

"England Seemed Remote and Queer"

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firmed their determination to remain adamant in their political methods. To stop at nothing and to take no chances, and to impose their rule, when assuming power, relentlessly on every particle of human life. Such was, I think, the first origin of totalitarianism in Europe. The first blow against freedom and tolerance was struck by my own scientifically-minded generation who would suffer no obstruction in achieving what appeared to them the necessary progress of mankind.

But what about the Nazis and Fascists? Surely their gangs were actuated by sheer lust of power; by no higher considerations than greed? Did the Mussolinis and Hitlers, the Goebbels and Himmlers derive any of their ideas from any kind of scientific outlook? Yes, I think in their own way they did. Take the typical Nazi. His beastliness is not that of the untaught savage. No, his inhumanity is of a highly sophisticated kind. He is beastly because he believes that the beast alone in man is real. He is not ignorant of morality, but he disposes it as worthless cant. He may not lack natural kindness, but he has stamped it out fanatically from his own heart. His evil instincts are firmly grounded in a theory that lust and power are real. Remember that the Nazi comes from a nation unsurpassed in the number and high standard of its universities. There can be no doubt, I believe, that his mentality is a logical expression of the scientific outlook as accepted on the Continent at the opening of this century.

"England Seemed an Anachronism"

I suppose this account of Continental history sounds very remote and queer in England to-day. But I assure you that England herself appeared very remote and queer to us modern intellectuals on the Continent at the opening of this century. In our eyes Victorian England was a curious sort of anachronism. Here, we were told, still survived scientists who believed in God; and the great Charles Darwin himself had been a religious believer. Labour leaders in Britain preached in church, and highly-educated people kept worrying about the opinions of bishops on birth-control. They seemed not to have heard of class war; nor of the discovery that morality is a purely conventional matter and that physical power alone is a real force in history. Though Britain was rather admired in various other ways, in these respects she—and of course America as well—appeared hopelessly backward in the eyes of advanced people on the Continent. However, some of us have travelled a long way since these early days. To-day I feel that if the English-speaking nations were backward in accepting the modern Continental views, they were backward only on a path of error and disaster. I think now that this kind of backwardness has probably saved Britain and America from national disintegration and from the fate of totalitarian subjection which many great peoples of the Continent were doomed to undergo.

What Can We Hope For?

How long can the English-speaking world hold out against the trend which has engulfed the Continent? How long can they resist the kind of conception of man and society, apparently based on science, which destroys faith in human

ideals and hence undermines freedom and tolerance? Have the English-speaking countries not been invaded already, during the inter-war period, by a process called "moral disillusion"? Have they not received their first training in class war and also in the practice of national opportunism? Is their immunity against the scientific outlook of the Continent not dissolving before our eyes? Surely, unless the main body of Europe regains its moral faith and restores freedom and tolerance again, the English-speaking peoples, and their friends in Continental Europe holding to the same ideals, could not maintain their ideals and their freedom for long?

What then can we hope for? We live in a scientific age. No conviction can survive in our midst which is contrary to the teachings of science. The question is: must science teach a materialist view of man and society? Or can we assert, in contradiction to the Continental outlook, that it teaches faith in ideals? Yes, I think we can. Every discovery of science has its starting-point in a guess which is yet much more than a guess, and represents an act of faith. In fact, the scientific method as a whole must be taken on faith by the scientist before he can even make a start in science. To become a scientist he must unquestionably accept the main body of scientific tradition and fully adhere to the ideals transmitted by that tradition. In this light the triumphs of science confirm rather than impair the roots of our Christian civilisation. They testify to the power of traditional ideals on which our civilisation rests. The new scientific outlook which I see approaching will clearly recognise that science is only one form of truth which is of the same substance as all the other forms of truth. It will recognise that we cannot believe in science without becoming involved in the whole range of human ideals of which the ideal of science is only the youngest sister. In this light science may help in reconquering our faith in traditional ideals.

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