

arch, all of them furiously anti-Red. Substitute the Church of England for the Catholic Church and you have the politics of Dr. Inge. But neither Mr. Belloc nor Dr. Inge has ever tackled the question of distribution. Probably they never will. The rest of the staff of the paper are equally irrelevant: they do their best to be as amusing and various as G. K. C., with the result that the paper is readable; but you may read it for years, as I have, without gathering any political doctrine from it except that we must be anti-Red at all costs. And anti-Reddism is not only anti-Distributism, but an infallible symptom of political folly into the bargain. It needs no very subtle diplomacy to understand that unless Britain and France throw all their fighting weight and moral support on the side of Russia, the new Fascist belt round the middle of Europe, allied with Japan, may be tempted to organize a crusade to dismember Russia and restore Capitalism there: in short, make an end of Distributism. The result would be the dismemberment, not of the U. S. S. R., but of the British Empire.

Had not the paper better clear its mind and define its aims to help itself to recover from the shock of its founder's death?

G. B. S.

A Letter to Bernard Shaw

My Dear Shaw,

Let me begin by throwing at you a Floral Tribute which conceals no brick. You have two qualities as a writer, wit and clarity; as a man one most eminent

quality, the hunger and thirst after justice. These three qualities are so rarely found in combination that your possession of them has made you very properly a leader among your own people. By the words "your own people" I mean the people who hold the same philosophy as yourself.

Now for the snag. Though you hold in unique combination these three excellencies, you lack one possession which is essential to social philosophy, and that is an understanding of the common man. It is therefore my business in answering you to show you how the common man is served by our intention, but disserved by yours: how those who would restore property where it has been destroyed (as it has been destroyed in England) serve the common man; while the contrary efforts of Capitalism and Communism (which is Capitalism's twin brother) disserve him.

You have made out a perfect plea for Communism as a remedy for Capitalism. Communism is that undoubtedly; just as suicide is a remedy for worry or prohibition for drunkenness. But though Communism is the obvious solution of the evils of competition, yet as an Eminent Personage has recently remarked (in Latin) "the remedy is worse than the disease".

Talking of that Eminent Personage, I cannot too much applaud your preoccupation with theology — yet I propose in these brief presents to leave theology out. It is the Queen of Sciences, as you have rightly discovered. It is the key to all controversy that differences in the theology are the bases of all differences in culture. Nevertheless, let us leave it out just now and here, in order that we may concentrate the better on

our definite problem; whether property should be rescued from the clutches of Capitalism and restored, or destroyed by Communism. In the Southern states of America, where the cooking is excellent, much the greater part of good cooks are black. Nevertheless, if you are discussing with a Virginian the pros and cons of cooking in the drawing room, the color question is better left out.

What you tell us of Communism as a remedy to Capitalism has, of course, been said a thousand times — though you say it more clearly than most. In saying it, however, you introduce certain errors with regard to our attitude — which attitude is only that of the mass of mankind.

For instance (to take one detail) you think we have some special hatred of M. Stalin. I have felt none such. No doubt if I met him I might rather like him. His face is not unattractive.

Further you have confused the point upon his political origins. We insist upon his marriage because it explains his acceptance by the small group which today despotically governs the Russians. He is evidently a man of the sort common enough in all forms of public life. He is full of energy and he wants to expend his energy in arranging human affairs and getting well into the limelight, at the same time. He may or may not want what most politicians want when they have thrust themselves forward, money as well as limelight. Anyhow, he is obviously of the politician sort, and politicians get into their saddles by intrigue, by inheritance, by purchase — but also by marriage. *He got in by marriage.*

It is relevant to talk of Stalin's marriage because it

is an example of the kind of thing now governing Russia. If I allude to the marriage of the professional politician Snooks, pointing out that Lady Snooks was the daughter of the millionaire Minister of Fine Arts, I do so, not to attack poor Snooks, still less to weary Mother Snooks with my impertinence, but to explain to the poor dupes who call parliamentary government "democracy" that it is nothing of the sort.

However, these little points are only personal misunderstandings, the big thing is your misunderstanding of our political doctrine; oh! ye generous but sadly isolated, desiccated, and inhuman Communists!

Let it be taken as a basis of the whole thing that we are *not* occupied in distributing purchasing power or income or cottages with little bits of garden. We are out for a better distribution of *Property*.

We are not particularly concerned with the peasant except as an example of solid property in action.

Here again there is a personal misunderstanding. I find continually, in highbrow quarters, your accusation that people like myself and my friends (and particularly the Founder of this paper) go in for an ideal peasant, very different from the real thing. Well, I have come intimately across peasants all my life. I worked on a farm for a year of my life and did so on my own land off and on for many years. I can plow, or at least I could when I was young (it is rather like steering a boat in a kicking sea). I learned also to reap in the old-fashioned manner and I was taught the difficult art of broadcast sowing. Also I spent a happy year of my life with peasants in a barrack room. But that is by the way, and only to show that if I love a peasantry I also know it.

I say again neither I nor any of those with whom I work are primarily concerned with the Peasant because he happens to till the land, but only with the principal of Property, in which all peasants are rooted and which we regard as normal and necessary to man. We are as much concerned with carpenters and with builders as with peasants; with traders, where the trade is duly limited and human, with craftsmen of every kind. We are concerned with men's possessing, as individuals and heads of families, the instruments of their trade, their homes, and some share in rents and profits. We are concerned with this as an object vital and central in all political effort, because we believe that, lacking property, men fall into slavery.

A way of putting it which will be irritating to you, but to which I beg you to become accustomed, is this: "Property is normal to Man." Property is a function of normal humanity.

We all know by heart from weary repetition the false doctrine that there is no such thing as a thing; that all things merge into all other things. It was the great discovery of the suburban intelligentsia a lifetime ago, and they cling to it still. We do not. We think that there is such a thing as a Man, and that Man is quite different from anything else. We think that a completed type is stable, and that therefore the nature of man is stable. There are of course deflections from the normal; variation is possible within limits; but push it too far and you distort and torture the object of your experiment. In analyzing any human thing you must analyze it in terms of normal humanity. In proportion as you abandon that

rule you approach the absurd or the insane and in proportion as you try to put into practice absurd and insane doctrines you approach the Pit.

In the Communist analysis of human society a false view is taken, not because the actual statement is false, but because the line of analysis is abnormal. A man can analyze his mother in any one of fifty different ways. He may regard her Biologically, Gynaecologically, Pathologically, Chemically, Philo-progentivically. If he is a Communist, he will probably find a still longer word along the lines of which to analyze his parent. But the normal and human way to regard one's mother is something very different, and if you regard her after some fashion not human and not normal you will fall into cruelty and folly.

So it is with Property. You can analyze the social functions of men along any one of fifty different lines. Thus, you may talk about "solving the problem of Distribution", or "the problem of Production", or the "problem of Organization", but, if in this talk you forget that man desires to own and desires to own in order that he may be free, and desires to be free in order that he may fulfill his end and conform with his nature, then you make man the mere subject of an experiment in some inhuman theory; you warp and you destroy, as do those who twist bones or cut arteries. You even fail to understand that so far from Property breeding competition and making men enemies one of another, it is only preserved by customs and laws restraining competition.

We are not, as you strangely imagine, exceptions. We are not a little coterie or clique. We speak for

what is everywhere the ordinary man, the normal man, the man attempting to fulfill his being and to live consonantly with the instincts native to him and to enjoy them in their right proportion. If we meet an Englishman who is hungry we propose for him a grilled rumpsteak and a pot of beer. You may blame us, crying out that we are monsters, being neither vegetarian nor prohibitionist. We admit the charge that we allow beef and beer; but quite certainly the hungry Englishman will be on our side and against yours.

So it is with the Restoration of Property. Our great chance lies precisely in this, that we are appealing to the common man; and it is just possible (I do not think it is likely) that even in this last disgusting stage of Capitalist decay, in this final mortal phase of urban industrial Capitalism which has battered on the dead body of property, we shall, in some small degree, raise Property from the dead. Attempt, I pray you, to understand of us what the Poet says of his own Tribe:

*. . . Some part of that strong mastery
Which though we falter, fail, and die
Upholds and glorifies our trade:—
The Power to make, and judge things made.*

H. BELLOC

What Is the Use of Art Anyway?

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

WE ARE familiar with two contemporary schools of thought about art. We have on the one hand a very small self-styled élite which distinguishes "fine" art from art as skilled manufacture, and values this fine art very highly as a self-revelation or self-expression of the artist; this élite, accordingly, bases its teaching of aesthetic upon style, and makes the so-called "appreciation of art" a matter of the manner rather than of the content or true intention of the work. These are our Professors of Aesthetics and of the History of Art, who rejoice in the unintelligibility of art at the same time that they explain it psychologically, substituting the study of the man himself for the study of the man's art; and these leaders of the blind are gladly followed by a majority of modern artists, who are naturally flattered by the importance attached to personal genius.

On the other hand we have the great body of plain men who are not really interested in artistic personalities, and for whom art as defined above is a peculiarity rather than a necessity of life, and who have, in fact, no use for art.

And over against these two classes we have a normal but forgotten view of art, which affirms that art is the making well, or properly arranging, of anything whatever that needs to be made or arranged, whether a statuette, or automobile, or garden. In the Western world, this is specifically the Catholic doc-