

Kingston, Jamaica
2/19/65

Economy control

THE EDITOR, Sir— Since people are individuals with unique and infinite tastes and desires befitting their personalities, I've often wondered how Government—or any other group of men—can control an economy without preventing the satisfaction of the individual's ever-changing desires, thus casting everyone in a mould by forcing them to accept what Government believes we should have—instead of what we'd like to have.

An economy cannot be constructed, it can only be allowed to grow. It does not arise from legislative fiat—but by people's needs and desires—and the necessity imposed by nature to produce and exchange goods and services to satisfy them. No Government can foresee—or provide for—the incredible and infinite range of goods and services demanded by fickle personal preferences in trying to satisfy their desires. Just reflect that man's desires are unlimited and that what makes him happy this minute, may make him utterly miserable the next—and you realize why only the "Free Market"—motivated by profit—and governed by the law of "Supply and demand" in free competition, can even attempt to satisfy the endless and ever-changing desires of consumers for a wide variety of things to meet their insatiable demands.

That's the reason why Russia is now abandoning bureaucratic planning of production of consumer's goods—and respecting the right of the individual to choose what goods best satisfy his personal desires. Planned economies inevitably lead to inferior goods and higher prices, as the consumer—denied freedom of choice—is compelled to buy shoddy, poor-quality articles since nothing else is available. This results in large quantities of unsold goods, as consumers unconsciously boycott the worthless and useless goods produced by bureaucrats contrary to their wishes and desires. Scarce resources are wasted, production is discouraged, and a lower standard of living is enjoyed by all.

When will men realize that they don't make the laws of the game of life—God does—and their duty is only to discover and obey them? Is it stubbornness and love of power over our fellowmen, which prevents us from seeing that the body economic—like the body physical—is governed by natural laws inherent in the nature of things deeply rooted in the constitution of the universe—and we can no more control the one than the other? When will they admit that the golden rule is both an economic and social rule, as well as a spiritual one, and that it's adequate for all our economic and social relationships?

Men cannot violate nature's just laws with impunity. Nature is always supreme, and does not depend on majority opinions for her validity. She cannot be democratized. Either we obey—or face the chaos her penalties entail. That's the cause of our present dilemma!

I am, etc.,
P. E. WALLACE,
(Director, Henry George School)
24 Harcourt Road,
Kingston 16, 19.2.65

Socialist faith

THE EDITOR, Sir— The opening paragraphs of Mr. Lloyd Brown's letter, (Gleaner March 31), replying to mine of the 22/3/65, criticising socialism's tenets, commit two common logical fallacies (1) The fallacy of "Argumentum Ad Hominem"—criticising the man, instead of the argument; and (2) The fallacy of arguing from authority—in this case judging facts from the authority and prestige of academic institutions—instead of on their merits.

He said, among other things: that my letter left him wondering whether the Henry George School of Social Science is an 'approved' institution, and that my criticism "is unworthy of one who purports to be the head of an 'academic' institution".

Since when, may I ask, has truth been associated only with "approved" institutions? Is "academic respectability" the criterion for determining facts? Would Mr. Brown suppress opinions not sanctioned by "approved" institutions? Aren't "principles" more important than personalities?

I'd advise a careful reading (or re-reading), of John Stuart Mill's famous essay, on "Liberty". Let's criticise what is said, not who said it—or where it came from.

Re my criticism of socialism's lack of faith in people's basic goodness, my remarks were entirely misconstrued. I did not say your editorial implied—or socialists admitted—that man is basically depraved or immoral—but that their basic assumptions, when taken to their logical conclusions, do. These were my comments on some underlying facets of socialist's premise.

Since men are basically good, will Mr. Brown please explain why they can't be allowed freedom to act without socialist controls? Will he say how good actions, by intrinsically good persons, can produce evil results?

This kind of faith reminds me of the gun-toting farmer, who, on being asked if his neighbours weren't honest, replied: "I reckon they are". Pressed for an explanation as to why, then, did he continually carry a gun, he replied: "To make sure they stay that way!"

Finally, Mr. Editor, may I recommend two of the best critical books on socialism I've ever read: "Democracy vs. So-

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and Mr. Sangster, both of whom have great experience of commercial and company operations, to reconsider this matter and make what is so obviously the right decision.

I am, etc.,
IVAN S. HERON
2 Dillsbury Avenue,
Kingston 6,
March 26, 1965.

Socialism

THE EDITOR, Sir— The very strange discourse on Socialism appearing in the Gleaner of March 22, above the name — P. E. Wallace, leaves me wondering whether the Henry George School of Social Science is an approved institution.

The writer set out to endorse your recent editorial, but his argument shows that he did not receive your message — he should read that editorial again.

To write that "Socialism betrays a basic lack of faith in people, believing that they're essentially wicked, corrupt, depraved, vicious, savage and destructive" etc. is unworthy of one who purports to be the head of an academic institution.

The very basis of Socialist doctrine is the inherent goodness of man — a contradiction of the Christian doctrine of man born in sin. Man's faults, claims the Socialist, derive from the evil society in which he lives. Create a perfect (Socialist) society and men will be perfect, docile and self-less, each in a permanent attitude of deference to his fellows. Government becomes redundant, for each man voluntarily fulfils his duty for the common good, and takes from the Commonwealth no more than his just share. I believe, Mr. Editor, that this constitutes the "Flight From Reality" which your editorial criticised.

I hope no one will be naive enough to suggest that I claim to have summarised Socialist doctrine in the above paragraph. I do claim that it is unnecessary to falsify Socialism — as Mr. Wallace has done — in order to criticise it.

There are quite a few sound critical studies of Socialism, some of which must surely be decorating the library shelves of the Henry George School of Social Science. Let me commend just two to the Director — "The Open Society and its Enemies" — K. R. Popper. "German Marxism and Russian Communism" — John Plamenatz.

He should read them more carefully than he read your editorial.

Finally, Mr. Editor, let me say

31/3/65

I am, etc.,
LLOYD BROWN
Bog Walk,
March 24, 1965.

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