

EVERYTHING HAS ITS PRICE

THERE IS ONE THING about a Tory government that can be relied upon and that is the consistency of their worn-out 'philosophy' of profit. Toryism is not really a philosophy and it has nothing to do with social reforms or improving the quality of life.

This phrase has been bandied around so much of late. Those in authority are quick to use it because they realise that people are beginning to learn that there is more to life than just acquiring more money and possessions and that they cannot provide the social environment necessary to give quality to people's lives.

Toryism is an attitude of mind which pervades all shades of political opinion. The Tories in the USSR are the communist hierarchy of party leaders and state bureaucrats. Over there the social benefits might be provided free, but political freedom is not tolerated. Here the Tories tolerate a degree of political freedom, but place a price tag on practically everything. These are mean-minded lower middle-class attitudes.

Recent examples of this are the Government's legislation to charge entrance fees for museums, to stop free milk in junior schools, increase school meal prices, and the proposal for full fares for children during rush hours on London Transport. We might be fast becoming a 'cashless' society, but in doing so we are moving away from a 'moneyless' one. Not only are prices rising at a rate never experienced before, but we are having to pay for services which have been free up until now and have been taken for granted to remain that way.

CLASS BASIS OF SOCIETY

These latest price proposals shows the mean streak that runs through all Tories. Nothing illustrates better the class basis of society and that time and time again it is working people who have to make the sacrifices so that this profit motive system can survive. The fact that these charges will hit people with large families and low incomes hardest, cuts no ice in the Christian, God-fearing, mean-minded Tories.

When announcing the full fares for

children, Horace Cutler, Chairman of the GLC Policy and Resources Committee, said: 'We believe our policies will enable us to meet our objective of providing more efficient and better public transport for London.' The Tory criterion of efficiency really means that a profit should be made, no matter how many buses are removed from services or how many children suffer malnutrition because they will no longer get a cheap school dinner nor free milk.

A number of Labour-controlled Councils have protested about the abandonment of free milk and some are planning to defy the legislation. Some Tory Councils, no doubt with an eye on the next elections, have also protested to the Secretary of State for Education.

THE CON TRICK

The whole question of paying for social services is a con trick. The mass of ordinary people just cannot win, because if these are 'free', they are still being paid for indirectly through PAYE and National Insurance contributions. Everything is

geared to conning as much as possible of the earnings received for labour from the people who produce the wealth. At every turn we are continually paying out for the goods and services which we and the rest of the working class produce and provide. The politicians and the state bureaucrats try to give people the impression that these things are given to them, while all the time the true providers are being robbed at the point of production, in the shops and for the benefits and services which are free in name only.

How long will it be before other 'free' services, such as libraries, become chargeable? Who would have thought that free museums, started during the *laissez faire* period of Victorian capitalism, would now end in our enlightened age? 'Free' services, although in name only, should be defended. They are part of our quality of life and it is mean and

degrading that everything should have a price tag.

Anarchists want to move in the other direction, towards a free society, free from the government and the state, free from profit-conscious employers and the money system. All necessary production of goods and services to satisfy the needs of people can be run by the free association of those who work in the industries. Items can be made and services run for needs instead of for profit.

It is people who are involved and affected who should decide how industry and services are run. Far from being asked, we are hardly consulted by those in authority. Efficiency in profit terms means exploitation. Instead of being robbed at every turn by the rich, powerful and privileged, we should boot them out and take over and run things for ourselves. P.T.

Heaving a Brick..?

MUCH OF THE LEGISLATION that vitally affects our lives is slipped in by the back door. Legislation for the recent census seems to have got in this way.

Unheralded and comparatively unsung, the House of Commons concluded the report stage and gave an *unopposed* third reading to the Criminal Damage Bill. This Bill creates the offence of possession of any object with which a person intended to destroy or damage property. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Home Office resisted an Opposition amendment which would specify that the 'object' must be an inflammable, or noxious substance or 'dangerous thing' (nearly as vague as an object).

Mr. Clinton Davis, supporting the amendment, said that society must be protected from petrol bombers, but should not concede executive powers capable of very real abuse. If the clause was too wide there was danger that the executive could abuse the law.

The Under-Secretary said it was far better to have a clause covering any article rather than to limit it to a particular type. Mr. Davis's amendment was defeated.

On another amendment, Sir Elwyn Jones (former Attorney General and now 'Shadow' Law Officer) said it was a dangerous thing for the law to be

couched in such terms so as to encourage police to go on 'fishing expeditions' into houses (he should know). He went on to say that the wide powers given by the Bill to search for 'anything' caused the Opposition a great deal of concern. He thought that the powers ought to be restricted to what was really necessary for the protection of the public. However, neither he nor Mr. Clinton Davis voted against the Bill when it was finally passed with its offending clauses intact.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Home Office apparently mollified Mr. Davis and Sir Elwyn by pointing out that this right of search for 'objects' was not a new power. It existed in the 1861 Act, and that had not been abused in its 110 years.

We have never known any institution to have power and not abuse it, in particular the police. This Bill will give them extra powers, which they don't really need. The one thing certain about this Bill is that it will not stop Criminal Damage, it will merely serve to give a further excuse for police raids and arrests.

It also credits the police as ever with powers of clairvoyance in divining 'intention'—and what object *cannot* destroy or damage property? Watch any four-year-old child!

R.J.

WHAT IS OBSCENITY?

TWO TRIALS for obscenity (one on appeal) concluded last week with a bookseller being sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, and two men were given fifteen months and another twelve months for staging an obscene play. These cases were in addition to the *Little Red Schoolbook* case which concluded with a fine of £50 and costs (110 guineas) for Richard Handyside the publisher, and the *Oz* case which has not finished as we go to press. Also it has been reported that 53,000 books have been seized from Sexa Ltd. for consideration by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

It will be argued, not least by the liberals, that these cases are different in kind from the civil liberty cases as represented by Richard Handyside and *Oz*, not to mention their famous forebears *Lady Chatterley*, *Ulysses*, *The Tropic of Cancer*, *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, *Fanny Hill*, *The Rainbow*, *Well of Loneliness*, *Boy, To Beg I am Ashamed*, *Sleeveless Errand*, *Song of Songs*, etcetera. The unfortunate bookseller from Bradford and theatrical impresarios from Manchester and the titillating Sexa Ltd. were, it will be contended by some, hard-core pornographers and not fit to be seen in the company of decent obscenity writers. In fact there is a strange snobbishness between the persecuted all due to a failure to define the term 'obscenity' or pornography. The latest irony is the decision of the Rugby Football Union to support Lord Longford's campaign against pornography. Sir William Ramsay, president of the Union, does not, according to the *Guardian*, consider that rugby songs could be called pornographic; they were, he told the *Guardian*, 'merely a young man's reaction to a night out'. Someone else took refuge in describing them (as Eric Partridge did writing on some portions of Shakespeare) as 'bawdy'. One man's bawdy is another man's obscenity which is another man's pornography.

Havelock Ellis in an essay on obscenity recalls how Sir Archibald Bodkin, then Director of Public Prosecutions and a zealous prosecutor of 'obscenity', appeared as the representative of Great Britain at an International Conference, which met at Geneva to discuss 'The Suppression of the Circulation and Traffic

in Obscene Publications'. A Greek delegate suggested the desirability of first defining the meaning of the word 'obscene'. Sir Archibald objected, on the score that there was no such definition in English Law, and it was unanimously resolved, before proceeding further that 'no definition was possible' of the matter which the Conference was called together together to discuss. Strictly speaking this was not true, Lord Cockburn (pronounced Coeburn) handed down a judgement that 'an obscene book... had a tendency to deprave and corrupt anyone into whose hands it might fall'.

It was noteworthy that Lord Longford, the latest knight to tilt his (non-phallic) lance against the windmill of obscenity, refused in a radio programme 'It's Your Line' to define the word 'obscenity'. He took refuge in the fact that this was one of the tasks of his Committee.

History of persecution reveals the changing pattern of the State's concern—and conversely of society's development. Man's earliest persecutions and trials were for heresy, this spent itself. Kingdoms decided that subjects must accept the religion of their Prince, this was the end of civil heresy—henceforward to be called 'treason'. A wave of witchcraft trials, hysterical in origin and continuance, swept over Britain and the new American colony. As God continued to lose his hold over the minds of people, the least service the State could do for him was frequent trials for blasphemy—an offence still on the Statute Book. Then, with the growth (and necessity) of sexual enlightenment, severest measures were taken against manuals which sought to spread information. Now, with technical innovations such as contraceptives and 'the pill', official recognition lags, as ever, behind reality and the new sexual pattern seeks, and will find, new interpreters.

As ever the common interpretation of the new ideas and new experiments is degeneration or decadence. Dirges are given forth about the decline and fall of nations, with unhistoric references to the Roman Empire and a nostalgic look-back at the glories of the British Empire—now alas! vanishing from the earth—due to the permissive society—whatever that is!

The most vociferous of the groups peddling this line is the Mary Whitehouse-

Moral Rearmament-Blandford Press-Clean Up TV-complex. Two specimens of the type of literature produced by this group are *The Cult of Softness* by Arnold Lunn and Garth Lean (1965) and *The New Morality* (1964) by the same authors. Each book has the same topic, how each strand of 'permissiveness' in society are part of a deliberate campaign by communist tendencies to corrupt and deprave British Society—or the West. There is much attacking of the extraordinary group of clergymen round the Bishop of Woolwich which appears to deny the existence of God but the general theses is that of Moral Rearmament of which Lunn, Lean and the Blandford Press are all satellites. The usual apocalyptic warnings are given and the fate of Rome is held up as a dreadful example of how licentiousness degrades a nation.

Why the Roman, or for that matter any Empire declines is anybody's guess. It is not the purpose of this piece to go into that. A case has been made out for the theory that it was the onset of Christianity which overburdened the Romans with the idea of guilt and led to their downfall.

A special object of Lunn and Lean's attack (in *New Morality*) is Alex Comfort who gave an excellent radio talk and wrote an excellent Penguin *Sex in Society* on the whole subject. Lunn and Lean were specially upset by Comfort's words, 'We may eventually come to realize that chastity is no more a virtue than malnutrition. It [sexual intercourse] is, in other words, the healthiest and most important human sport; and the need to consider it in other, medical and sociological contexts should never be allowed to obscure the fact.' Another of the quotations from Dr. Comfort which L and L found particularly offensive was the definition of a chivalrous boy as 'one who takes contraceptives with him when he goes to meet his girlfriends'.

Lord Longford's pathetic attempt to get in on the act looks suspiciously like a left-wing attempt to prove an alibi. Lunn-Lean-Whitehouse and Co.'s right-wing affinities are notorious but obviously Longford, Soper, Muggeridge and Co. could not join their circus. So they put on an act of their own just

to prove that the Labour government owes more to Methodism than it does to Marxism—and it's going to pay it back.

The myth of the 'permissive society' dies hard. No one was ever 'permitted' to do anything. They did it, from Galileo to Mrs. Pankhurst, from Tim Leary to Christine Keeler, from Annie Besant to Tim Daly, from Mohammed Ali to Dr. Ellsberg, and were forced to take the consequences. This is the way it always has been.

The dangers of a Puritan reaction to an imagined 'permissiveness' are frightening to contemplate. The totalitarian religiosity of Mary Whitehouse, the penitent-form Puritanism of Malcolm Muggeridge and the well-meaning Catholic paternalism of Lord Longford, all add up to a clamp-down on all forms of free expression. It is not only what they kill but what they abort and cripple. The commercial interests, always sensitive to protect their investment, have seen, if not a red light, that it would not be forever amber. The vapid sentimentalism of *Love Story* is indicative of the backlash. It will be remembered,

although the plea of the danger of pornography to democracy is usually urged, that the late unlamented Jo Stalin and Adolf Hitler were both pillars of Puritanism.

In the United States the Government has painted itself into a corner after setting up a Federal Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. The report of the Commission (like the British Wolfenden report on Prostitution and the Wootton report on drugs) was so opposed to the conventional thinking of the Government which set it up that it was ignored—and even suppressed. It is in fact available in a paperback and a Government report. However there will be no Government discussion or action on its findings.

The Danes, by dispensing with censorship, have found that there is no increase in sex-crimes. In fact the Danes have found that there is a saturation point in sexual exploitation. According to the *Daily Telegraph* (8.6.71), a five-day 'sexiland' fair in Copenhagen flopped with a loss of £7,250. This story follows

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