

Enoch Powell, who needs no introduction, and who was dismissed from the Shadow Cabinet by Edward Heath in 1968 for a particularly hard-line speech on immigration: it was designed to advance Tory thinking on social welfare matters, and adapt the Labour inheritance of the Welfare State to Tory uses. Later still the Bow Group was created: this was an organization designed, though as a research outfit rather than a pressure group, to bring Toryism into touch with the best of modern and generally liberal thinking without sacrificing the best traditions of the Party. All of these enterprises were smiled upon benignly by the Party leaders. It was scarcely noticed that, throughout the fifties and the sixties the national crisis, mainly in economics—or most obviously in economics—became worse and worse with each stage of play. Gradually, with the loss of the empire, with the cultivation of intellectualism, with the attempt to win the center, Toryism lost distinction of character. It did not necessarily follow, of course, that the Party could not continue to serve the nation—who ever knows what a nation's true interests are?—but it did mean that that service, considered deliberately as something distinct and definite—as an interest—no longer took the foremost position in Conservative intellectual thinking. It might almost be said that the Tories welcomed the intellectuals, not because they might contribute to the Party, but because the Party might contribute to them. Hence my initial distinction between different kinds of minds. Conservatives, frightened by the terrible experience of their defeat in

1945, sought power at almost all respectable cost. They began to conceive of their history in terms of success at power. And they forgot that probably their most successful leader, Salisbury, had said, in the *Quarterly Review* of July, 1860, that Tories ought not to think simply of office for such a concern was "a degrading error which has squandered the fair fame of parties and made a byword of the honour of public men."

Throughout the fifties and early sixties the most emotional and passionate debates in British Conservatism were about the loss of empire, the foreign policy role of the country, and Europe. Only gradually, in the sixties, did economic matters begin to ascend to paramountcy. The foreign policy debate never attracted very much of the attention of the best minds on the Right: it spawned another pressure group, the Monday Club, which rapidly developed an emphasis on anti-Communism, support for the white nations of Africa, and the prevention of colored immigration. For a brief moment, in the wake of Powell's taking up the last subject, the club enjoyed prominence, but it has been in decline for some time, rapidly losing influence at the heights, and suffering terrible division at the grass roots. Broadly speaking, the economic policy division between the Labour and Tory Parties in the sixties consisted of the one leaning towards socialized industry and the other against. Only with the failure of the Wilson government, and the subsequent, at least temporary failure of the Heath government, did the possibility of a serious debate about the eco-

nomic organization of the country become possible; and only for a very brief time indeed did the leadership of the Conservative Party afford much tolerance for Tory intellectuals on the Right—or old-fashioned liberal—side of this argument. Indeed, such Tories as are on this side draw much more sustenance from Americans like Friedman than from anyone at home.

When he became leader of the Tory Party Edward Heath gave a good run to economic liberalism and the ethic of free enterprise. But in power he developed economic management in the direction of controls and administration. This was in part the reflection of his desire to enter Europe, and his awareness of the fact that, in the Community, it would be desirable to develop British industry by fostering cross-border mergers: this need, in turn, dictated a stress on management, bureaucratic control, and government supervision. Ineluctably, he was led back to the government intervention popular in the fifties and sixties, but at a much higher pitch. Some of those who opposed him were themselves pro-EEC; but they believed that free enterprise economics offered the best guarantee of British success inside the Community.

But the most important foci of what American Conservatives would think of as Conservative economic policy in a true sense—competitive, monetarist, and concerned to reduce the power of the state—are not within the Tory Party (save insofar as they are represented by the staff at Swinton Conservative College, which enjoys a considerable measure of autonomy from the leadership: it was a gift from the late Earl of Swinton). The Institute of Economic Affairs is the most important propagandist of micro-economic and Friedmanite ideas. The contribution of the Monday Club is negligible; and the so-called Economic Group of bright Tory members of Parliament has yet to develop its influence.

But that is to look at Conservatism as a doctrine. Historically, the Conservative Party of Edward Heath is far from out of tune with what has been stood for in the past. Most notably on the question of entry into Europe, Heath has defied the wishes of the country, and of the majority of the Party: he has been elitist in the true sense that the Conservative Party has always been elitist and anti-democratic. Salisbury always fought for the "political predominance of the educated classes" and they, in the great majority, have supported entry into Europe, even where they admit or even desire the likely disappearance of the nation as Europe unites further.

The great difference to this fragmented debate has been made by Powell. He is an economic liberal, a Friedmanite. He is also a die hard nationalist. He is also a democrat, believing, as is most evident in his stands against Europe and immigration, that the people of the nation as a whole have a right to determine their future as they wish. As I write this piece, moreover, Powell has just made a

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major speech on economic policy in which he attacks the system of economic controls which Heath has established; calls for more responsibility in the control of public expenditure, and the imposition of extra taxation until the desired anti-inflationary effect is achieved. Whatever his ultimate success will be no one can tell: but he does represent the return of the tough Conservative, in that his economic policies will require the abandonment of much of the tender, paternalistic policies adopted by both parties since the war. He is also the

repository of the liberal economic heritage of the nineteenth century—stressing free enterprise and the intimate interconnection between freedom and economic freedom—in the Tory Party. But over and above all this he is a nationalist; and I believe that nationalism is the most important characteristic of British Conservatism. Since he is also a democrat, he defies the paternalistic heritage of Salisbury, though he is intellectually a very similar kind of politician. The battle between his ideas and those of Heath will determine the future of British

Conservatism, and probably of the country. The likely permutations of that battle need to be worked out elsewhere—the chances of politics and the likelihood of success for either side require separate consideration—but the point to grasp now is that Powell, virtually alone, has created such debate about Conservatism, such distinctively intellectual Conservative debate. Compared to his effort, the Bow Group, such youth ginger groups as Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism, are insignificant. □



Income and Equality

In the course of George McGovern's abortive quest for the presidency, the Senator advanced a set of proposed tax reforms which, he asserted, would have high priority in a McGovern Administration. Besides closing what he called "unfair" tax loopholes for the rich, McGovern wanted to tax annual income over \$50,000 at a rate of at least 75 percent, and sought a 100 percent confiscatory tax on any inheritance over \$500,000. These reforms, argued McGovern, would not only yield a "fairer" tax system, but would also promote a "more equitable" distribution of income in America.

McGovern's tax package immediately came under a lot of fire, in large part because many people found the above-mentioned figures unreasonable. Even those commentators essentially sympathetic to the candidate's aims felt that he had misjudged the feelings of most Americans in this area. McGovern himself was alternately bemused and befuddled by all the furor: at one point he expressed perfect amazement that many of the assembly line workers he talked to thought *his* tax package "unfair," at least for people making more than \$50,000 a year. (Apparently, the Senator felt such views represented a gross misreading of one's class interest.) In any event, McGovern soon started backtracking on his ideas while Republicans rejoiced at yet another blunder, McGovernites cursed yet another example of the "backwardness" of the American people, and historians added yet another cubit to McGovern's stature as the most naive man to run for the presidency since William Jennings Bryan.

This episode, however, is more than just a commentary on the lack of strate-

gic brilliance exhibited by the 1972 Democratic nominee for president. It strikes me as having considerable substantive interest as well, for two reasons. First, the fact that large numbers of individuals in intellectual and academic circles wholeheartedly accepted and supported McGovern's ideas *in toto*. Second, the fact that those who did criticize the candidate attacked his specific figures, and not the more general idea that income needed to be redistributed. Apparently, that goal itself is no longer at all controversial in liberal circles; or to state the matter somewhat differently, the belief that the current distribution of income in America is somehow "bad" and "inequitable" is ceasing to be a radical idea and is becoming instead part of mainstream liberal doctrine.

One wonders, of course, why this should be the case—and this in turn raises a whole series of other questions. Has income distribution in America become less equal? Can one specify what would constitute a "just" or "equitable" distribution of income? And finally, what posture should public policy take toward this increasing criticism of current income distribution?

The first question is difficult to answer with any statistical certainty; however, there are clear indications that income in this country is continuing a long historical trend of becoming more evenly distributed. Two of the more interesting of these indications are presented by B. Bruce-Briggs and Irving Kristol. Briggs, in a recent article for the *Public Interest*, points out that the *only* type of housing whose cost is rising relative to income is in upper-middle-class areas—because more Americans are becoming bunched

in the middle income ranges where they can begin to bid on such housing, hence driving up the price. Kristol discusses the same phenomenon in more general terms in an article for the *Wall Street Journal* entitled "The Frustrations of Affluence." According to Kristol, technology has made many things much cheaper in this country, thus bringing an improved standard of living within range of an increasing number of people. What frustrates the affluent, then, is the difficulty, in this increasingly egalitarian society, of purchasing those "distinctions" that the upper 15 percent of the income strata used to be able to command automatically—e.g., a live-in maid, or a summer home on the Cape. In Kristol's words, "A hundred years ago, it took a relatively small amount of money to make a person much better off. Today, it takes substantial amounts of money to make a person (above the working-class level) only a little better off. The reason is that middle-class people now have to compete with working-class and lower-middle-class people for those 'good things in life' they had always aspired to."

Conceivably, one could disagree with the above arguments; nevertheless, it would still strike me as an extraordinarily difficult proposition to assert that income in America has become less equal in the last century. Kristol, in an article in *Commentary* called "About Equality," has eloquently addressed this point as well: "Inequality of income is no greater today than it was twenty years ago, and is certainly less than it was fifty years ago. . . . Though there has been a mushrooming of polemics against the inequalities of the American condition, most of this socioeconomic literature is shot through with disingenuousness, sophistry, and unscrupulous statistical maneuvering. As Professor Seymour Martin Lipset has demonstrated, by almost any socioeconomic indicator one would select, American society is as best we can determine *more* equal than it was one hundred years ago. Yet, one hundred years ago most Americans were boasting of the historically unprecedented equality that was to be found in their nation, whereas today many seem convinced that inequality is at best a problem and at worst an intolerable scandal."

If income has *not* been getting more

unequal, we are back where we started—wondering why so many people have become convinced that inequality of income is now a problem. Is it perhaps because some new, morally compelling standard has been formulated which spells out, in keeping with the sympathies of our more enlightened age, what should constitute a just distribution of income? If someone has drawn up such a standard, I have been unable to locate it. Kristol states that the *Public Interest* (which he edits) has been trying for some time to get one of the critics of income distribution in America to write an article attempting to define a "just" distribution of income. Kristol further states that no one will write this article for him. One begins to suspect that the people who are so critical of the existing distribution of income in this country really have little idea of what they would like to see in its place. And one begins to suspect as well that their dissatisfaction must reflect something other than mere disapproval of the way income statistics read in U.S. Census reports.

What it does reflect is quite fascinating. Kristol argues persuasively that those who are most critical of income distribution in the United States—whom one could broadly and loosely categorize as intellectuals—are in reality engaged in a class struggle with the business community for status and power. But this struggle does not reflect mere power lust; rather, it expresses a

genuine dislike for bourgeois, commercial society, with its belief that personal security, personal liberty, and the opportunity for steadily increasing material prosperity constitute the essential elements of the common good. To the American liberal intellectual, such a crass, mundane, self-centered formulation of the philosophic basis of a society will never appear morally sufficient or be personally satisfying. A society founded on such a basis will accordingly be viewed as illegitimate. And if such is one's view of a society, he will see everywhere the signs of that illegitimacy.

It follows, then, that almost no conceivable redistribution of income will satisfy those who criticize America most severely in this area. For the problem is not really income at all. On the contrary, income seems to be getting more equal, and those who criticize the current distribution are unable to formulate what *would* constitute a just distribution in any event. The problem is rooted instead in a basic disagreement over the philosophical basis of a good society.

No doubt, America's most vocal social critics would prefer a more heroic, selfless, inspiring vision of the common good than that which prevails in western bourgeois democracies. Such visions, one might point out, are precisely what is venerated in the worker's paradises of Russia, China, and Eastern Europe.

And not surprisingly, a number of American academics have returned from visits to these countries with glowing reports of happiness and collective progress.

I suppose this concern for heroics and inspiration is fine if one wants to indulge it. But most of us are considerably more impressed with the fact that the "crass, mundane, and self-centered" bourgeois society of America has yielded the highest and the most equally distributed standard of living in history. Some of us would even go so far as to argue that the equally unique degree of personal freedom in this country is actually a rather heroic thing for a society to achieve.

Granted, improvements can be made. Few would argue that opportunity is completely equal, and few would quarrel with some redistribution of income as prerequisite to assisting the most needy elements of our society. But to argue, as did many supporters of the sage from South Dakota, that the current distribution of income in America is somehow "evil" is patently absurd. In truth, as we have seen, this is an indictment less of income distribution than of the philosophical basis of American society. There is a perfect right to make such accusations (though one might hope for more intellectual honesty on the part of the accusers). But public policy, unless it is suicidal, has an equal right (and indeed, an obligation) to dismiss them. □

Thomas Molnar

The Inarticulate Society of the Future

Even while they protest every aspect of the industrial-consumer society, the new scientists of futurology imperceptibly describe the society of the twenty-first century in ways not essentially different from ours today. Although they call for boldness of imagination, futurologues usually do not think beyond the known and the familiar; they merely enlarge the size and swell the statistics of the present. The "bigger" and the "better" seem to form the horizon of their predictions.

Concrete observation ought to come, I think, to the aid of imagination when we speak of the future. And, of course, no cause is served when we speak of the entire planet as having one kind of future, that is, when we are carried away by the contemporary yet provincial thinking of the West. It may be forgivable when western futurologues try gently to impose their own vision on the rest of mankind, but it is obvious that the rest of the world has its own traditions, and that the passing of years and decades will remove rather than thicken the recently added layer of western usages and institutions.

In comparison with third world societies, what was the nature of this "added

layer"? And more generally, what is specifically "western" (from the point of view of a phenomenological analysis of political life and institutions) in the West over against the societies of the third world and also the modern communist societies? A brief answer can only state that western ideas have created an *articulated* society, whereas the more traditional societies (archaic, tribal, sacral, the oriental despotisms, etc.) have been relatively *undifferentiated*. It is only in the West that one may speak of society as not coincident entirely with the state; of spiritual and temporal power; of government, institutions, and church; of governing and opposition parties; of distinct yet interconnecting social classes and so on. Let us call societies where several of these phenomena exist *articulated*, and let us note—here only very summarily—that most nonwestern societies, together with archaic ones, did not allow themselves to be so divided or internally differentiated; they did not allow, for example, the existence of a free intellectual community whose ideas and concepts would interact with the ideas and concepts of the spiritual and temporal power, thus influencing the structure of

institutions. Even in the culturally brilliant medieval Islamic world, the philosophers were limited to speculation within their profession, and the state never had recourse to their ideas. Nor did the official religious establishment.

Now the point I wish to raise after these few preliminaries is whether an intellectually honest futurology ought not to imagine our various societies as going towards new forms of inarticulateness? Let us distinguish three spheres in the world today which, it seems to me, are tending centrifugally away from the articulate (western) model of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The three spheres are the western world proper, the communist countries, and the third world. In other words, I do not wish to step out of the presently existing general frame of reference. And the reason why I speak of the nineteenth and twentieth century "model" is that these 200 years saw western concepts of politics and government penetrate the third world (colonialism) and the empires of Russia and China (Marxism). This period was the apogee of western influence, and when the futurologues show themselves so optimistic regarding the future world soci-