accept the theory behind the above argument; although I did say in my previous letter to express the theory in this way is certainly enough to make the pragmatic banker blanch.

Yours faithfully,

F. J. JONES
University College, Cardiff

PROMISES TO PAY

SIR, — Once again I must reply to Mr. Henry Meulen.

He tells me that the inscription on the old Scottish notes ran (“with small variations” which he does not specify) “I promise to pay to bearer on demand one pound sterling” and that the notes were redeemable in coin. That would have meant that in payment for one Scottish pound note the bearer would expect to receive one gold coin, being a pound, of a certain weight and fineness.

“Surely it is equitable” he writes “that if the free market price of gold rises, the holder of the note should receive a smaller weight of gold on redemption than before the rise.” Presumably if the price of gold fell he should receive a larger weight of gold on redemption.

No, Mr. Meulen, this would not be equitable nor even practicable. It would not be equitable because the holder of the note would not know what size of coin he would be due to receive. It would not be practicable because it would be impossible to have gold coins, all
marked “One pound” but of different sizes to accord with the free market price of gold on any particular day or at any particular minute.

Mr. Meulen then explains that the difference “between redeeming a pound note in a pound’s worth of gold at the current price in a free bullion market... and just buying gold in the free market, is that in the former case the bank binds itself to redeem the note in gold; whereas the bullion market does not.” If it were a free bullion market, it would have to: that is what a free market is: and if the free market were unwilling to deal and therefore unable to establish the free market price, at what price would the bank redeem its note?

Mr. Meulen’s explanation is, I fear, a contradiction in terms.

Yours faithfully,
Olivier Smedley
Wendens Ambo
Essex

CHINA’S LAND-VALUE TAX

Sir, — Are there, among the readers of Land & Liberty, any experts on Chinese history as it relates to the Kuomintang? The Kuomintang, or People’s Party, was the first modern Chinese political party. I recently discovered that, according to its manifesto, it had every intention of implementing a programme of land value taxation.

Under “Domestic Policies”, the manifesto declared that all tax proceeds from lands would be used by local government to administer local institutions, help the young and aged and poor, and “aiding sufferers from famines and other natural disasters, and promoting sanitation and other kinds of public welfare.”

The people who drafted the manifesto clearly did not envisage the operation of a self-regulating market economy, on the Western model; given the traditions of China up to the turn of the century, it would have been surprising if they had thought in those terms.

Clause 14 of the manifesto promises: “The enactment of land laws, laws regulating the use of land, laws governing the taxation of land produce and of the assessed value of land. The value of lands privately owned, after having been properly assessed by their owner, must be reported to the government which will levy taxes on them proportionate to their value, and, if necessary, the government will exercise the right of eminent domain.” There is, here, considerable scope for research.

Yours faithfully,
Fred Harrison
Twickenham, Middx.

COMMON MARKET CON

Sir,—I haven’t particulars of the Common Market’s current destruction of French apples but this seems to be one of the most blatant examples of the planned economy. Unreason could hardly go further. The most cunning witch doctor could not con the people of a cannibal tribe to the extent that the economics experts can con the State-“educated” people of Europe. Victor Hugo who began life as a schoolmaster said that common sense exists not because of, but despite education.

Yours faithfully,
Frank Dupuis
Ruthin, Clwyd.

Milk Marketing
Maze and Muddle

What effect has Britain’s entry into the EEC and phased acceptance of its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) had on British agriculture and British dairying in particular? Does changing government policy, national and supra national, help or hinder the farmer in producing and the consumer in buying the products he wants? Would a free market in milk and dairy products do the job more efficiently?

Five years after the publication of Mrs. Linda Whetstone’s Research Monograph 21, The Marketing of Milk, the Institute of Economic Affairs invited her to re-examine the British dairy industry’s progress and potential under the effects of changing government policies and the impact of the CAP, in the light of her analysis and conclusions in 1970. The picture that emerges* is apparent confusion for the farmers and especially the manufacturers of dairy products—butter, cheese and cream; less superficially alarming for the consumer; much more worrying for the taxpayer who has seen mounting exactions in levies, grants, guarantees and food subsidies from Labour and Conservative governments to support British and continental farmers in the interests of “orderly marketing” and controlled prices. Yet, as Mrs. Whetstone’s Supplement suggests, British dairy products are becoming scarcer.

Mrs. Whetstone points firmly to government policy-makers, national and EEC, as the source of confusion, uncertainty, procastination, error and inconsistency leading almost inevitably to loss of confidence, disappointment of expectations and ultimately damage to investment. The effects on growth, profitability and prices and the misallocation of resources, may prove irreversible. Mrs. Whetstone asks whether farmers can have confidence in the future when national policy emanates from no less than three unharmonised sources. Not only has national policy conflicted with supranational (EEC) in the example of the Beef Conversion Scheme she

claims that more money should be spent on research into the environment. The politicians’ instrument, but criticsise it for ignoring or obfuscating the recommendations on its

Take it or Leave it
Housing

DESIGNERS have “mistaken notions about what the average person does or wants and this inhibits them from giving the people what they want.” So says Dr. David Canter, director of the Environmental Psychology Unit, University of Surrey (Evening Standard, Sept. 1). Despite the now well established fact that people do not want to live in high rise flats, Dr. Canter claims that in favouring two-storey buildings instead one might very well be exchanging one set of mistakes for another. Mistakes have been made he says, because planners have tended to consider economic factors instead of the needs of the people. Dr. Canter further claims that more money should be spent on research into the environmental needs in housing.

It has apparently not occurred to Dr. Canter to question that the “needs of the people” should be decided by anyone but the people themselves. People are quite capable of deciding by themselves the kind of house they want to live in with the help of a free market price—that is really free. Free from tariffs and taxes on building materials, free from restrictive practices in building and from the near monopoly of some building supplies. And, of course, free from the excessive demands for land on which to build. It adds insult to injury for those who cannot afford to buy their own homes, to have state charity and hand-outs conditional upon the choice of a home being left to planning psychologists, however well disposed and armed with dossiers of research they may be.

THE GOVERNMENT has now been made more aware of one of the seemingly intractable problems of unemployed workers—their lack of mobility. Now, says a recent Press report, the Government plans to “counter the effect of low rent council housing which is partly responsible for the immobility of labour.” One can well understand it. No one is likely to be attracted away from a council house (or a rent controlled private house for that matter) into an area where accommodation is simply not available—except perhaps high priced inadequate accommodation—simply because there is work to be found there.

Apparently in certain situations, workers moving to jobs outside a reasonable daily travelling area can qualify for over £1,000 in grants, including a £7.84-a-week lodging allowance for two years, fares home up to six times a year, house removal costs, a £135 re-housing grant and £250 towards estate agents’ and legal fees.

The travel subsidies are limited to workers moving to new jobs which pay under £3,300 a year.

Here is a classic example of the wrong solution applied to a problem creating yet another problem—to which a further wrong solution is applied. It is our land tenure system and the Rent Acts that have condemned many to homelessness and overcrowding.

The philosophy of politicians is, if you see a problem, pass a law. If this creates another problem, pass another law.
London’s Game of Chance

Robert Miller

WHEN a man is tired of London, Dr. Johnson is reported to have said, he is tired of life. Well, that was all right for him somewhere around 1775 talking about his London, a mere fraction of what it is today and very much quieter. What would he say about it today? I venture to suggest it would be more explosive and less flattering.

For some time now I have maintained that when things get bigger they seldom get better; as examples I quote children, local authorities and cities. Simon Jenkins in his new book\(^*\) tells how London grew and became the big problem it is today. He begins the story at the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII. As far as architectural gems were concerned, and there were many, this was vandalism with a vengeance—and I mean the phrase literally—by Royal decree. Almost all the land was surrendered to the Crown, and subsequently dished out in large lumps to Court favourites, other portions went to the newly established Church, and all in due course became fully-fledged rentier capitalists.

The next two hundred years seem to have been spent by these landowners vying with each other in improving and enlarging their estates and their fortunes by means of marriage. It is odd how so few of them managed to provide themselves with a male heir. Hence the arranged marriages of wealthy heiresses with young men similarly well-heeled, these unions thus resulting in a mere handful of families in possession of large slices of some of the richest land in the world.

All the cards in this mighty game of Happy Families are here in this book: Audley, Russell, Berkeley, Cadogan, Grosvenor, Jermyn, Portman, et al. We may also read how the Jokers managed to enter the pack: Cotton, Clore, Levy, Samuel, Hyams, and so on, their introduction necessitating

(and sometimes following), for better or worse, certain amendments to the rules, so that all the players, and most of the onlookers, may at least be aware of who takes most of the tricks.

Even after many disasters and upheavals including the Civil War, the Plague, the Great Fire, economic depression, two World Wars, and adverse changes in estate taxation law, it is amazing how many of these old families still retain a grip on valuable freeholds.

During all this time, of course, there was the problem of the poor—that is the landless. When gentlemen of means build town houses and set out to live like gentlemen, they must be served by those who are not so fortunate and must work for a living, and so the traders and servants will come and they will demand some sort of accommodation, and since such houses were regarded at best as necessary evils, evils they soon became. The slums were ignored until such time as it became convenient to clear them away, then the process would begin all over again.

The worst clearances were carried out to make way for the coming of the railways, about 100,000 people being evicted with little or no notice and no compensation. This deliberate devastation of working class homes would have been much less, and less costly to the Railway Companies, if they had all agreed to run their trains into a single terminus; but such a common sense arrangement a century or more ago would be hard enough to imagine, let alone find favour with all concerned.

Not until the middle of the nineteenth century was any serious attempt made to do anything about the plight of the poor (with the exception of the valiant philanthropic few such as Shaftesbury, Peabody and Octavia Hill), by which time they had had enough, and it is my belief that it was bad housing as much as the so-called capitalist exploitation which spawned and fed the Labour movement and its claim to represent the interests of the working class.

Today things are much better for all concerned, but the stigma attaching to private land ownership still persists and has now overspilled into the property market generally. And London still has its slums, and all politicians should by now realise that just as private monopoly in land is the mother of all monopolies, bad housing is her daughter and the mother of many social evils.

Here is a history of London, full of romance, grandeur, intrigue, follies, mistakes, and in the concluding chapters a promise of better things to come, provided we learn from past errors and ensure that we are allowed to discuss and criticize plans for the future with those who propose to carry them out, before they are carried out. London is no longer merely a private family affair; it is the concern of each and every one of us who lives or works in it.

Pull this one—it's got bells on it

Nicholas Bilitch

I HAVE yet to reach my “three score years and ten,” but after being around for some fifty odd years or so, I never cease to be amazed at the amount of verbal or written rubbish some “clever” folk would have me swallow. It is not only politicians—who, after all, have a professional vested interest in throwing dust in my eyes—who would persuade me that pigs can fly, or have me believe that the moon is made of cheese. Newspaper editors and columnists, professors and academics, television pundits, economists, business spokesmen, trade union leaders, student leaders, public relations con-men etc., all with an axe to grind, a likely story to tell or just simply out to explain some “new truth” or “new reality” — that black is white, square is round or long is short — would have me fall for the most bizarre nonsense.

For years now — lethargy and procrastination notwithstanding — I have wanted to write a book on


NOVEMBER & DECEMBER, 1975
the subject of how to fool everybody, all of the time. Abraham Lincoln considered it impossible to pull the wool over the eyes of all of the people, all of the time; Lincoln just did not appreciate the extent and amount of latent ingenuity there exists for conning the man in the street from here and now to Kingdom Come.

While my book has yet to be written, an enterprising author, one Terry Arthur, being fed up with reading and listening to endless balderdash, has got down to the job of writing what he forthrightly calls "95 per cent is CRAP" A Plain Man's Guide to British Politics.

Accompanying the author's text are some first class cartoons by Daily Express cartoonist, Michael Cummings. If you have a preference for common sense and plain speaking, this is the book for you.

To complete your guide to contemporary clap-trap, the author has supplied a handy appendix informing the reader "Where the Crap Came From". There is also a handy "Who the Crap Came From" which identifies some authors. They are mostly politicians and political commentators who have a highly developed skill in the art of turning logic on its head, or writing involved passages which are intended to conceal rather than reveal thought.

Read and enjoy this excellent introduction to the world of economic and political hocus-pocus.

Capitalism Takes the Rap for Land Monopoly

Marx's economic philosophy has a lot to answer for. The failure to make the ethical and economic distinction between land and capital has led people to believe that there is no alternative but to choose between total private ownership of land and capital, and total state ownership of them.

Persia's revolution was initially a revolution against the land owners, which, because it did not deal with the problem of land monopoly in the right way has now become a revolution against capitalism.

Big businesses have been ordered by the "Shah-People Revolution" to surrender forty-nine per cent of their shares to workers, farmers and the general public, reports the Daily Telegraph, October 20. Inflation is rampant and the predictable reactions to it—price controls by the government and black marketing by the public—are leading to economic chaos and bankruptcies. "Profiteers" are being jailed or exiled and students are helping to smash capitalism—literally, by smashing up commercial property where overcharging is alleged.

This Marxian madness is like trying to deal with the evils of a water monopoly by nationalising, redistributing and controlling the price of buckets and punching holes in the best and largest.

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