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## Understanding the mass mind

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SOCIAL SCIENCE SERIES No. 1

# UNDERSTANDING

THE

# MASS MIND



*"This pamphlet suggests a fallacy underlying the progressive politics of to-day and tells of a new advance in scientific knowledge which will help in the building of a new world..."*

**6<sup>D</sup>.**

ISSUED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION





First published under the title of  
"Science, Politics and the Masses,"

# THE NEW WORLD— AND THE MASS MIND

## I.

### Science and Human Government

**A**MONG the more widely discussed aspects of science today is the decision of certain of its representatives to apply themselves to the problems of human government. Science, it is said, has reached the stage when it must discard its long-established aloofness from politics, and cannot remain unmoved by the discord of modern society and its inevitable accompaniment, the widespread misuse of science.

There are not a few who will welcome this change of attitude. At least it may be conceived, on purely academic grounds, as a rational necessity; at most it must be recognised as a measure of the greatest social urgency. There is no time to be wasted if the social function of science is to be truly realised. This being so, there ensues a consideration of how best to further the impending weld of science and politics.

This short pamphlet, arising largely from such a consideration, has the object of drawing attention to at least one important issue confronting science in its new venture, and the writer hopes that despite its many obvious limitations he will in some small way succeed.

Yet before describing what this particular issue is, it may be of advantage to offer a few observations on the present occupants of the jungle of social theory—the native politicians. The analogy is deliberate, and may prove to have a certain pertinence, for there is considerable evidence that political theory and practice—in their present condition—are of predominantly unscientific character, being motivated by emotional forces rather than logical objectivity. This is contended, at least



through inference, by the scientists we have mentioned, for the demand that science enter politics surely implies that it has not done so already.

Thus science, when it begins to treat of politics, will find itself surrounded with the amazing assortment of assumptions which existing theories of government put forward: assumptions prompted largely by innate desire and such considerations, with little regard for systematic analysis. It may, of course, be insisted that science can with confidence be left to deal with all this; that its disciplined insistence on objective confirmation will enable it readily to grasp the essentials of the political world. This is probably true to a degree, but all the same there appears ground at the moment for some doubt, for a survey of the political observations so far advanced by scientists reveals a tendency to adopt a particular assumption—held by a large number of modern political theorists—which to say the least is very much open to question.

The assumption is, simply, that a prerequisite factor in the solution of human problems is to be a widespread change in the social mind. If the world is to be different, broadly runs the argument, then people must think differently; there must be a fundamental change of attitude to social problems on the part of the masses.

In politics this insistence takes many forms: that people shall think more morally, more progressively, more class-consciously, or more rationally; that they shall have a more international outlook, or become more patriotic; that they shall think more conservatively, more liberally, more socialistically or more communistically; that they shall think beyond party politics; that they shall support the individual against the state, or the state against the individual; that they shall have a greater regard for their rights, or that they shall be prepared to sacrifice their rights. And so on.

So far as science is concerned, the tendency we are to examine is to regard it as possible (a) that men generally shall occupy themselves with social problems, (b) that they shall think scientifically. This trend in science is obviously nothing like so general as its political counterpart, since human relations form the subject matter of *all* political theory, but are as yet a mere fragment of scientific enquiry.



Nevertheless, it is relevant to read in a report on the Conference on Science and World Order, arranged by the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the following declaration :

Any slight scientific orientation that can be given to the children of the masses will pay big dividends in subsequent social welfare, for it helps to provide the basis for a mass interest in science, which in turn is the only possible democratic basis for a scientific management of society. ("Science and World Order" 23).

To select one or two examples from individual scientists, we have first the words of Professor H. Levy, who contributes a section headed "Everyone a Scientist" to a book called "Science and the Changing World". After writing of "the efforts which are being made by some scientific men to interpret scientific discovery and to indicate to the man in the street the direction in which science is moving", he adds :

Any attempt to do this is very desirable; for the day is long past when understanding of a powerful activity like science can remain the private possession of a few.

Next we have Mr. H. G. Wells. In his book "What Are We To Do With Our Lives?", which deals at length with political questions, he affirms :

The new world demands new schools, therefore, to give everyone a sound and thorough mental training and equip everyone with clear ideas about history, about life, and about political and economic relationships . . . (23).

A further example is from Mr. J. G. Crowther. In his author's preface to his "Outline of the Universe" we read :

Modern science may collapse unless the atmosphere of science becomes generally apprehended. . . . society will learn from continuous impersonal accounts that attitude required to solve present social problems.

Then, as a final example, we may consider the statement made by Professor Haldane, on page 13 of his book, "The Inequality of Man" :

But science can do something far bigger for the human mind than the substitution of one set of beliefs for another, or the inculcation of scepticism regarding accepted opinions. It can gradually spread among humanity as a whole the point of view that prevails among research workers, and has enabled a few thousand men and a few dozen women to create the science on which modern civilisation rests.

It must be emphasised that the foregoing quotations are drawn from a considerable number of statements embodying



essentially this same opinion; it seems feasible, moreover, that other scientific men think along similar lines, but do not express themselves in print.

The business of this pamphlet is to examine the assumptions exemplified above: to question whether the anticipated developments could, if they were possible, alleviate social problems—and to ask whether, in any case, they *are* possible.

## II.

### Too Much Theory . . . and Too Little

**I**S it warrantable to assume—as most politicians and certain scientists do assume—that it would lessen world chaos if men generally took an active interest in political theory and practice?

If we are to weigh the answer to this question in a logical manner, we may surely place some significance upon the behaviour of those who already evince this interest. In Britain today such people variously attach themselves to such organisations as the Conservative party, the Liberal party, the Labour party, the National Liberal party, the Communist party, Federal Union, Common Wealth, the Social Credit party, the Welsh Nationalist party, the League of Nations Union, the Independent Labour party, the Economic League, the Socialist party of Great Britain, the Manchester Movement, the Socialist League, the Scottish Nationalist party, the Trotskyist movement, the Never Again Association, the Union of Democratic Control, the Socialist Labour party, various Anarchist bodies, various politico-religious bodies, the Peace Pledge Union and many others. This is to say nothing of unnumbered individuals whose personal theories of what has to be done may be found in the modern bookshop, with a selection of authors including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. “Bunny” Austin and Mr. Clarence Hatry.

In short, those people who do interest themselves in politics, far from being agreed as to the solution of world problems, seem powerless to endow even themselves with order. The implicit contention of each is that all the others are incorrect in their social analysis, and that at some time—generally unspecified—the majority of men will come to see the one particular party which *is* correct. As Mr. James Burnham has observed in his very stimulating book, “The Managerial Revolution”:



However, it is even more important to observe that no major ideology is content to profess openly that it speaks only for the group whose interests it in fact expresses. Each group insists that its ideologies are universal in validity and express the interests of humanity as a whole; and each group tries to win universal acceptance for its ideologies (25).

We see, then, that the mere fact of people taking an interest in politics is not necessarily of effect in alleviating the problems of society. One might almost say, indeed, that the people who take an interest in politics *are* a problem of society, presenting as much complexity as any other.

In the words of Phillippe Mairet in the introduction to Adler's "Science of Living": ". . . the result is the disintegration of a people full of saviours who are not on speaking terms."

At this point an objection will possibly be raised. Science, someone will say, is beginning to insist not merely that people take an interest in social matters, but that they take a *scientific* interest.

The immediate comment to be made is that in the past, and to a very great degree in the present, to be scientific has generally been an indication of utter indifference to politics, of being completely unconcerned with the working out of social difficulties. Nevertheless, let us consider the newer scientific outlook, which *is* concerned. One can, without wishing in the least to do other than welcome this awakening, point to two matters which seem as yet to have had little scientific settlement.

The first is this: though the scientists of whom we are speaking are agreed in principle upon a transfusion from science into the body politic, they do not seem to have indicated with any appreciable unanimity the political programme thereby prescribed.

One finds indeed that whereas those primarily concerned with politics are over-burdened with schemes, the men of science are at this juncture handicapped for the opposite reason of being almost bereft of any scheme. Mr. Crowther may envisage society, with the atmosphere of science "generally apprehended", learning "that attitude required to solve present social problems", and one may envisage Mr. Crowther having the specified apprehension of scientific atmosphere; but if he is thereby endowed



with the necessary attitude for solving social problems, there is at any rate little indication or suggestion as to the nature of the solutions. Again, one may assume from Mr. Wells' statement that he himself has something of the "clear ideas" about "political and economic relationships", yet the political organisation announced in his book remains largely confined to the latter's pages.

In the case of Professors Levy and Haldane, it is possible that they identify the requisite scientific political body with the Communist party. Yet the biologist Waddington states in his book, "The Scientific Attitude": "So long as loyalty to the working class is its final test of value, Communism cannot claim, as it has done, to be the application of the scientific attitude to politics. That would be true even if their theory of the class structure of present-day society was sociologically adequate, and it is even more to the point if their theory is, as I suggest, incorrect." (84).

It seems clear that scientists, having declared themselves concerned with politics, cannot logically escape the responsibility of formulating some agreed programme. As Harold Walsby—to whose theories we shall presently refer—has insisted:

After all, it is not much use to assert that science must drop its impartiality and quit being indifferent to the political scene if nothing is forthcoming to indicate what sort of *positive action* is to be taken in the matter.

The second point yet to be determined by science is the degree to which the social mind is capable of thinking about science and politics in any case.

### III.

## Logic and the Mass Mind

**T**HOUGH, as we have seen, a number of scientific thinkers entertain the possibility of men in the mass attaining—through improved education, or in other ways—the capacity to make a rational analysis of society, this is not true of all of them.

Bertrand Russell, for instance, has written:

. . . there are many questions which ordinary men and women cannot understand, and in regard to which they are compelled willy-



nilly to accept the opinions of specialists. The importance of experts is likely to increase rather than diminish as the part played by science in daily life grows greater. We must therefore expect that, in the future, government by experts will largely replace government by the will of the people, even if the outward forms of democracy are preserved intact (Science in the Changing World 201-2).

It seems clear in the first place that science, if its influence in politics is to be effective, must clarify this issue, and secondly that to do this it is not enough merely to express an opinion one way or another. If the question be treated scientifically, we shall neither profess faith in the ultimate rationality of man, nor go to the other extreme and cynically assert his inevitable stupidity. We shall rather try to find, and assess as impartially as possible, whatever relevant evidence there may be.

It must be admitted at once that such evidence will be very difficult to obtain from established science, whose general practice is to treat human ideas and their development as being so capricious and unlimited as to be beyond the grasp of science, at its present period of growth at least. "The primary concepts . . . of life and mind", wrote J. W. N. Sullivan, in his "Bases of Modern Science" (26), "are so far from being sufficient, that they have hardly yet been found to be even relevant."

Yet one field of research which might reasonably be supposed to provide some clue is psychology. Let us grant that conclusions from this source are not only treated with considerable reserve by science generally (on the grounds of the "immature" state of psychology), but they are often advanced with the utmost tentativeness by the psychologists themselves. Nevertheless, if—as appears to be the case—psychology has some remarkably pertinent things to say on this crucial question of the social mind, we are surely not entitled to maintain complete indifference, unless in possession of overwhelmingly strong counter evidence.

Indeed, one so well grounded in the world of science as McDougall has observed :

It is a remarkable fact that psychology, the science which claims to formulate the body of ascertained truths about the constitution and working of the mind, and which endeavours to refine and to add to this knowledge, has not been generally and practically recognised as the essential common foundation on which all the social sciences—ethics, economics, political science, philosophy of history, sociology



and cultural anthropology, and the more special social sciences, such as the science of religion, of law and of art—must be built up. (Introduction to Social Psychology 1).

Are we to declare there is no significance in the fact that the most prominent schools of psychology, however much they may otherwise diverge, are largely agreed as to the innate irrationality of the mass mind? Indeed, it seems difficult to find any work on psychology which *does* declare the mass mind to be rational, or even potentially rational. Let us consider a few pronouncements on the subject. First, from the Freudian school, the following statement is put forward referring to the structure of the mind of the general individual :

In spite of all later development the individual retains all his infantile psychic structure. Nothing is lost; the infantile wishes and primitive impulses can always be brought back to the surface. . . . The unconscious mental activity which is made up of repressed infantile material for ever tries to express itself. Whenever the individual finds it impossible to dominate the difficulties of the world of reality there is a regression to the infantile, and psychic disturbances ensue which are conceived as peculiar thoughts and acts. Thus the civilised adult is the result of his childhood or the sum total of his early impressions. (A. A. Brill, in his translator's preface to Freud's "Totem and Taboo" 13).

If it be true indeed that the individual, in the stress of social difficulty, tends to be swayed by primitive-puerile emotions, this would seem *ipso facto* to preclude any mass movement of the social mind towards a mature grasp of science and politics. Freud himself, in his "Civilisation and its Discontents" (43), propounds this very problem of the social mentality. He refers to "the superior force of nature" and "the disposition to decay of our bodies" as two sources of unhappiness which are regarded as inevitable. Yet, he says, there is a third, "the inadequacy of our methods of regulating human relations in the family, the community and the state", which is *not* regarded as inevitable. He writes :

To the third, the social source of our distress, we take up a different attitude; we prefer not to regard it as one at all; we cannot see why the systems we have ourselves created should not rather ensure protection and well-being for us all. To be sure, when we consider how unsuccessful our efforts to safeguard against suffering in this particular have proved, the suspicion dawns upon us that a bit of unconquerable nature lurks concealed behind this difficulty as well—in the shape of our own mental constitution.



In further amplification of Freud's account of the matter, we read his reference at some length to the works of Le Bon in his "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego". The following excerpts are from pages 16-18:

Inclined as it itself is to all extremes, a group can only be excited by an excessive stimulus. Anyone who wishes to produce an effect upon its needs no logical adjustment in his arguments: he must paint in the most forcible colours, he must exaggerate, and he must repeat the same thing again and again.

Since a group is in no doubt as to what constitutes truth or error, and is conscious, moreover, of its own great strength, it is as intolerant as it is obedient to authority. It respects force and can only be slightly influenced by kindness, which it regards merely as a form of weakness. What it demands of its heroes is strength, or even violence. It wants to be ruled and oppressed and to fear its masters. Fundamentally it is entirely conservative, and it has a deep aversion from all innovations and advances and an unbounded respect for tradition.

Some other features in Le Bon's description show in a clear light how well justified is the identification of the group mind with the mind of primitive people. In groups the most contradictory ideas can exist side by side and tolerate each other, without any conflict arising from the logical contradictions between them.

To instance a similar trend in Jung, we have the following from his "Integration of the Personality" (9):

It is one of the most ridiculous illusions of civilised man that the "perils of the soul" have entirely disappeared along with primitive superstitions. Even the superstitions have not disappeared from any civilised nation as a whole. They have only changed their names, and often not even that. The clan of uprooted intellectual highbrows usually goes on believing in permanent and universal enlightenment. That technical progress and social improvements do not mean psychological differentiation or a high level of consciousness is a lesson that we are unwilling to learn.

Is it not possible that the "universal and permanent enlightenment" which Jung mentions with such scepticism is very much what seems to be in the minds of the scientists quoted earlier in this pamphlet? To bring another viewpoint against them, let us turn again to McDougall—this time to his book, "The Group Mind"; he affirms (44):

The actions of the simple crowd . . . are simply not volitional in the true sense, but rather impulsive. They are comparable with the actions of an animal rather than with those of a man.



Of further interest are the experiments based upon the "intelligence quotient": the attempt to grade individuals from their answers to questionnaires, and to produce statistics of the social manifestation of the different grades. One line of conclusion from this source is that parents of a low mean IQ (a) tend to have children of similar level (b) tend to procreate more than those having higher IQ. In other words, the lower intellects are growing more numerous than the higher—the social mind is becoming not more, but *less* rational.

Thouless' "General and Social Psychology" contains relevant information on this subject. In the second (1937) edition he gives, on page 144, the following findings from IQ research:

IQ's: 20 idiots 20-5 imbeciles; 50-70 morons (USA); 70 m.d.; 70-90 backward or dull; 90-110 average or normal; 110-120 superior intelligence; 120-140 very superior intelligence. About 60% are said to occupy the average level, while the most advanced intellects appear in a very small minority: about 1% have an IQ of over 130, and roughly  $\frac{1}{4}$ % over 140. In the last-named case it is said that if some high specific capacity is combined with it, then genius results.

Further emphasis on the immaturity of the mass mind is made some pages later, when Thouless declares:

There is not even any evidence that human intelligence has increased since the time of our ancestors of the stone age. It is indeed stated that the average capacity of the skulls of stone age specimens of *Homo Sapiens* is slightly greater than that of modern man. While the conclusion that we are less intelligent than they were would be a very uncertain one (since the correlation between intelligence and skull capacity is small), this observation makes it unlikely that there has been any great increase of intellectual capacity since that time. (443).

It may, of course, be held that investigations of this kind cannot attain a very great degree of precision, and that a certain amount of presumption has to be taken in the assessment of an IQ. Thouless denies this. He writes (*ibid* 441): "By the use of various forms of test it is possible to obtain a reliable indication of the general intellectual capacity of an individual child which is independent of the test used and of the individual performing the test". If, however, the objection be sustained, it is surely ground not so much for ignoring this field of enquiry, but for devising more efficient methods for its exploration.

Let us grant, if only for the sake of argument, that available evidence of the innate irrationality of the mass mind is by no



means conclusive. Even so, this hardly justifies the adoption of an opposite belief which seems to have practically no evidence to support it. One must accordingly have certain misgivings regarding those scientists who—in the manner of utopian political theorists—maintain a groundless faith in the mass development of scientific and political understanding.

It is relevant to conclude this pamphlet with some reference to the work of a man whose theories and discoveries claim to deal in particular respects with the relation between science and man's social and political consciousness: Harold Walsby. It transpires that the view of the social mind exemplified by the statement of Bertrand Russell, the findings of psychology on the subject, and the experiments hingeing upon the intelligence quotient, all have common ground with some of the results of Walsby's investigations.

#### IV.

### Walsby on Ideological "Layers"

**WE** shall be referring here and now to Walsby's discovery of the Demos and to his analysis of its structure and development. The limited scope of this pamphlet precludes any detailed account of the process by which he arrives at his results, though all this must sooner or later be examined if one is to have full evidence for the conclusions about to be described.

To most of us the ideological field—the sum of man's ideas, views and attitudes—present an utter bewilderment, a veritable confusion which seems to defy any systematic or logical interpretation. According to Walsby, however, a closer examination reveals certain laws to which human thought conforms: social ideas, despite their apparent capriciousness, are yet regulated by definite constant factors.

His conception of the Demos (a term which indicates the social mind but which he uses to distinguish from the usual but—for his use—too simple concept of the "group mind") is essentially that of a complex structure of mental levels, and it is the *degree* of rationality within each level—its logical content or adjustment with respect to reality—which to a large extent distinguishes it from the others. Let us consider Walsby's own words from his forthcoming work "The Demos":



But to study the individual mind is not enough; it is not enough to investigate the psychology of the "group." It is necessary to study the whole *ideological field* (which includes the system of mental organization underlying groups) not merely as it is at any one moment but also to trace its origin from comparatively simple beginnings and to study it in its development. The ideological domain is part of the evolutionary process and, like many things which have passed through a number of evolutionary stages, possesses an underlying complex structure of differentiated layers which have arisen and grown one upon, and out of, another. These layers form a kind of hierarchy wherein they stand in definite logical relations to one another; they form a united interdependent whole, a living, growing, interacting, ideological system; and the whole system corresponds to, interacts and is interdependent with, the prevailing socio-economic condition, structure and practice of the epoch to which it belongs.

Yet each layer itself represents a kind of system; it represents a definite level of culture with a distinctive world-outlook, with political implications peculiar to itself and a special sphere of mental "interest". Again, each layer is itself ever-growing, undergoing modification, and constantly adding new material and new refinements to itself—being acted upon and superficially altered by the other layers and in its turn reacting upon them—*though still retaining the fundamental organization and principles which characterize its "level"*.

To every layer is attached a number of people or, put another way: to each layer there corresponds a class of individual minds which constitute its living, growing tissue. These members of a layer are bound together by emotional and intellectual bonds; they are also connected with the members of the other layers by similar mental ties, complementary to those which bind them to each other. Within each layer, and sometimes cutting across many layers, are the "natural", "arbitrary" and "artificial" social groups with which everyone is familiar, which the ordinary group-psychology recognizes and with some types of which (mostly composed from the lower layers) it deals: the family, the nursery, the gang, the school, the team, the church, the crowd, the club, the society, the sect, the business firm, the political party, the army, the race, the nation, etc., etc.

The law which seems especially significant for the salient theme of this pamphlet, and of particular pertinence for those who envisage the masses achieving some kind of scientific and political understanding, is somewhat as follows: that the greater the logical content of a given level, the smaller its social exhibition. In other words, the more logical the outlook, the fewer the people holding it. Again, it must be stressed that Walsby declares this to be the case at any given period. He writes:

Mind evolves just as does matter. And in this mental evolution the lower layers of the ideological field are historically older than the higher ones, which appeared later and which have more complex



mental structures than the lower layers, which, in their turn, represent the more simple types of culture and mental organization. Generally speaking, the older and more primitive the layer the greater the number of persons associated with it at any one time; in other words, the qualitative "level", so to speak, of the layer, is inversely proportional to its quantitative representation—that is to say the number of individual minds of its class . . . Moreover, the individual mind in its development recapitulates the ideological stages through which the social mind itself has evolved since the dawn of human society. And again, regression back to lower levels is frequently exhibited in the individual development. But when we come to examine the series of layers we find that only a small minority ever reach the upper levels; all but a comparative few become fixated on their way through the lower stages. . . .

Unlike the arbitrary and artificial social groups, which are liable to sudden and violent changes, to division, coalescence and dissolution, according to their social vicissitudes and functions, each ideological layer, once developed, remains a permanent acquisition of society, and continues permanently to form and take part in the composition of groups which—to the extent that it predominates in their make-up—express its level of mental organization. . . .

This last piece of knowledge regarding the permanent nature of the ideological layers, taken in conjunction with the Inverse Ratio Law, is of no little importance in the understanding of the social mind and, therefore, in any attempt to apply scientific method to the control of human society. Especially is it important when we consider the fact that nearly all progressive political organizations base the achievement of their ultimate aims upon the assumption of either the possibility or inevitability of "mass education and enlightenment" which, from the relatively advanced point of view of these parties, necessarily implies (i) the impermanence of the lower ideological layers and (ii) the raising of the masses to the level of the higher layers.

By "arbitrary and artificial groups" Walsby is referring to those which form the subject-matter of group-psychology and it is interesting to note that as far back as 1903 Le Bon—writing on such groups in his book "The Crowd"—made the following observation :

It cannot be gainsaid that civilization has been the work of a small minority of superior intelligences, constituting the culminating point of a pyramid, whose stages, widening in proportion to the decrease of mental power, represent the masses of a nation. The greatness of a civilization cannot assuredly depend upon the votes given by inferior elements boasting solely numerical strength.

To return to Walsby, his conclusions with respect to general outlooks are in every way similar for political standpoints. He explains that the evolution of political understanding passes through certain stages—conservatism, liberalism, socialism and so



on—which have a necessary logical connection with each other. And that the more logical the political outlook—the more closely it is adjusted to objective reality—the fewer its convinced adherents. Thus if his analysis be correct, those people sometimes termed “the politically unconscious”—i.e. whose interest in social and political matters is largely emotional—must at all times be in a considerable majority.

## V.

### The Political Future

**I**F it be true that there is no concrete evidence to justify the assumption of an essential or fundamental change in the social attitude of the overwhelming majority—or if the evidence, as it would appear, is rather to the contrary i.e. that such a change is not possible—is one to infer that the economic crisis of modern society cannot be overcome? Is the great mass of mankind through its inherent incapacity for scientific thought and understanding, doomed to eternal suffering?

Walsby affirms that the more progressive political organisations are largely agreed as to the direction that economic reorganisation must take. This is because their convinced adherents and propagandists are drawn from the higher ideological layers which exhibit mental organizations more complex and more adjusted to outer reality than the lower layers. But this greater complexity and adjustment to reality is not complete—it has its limitations. Concomitant with the rational superiority of these politically more enlightened people goes their inevitable numerical inferiority.

Yet, year in and year out, with admirable though blind optimism and appalling ignorance as to the nature and structure of political development, they go on, fighting among themselves and vainly appealing to the masses with the same arguments and upon the same subject-matter which was instrumental in their own conversion. If they are more or less agreed about the ultimate nature of the economic reorganisation, why do they fight among themselves?

The rock on which these progressive bodies split, says Walsby, is the same one which bars them from large scale membership and support, namely: lack of knowledge regarding



the structure, development and social distribution of mental organisation—in short, ignorance of the social mind. Thus they fiercely squabble about the extent to which it is expedient, or to which they are prepared immediately to carry through, their economic reorganisation of society. How often have we not heard that old tag: “We are agreed upon what we want but we differ about how to get it”?

The problem, in other words, is primarily political and only secondarily economic. And that problem can only be solved scientifically by the independent study of the nature of the political and ideological field. But to expect a majority of these progressive people to make a specialised study of the ideological domain would be as foolish as their own expectation that the masses can give up football pools, racing, gardening and a hundred and one other occupations, sufficiently to take up a specialised interest in economic problems. Again it remains to the relative few.

This we learn from the study of the Demos. For, according to Walsby, there exists a differentiation of function between the ideological layers. Thus the less logical strata of the Demos are absolutely necessary to the existence of the more systematic and scientific levels of understanding and—as a glance at the highly complex nature of modern society will readily show—vice versa. A trained scientist or research worker, for instance, will require to eat vegetables, the growing of which will not demand a very high level of mental organisation. The grower of vegetables in modern society, on the other hand, will require the use of various highly technical devices, skills and arts, which are provided in the first place by the knowledge of the scientific worker.

So we see that the ideological layers, to which the different political levels belong, are a permanent feature of our social life. That is to say, there will always be, so long as civilisation endures, conservative, liberal, socialist, communist etc., levels of social and political understanding, even though—in the absence of political democracy—they be denied formal expression. This seems on the face of it to be an incredible conclusion. But, says Walsby, all the available evidence and facts, as well as logical coherence, are against the other view, which is largely wishful thinking and thoughtless assumption—faith, not science. Evolution tends toward greater and greater differentiation.



How then are we to have the proposed economic change and still retain the political democracy we now have? Through the development and application of the science of man's social consciousness, says Walsby. With the study of the structure and evolution of the Demos, with the knowledge of human intellectual and emotional nature, with its complex mental organisation, we can learn to integrate the various ideological layers for the common purpose of economic reorganisation. Under the aegis of science we can look forward to the application of scientific method—which has been so successful in the control of material nature—to the social mind, for the scientific control (i.e. self control) of human nature.

Space and the limited aim of this pamphlet prevent any elaboration of this question here and now. It remains therefore to sum up the main points which this pamphlet has sought to establish. They are as follows:

(1) That there is a tendency among political theorists (especially among left wing elements) to adopt unsupported assumptions regarding the development of the mass mind;

(2) That certain scientists now interesting themselves in politics incline to do likewise;

(3) That the findings of psychology—both directly and by implication—tend to contradict these assumptions, and affirm that the mass mind is preponderantly irrational;

(4) That the recent investigations of Harold Walsby indicate that the social mind is composed of permanent "layers", and that the more logical a "layer" is, the fewer are the people who typify it;

(5) That since it seems the economic reorganisation of society cannot be democratically achieved without scientific knowledge of political development, the whole question is of such major importance that scientific thought, to be effective in politics, must examine it thoroughly.



## *A word to the wise . . .*

- If you are interested in new scientific aspects of the social problems of our times, and you feel you would like a more or less regular supply of literature dealing with recent developments in this field, then the following facts will concern you.
- The Social Science Association is a group of people who—irrespective of sex, colour, race, creed or class—have in common the promotion of this object: To support wherever possible the extension, development and application of scientific method to contemporary social and political problems. The S.S.A. therefore aims at advancing human understanding of human nature as the prerequisite of a rational, peaceful and scientific control of human society.
- The S.S.A. firmly believes in full and frank discussion of the whole of human nature and institutions and regards this as a necessary condition for the furtherance of scientific knowledge concerning social problems and their solution.
- The S.S.A. therefore asks of all those who are in sympathy with its aims, and who are able to give of their time, abilities, knowledge or financial resources, to assist in this great cause. One of the easiest and best ways of aiding the S.S.A. is to become a member yourself and to secure the membership of at least one other interested person.
- Membership of the S.S.A. entitles you to free copies of the Social Science Series of publications (sent post free), and admission to all lectures, meetings, social gatherings, etc., of the Association. The subscription is five shillings yearly. Write now, stating you wish to join the S.S.A., enclosing P.O. for your first year's membership to :

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