

Aus einem Manuskript über das ... 19. 11.
Newington 14

ich selbst fühle mich wie einer der auf der äusseren Bühne seine innere Sicht bestätigt findet. Mein geplantes Buch handelt von unserer Zeit, und dennoch fand ich es nicht nötig, seinen Gedankengang zu ändern, wiewohl es seit einigen Jahren festlag. Je länger die Krise dauert umso einfacher stellen sich ihre Umrisse dar. Nach wie vor glaube ich, dass unserer Zeit eine objektive Aufgabe gestellt ist, und dass diese zwei ^{einander} ausschliessende Lösungen zulässt. Was die organisatorische Gesinnung anlangt sind sie heute am ehesten durch Russland und Deutschland vertreten. Die eine ist auf die Person gebaut wie sie (im westlichen Umkreis) seit dem Christentum existiert; die andere auf den Versuch, hinter jene Erkenntnis zurückzugehen, sie zu leugnen. Freilich genügen altes und neues Testament nicht. Sowohl dem Fascismus wie dem Sozialismus ist eine dritte Erkenntnis eigen, die nicht minder Endgültiges offenbart als die Erkenntnis von Tod und innerer Freiheit, nämlich, die der Unaufhebbarkeit der Gesellschaft. Der moderne Mensch ist ein Kind dieser Erkenntnis (der liberale und liberal-konservative), der sie nicht kennt, gehört einer versunkenen Welt an). Das Christentum ist damit überwunden aber nicht widerlegt. Die Lösung der unabwiesbaren Probleme des Lebenssinns, die uns die Gesellschaft in ihrer industriellen Form setzt, muss jene dritte Offenbarung anerkennen, aber ohne die zweite zu leugnen. In anderen Worten, nur eine das Christentum transzendierende Lösung ist wahr; nicht eine, die das Christentum in seinem Wesen leugnet. Wiewohl unsere Zeit nicht gewohnt ist sich selbst in diesen Wendungen zu erfassen, bleiben sie doch die einfachsten.

K. P.

from 1913, 1914

Christentum ist in der Krise der Menschheit

All I have become, I have become in Hungary. My life has been given sense by Hungarian lives. Any mistakes I have made have been paid for here, in Hungary. Therefore, any good I might have achieved should benefit this country. That little I have been able to give the world should eventually return here.

K. Polányi: The bequest of the Galilei Circle

Uj Létóhatár 1960. No. 6.

p. 513-524

Polanyi on Polanyi (along with Hamlet)
or
separate Hungary section

(3)

to Bi de Waard(?) (6th Jan. 1958)
response U.S. friend

...Mein Leben war ein "Welt"-Leben -- ich lebte der Welt Leben. Aber die Welt hörte eben über Jahrzehnte zu leben auf, um dann innerhalb von Jahren ein Jahrhundert aufzuholen. So kam es dass ich erst jetzt zu meinem Recht komme, wiewohl ich irgendwo 30 Jahre verloren hatte - waiting for Godot - bis der Weltlauf wieder auf pari stand, d.i., mit mir aufgeholt hatte. Im Rückblick nimmt sich das komisch aus, das Martyrertum der Einsamkeit war ja doch nur scheinbar - im Grunde wartete ich bloss auf mich selber. Jetzt steht die Rechnung gegen uns (Dica und mich), denn noch zehn Jahre, und ich stünde noch in meinen Lebzeiten vindiziert da. Mein Werk ist für Asien und Afrika, für die neuen Völker - der Westen sollte ihnen geistige und intellektuelle Hilfe bringen; statt dessen zerstört er selbst des XIX. Jahrhundert's Traditionen und demoliert sogar die viktorianischen Ideale. Einige Wenige die dem Westen angehören und der Welt gut gesinnt sind; dem Osten zum Leben helfen möchten, um das schwere Joch des Kommunismus zu tragen; diese wahrlich "freien Geister" des Westens kommen nicht zum Wort. Nicht ein einziger Denker des Westens ist auf der Höhe der Aufgabe. Der einzige Toynbee und (als Friedensfreund) Bertrand Russell sind Helfer, Führer, die dem wachenden Osten Licht und Hilfe bringen. Die anderen sind Einschlüferer, Anaesthetisten, wo nicht Aergeres. Die Opposition die sich endlich gegen meine Gedankenwelt regt ist ein gutes Zeichen. Ich hatte gerne den Kampf erlebt, aber der Mensch ist ein endliches Wesen...

KD

Not since 1920 did I have a time so rich in study and development.....
My studies fall into three periods, I should say.

First, I tried to Americanise my knowledge of the various social sciences, reading up the leading American sociologists, political scientists, psychologists and philosophers. Actually Dewey (some six of his works) took me a month, but this had to be expanded by Pierce, Head, James and Morris. I read up almost all of Laswell's, a number of anthropological works, like Boas, Linton and Ruth Benedikt; I studied the history of American Democratic thinking and some authors who form opinion just now. Then I proceeded to a comprehensive study of economics, mainly the Keynesian school - that brilliant galaxy of writers to whom Mrs. Robinson, Harrod, Robertson, Head, ~~Mrs. Robinson~~ Chamberlin in U.S.A. belong. I had to read much of Haberler's, Hayek's stuff too, quite apart from the genuine Americans like Wesel, Mitchell. To this ^{second} period I would reckon my efforts to get into semantics, my reading of ~~Sapir~~ Morris, Wedger and others. Incidentally I took my first dip into elementary mathematics in order to get a better grip on my economics. (I forgot to mention my continuous occupation with the subject matters of my seminar - closely related to the book stuff - which kept me busy on the theory of the balance of power, Imperialism, and the influence of christianity on the development of Western Civilisation, relying mainly on Max Weber, Troeltsch, Sombart, Tawney, Pirenne and Cunningham, but eventually having to include the Institutio Christiana or Calvin and other rather out of the way matters.) The third and by far the most important period started with the beginning of July and is still continuing: research work at Columbia. The main periods on which I am testing the validity of my ideas are the Speenbield period, about 1800 and the turn towards perfectionism about 1875; finally the 1920 to 40 period in which the collapse occurred. These will form the bulk of the material insofar as it is historical. On the whole I find my intuition more supported than not in the facts....

Ask Harry P.

Date ?

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For Biography

Paul

[Biographical note
by K.P.]

(?)

~~K.P.~~

Polanyi Károly $\frac{4}{7}$

Our country's duty among those who

The author of this book was a participant
in the launching of the Galilei Circle
which happened in the early years of
our century. He ~~was~~ belonged to the
Western emigrants ~~from~~ his home country.

He saved the trust with his
History continued to revolve. The

October Revolution was followed by Sollo
Communist regime Soviet Republic of 1919, followed
by White Power and Counter-revolution
which turned the hot war into a moral
catastrophe.

letter?

K.P.

I was re-converted to socialism, and essentially to the prophetic understanding only Owen had of what industrialism would mean. Socialism is its humanizing. By now - 1960s - it is literally its physical salvation. E.H.Carr had a word for socialism, his own: ' a purposeful society '. This requires some organisation, at least that of the economy. The point is that states or nations are insufficient to resolve the question of an industrialised mankind - neither peace nor the international economy can be achieved outside of actively purposeful societies. Many questions are up: peace involves the conditions of growth for many peoples, and the restoration of an (any) economy comprises long-term trade, investment, co-operation and even some degree of spontaneous competition, an expression of live vigour, not profit-motivated but un-motivated, like life itself.

A developing process of technology (machines and instruments) of national and racial consciousness, association in the sharing of raw materials - all this happens to necessitate policies which involve the use of national resources by the governments. But capitalist countries cannot do this. The resources are privately owned. The state has no organs for foreign economy. Indeed their trouble with the Soviets is that these possess a foreign trade monopoly which they have defended over 45 years at an enormous cost in civil and foreign wars. Actually, the Soviets refrain from using that monopoly because the "free economies" are virtually, when confronted with such a monopoly, defenceless. The greatest obstacle to serious peace moves is this: the USSR has no partner in the West with whom to make a deal in the absence of organs of foreign economy in the capitalist states. Yet there is hardly any hope for co-existence as long as the economies of the blocks can neither co-operate nor compromise for lack of the necessary organs (institutional instruments). These organs need not go to the length of a foreign monopoly, but they must be suitable to negotiate with foreign trade monopoly countries. By no means does this imply socialism. As little as trade unions, social insurance or even the nationalisation of one or another industry amounts to the abolishment of private property. False notions are rampant in the USA on these matters, but that should not be a permanent obstacle.

These problems are second in importance only to nuclear disarmament, which ranks first. As to the latter, looked at from a distance, I maintain that no socialist action of the latter years was, in its total direct and indirect effect more vital than that of the English marchers. At this very moment the chances of ultimate effective bans still primarily depend on the moral factor of world public opinion - simple people's feelings, in their mass.

The negative side of this was documented by Saskatchewan. No informed person doubted here that the scandalous Regina doctors' strike was a symptom of a general antipathy against socialism which came to a head as a result of the world tension. Don, I believe, shared this view.

The Soviets themselves appear very conscious of the need for an intellectual and institutional equipment that would enable them to contribute to co-existence as soon as a chance offers. However, their "great-power chauvinism" is an awkward obstacle; the satellite countries throng helpless on the sidelines, a la Walrus and the Carpenter'. My own aims are very consciously directed towards the improvement of Soviet theory and outlook, as a by-product of their girding themselves for co-existence. Their present theoretical armour has already proved shockingly inadequate (Cuba). But sign of an awareness of their backwardness are not lacking.

Vancouver
Date

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(Karl's?)
1942. 15. 14

(from a letter to J.A.C.)

Your country should not be judged from too near just now (letters I had from such who love it mirror a veritable anguish of pain over the moral superficiality of her new-born ways); it is from a distance that her basic steadiness can better be gauged. London is the centre of the political cyclone of our planet, and it is from here that one best can recognize the stabilizing role of the U.S.A. to-day. I was amazed to hear American friends complain of the utter lack of policy of the State Department. That is eminently unfair to Byrnes and his crew in the St. S. They are not in words but in actual reality working for peace with all their might, and have done a good, a very good job. Lippmann (whose little books I admire for sheer straightforward pamphleteering) merely touched the fringe of the post-war political problem, and that rather in the vein of the tutor than the statesman, the educator rather than the politician. The real job was to tackle the Far East, and that to prevent an entirely unnecessary and yet unavoidable war between the U.S.A. and the USSR: for unless China was restored as an integral national state there was no way of avoiding such an unwanted war. Its inevitability was purely geographic, i.e., no conflicting interests entered; the Chinese vacuum alone would have been responsible for it. That Byrnes and Stalin, obviously following up the outlines of Roosevelt's (maybe unwritten) political testament succeeded in managing tiding that four hundred million broad maelstrom will for all times (and irrespective of the duration of their success) rank amongst the high lights of historical statesmanship.

The trouble is with us. Britain is reluctant, perhaps even unable, to do what is needed, namely, to go ahead and help to fill in the terrifying vacua of the political globe. The victory was much too great; some 600 million people in the East, and some 400 million in Europe have been thrown out of their power fixture. The USA and the USSR are rushing in under sheer vacuum pressure - it is overpowering - to cover up the chasm or reorganise the field of power so that life can continue. Britain alone shies at the brink of the abyss and hesitates to take the jump. Consequently, she is forced to undertake the impossible, i.e., to maintain things as they were in the midst of a cataclysm. Britain can exist as a larger & stronger entity, or as a much smaller one, but certainly not exactly as she was before. By insisting on this, she actually puts herself into the wrong. For history has no patience with the shirker. (In practical terms this means: taking the lead in Western and North Western Europe, planning as far as possible the Commonwealth plus Western Europe. Such a greatly strengthened Britain could (and should) make reasonable concessions not only to India, Egypt, etc. but also to the USSR where the latter's vital interests conflict with secondary assets of Britain. This is the way to compromise with the USSR and arrange for co-operation primarily on the reconstruction of Europe, including Germany.) This would make co-operation with the USSR in Europe, with the USA in the Seven Seas possible, and allow UNO to be built up into a world clearing house of political debit and credit. The USA should make her contribution to this solution by helping in a positive fashion to organise world economy on a semi-regional basis (instead of forcing an entirely utopian, because reactionary, free trade line upon a world which has just escaped the deadly dangers of such an artificial, abstract, Potemkin solution of the world economic problem).

X Domestically, Britain is sound. The steady forward drive in her home affairs is borne along with an unsuspected vigour which is very far indeed from having spent itself. Her administrative chiefs are as able as their Tory predecessors, but much keener on results; and they are supported by innumerable similar enthusiasts in minor positions. That's why the

practices, and so on, do not cause despondency. X

Life is, on the whole, easier than it was during the war; there's no black-out and no Vs. Maybe it is more difficult to bear, since we call it now "peace". But after all, - what is in a name? People are beginning to realize the misnomer.

Churchill's speech fell through in ^{into this for the wrong reason that the} this country, ~~because~~ country does not believe in "power-politics". I am afraid, this silly word merely covers up its unwillingness to face up to the issues of the time. Britain should, in my belief, "go ahead", since her weakness is the chief cause of world imbalance; but "going ahead" does not involve an irresponsible (and effortless) military alliance with the USA, but, on the contrary, it means national reorganization, a socialist Commonwealth, leadership on the ~~Western~~ Continent, concessions to rising nations and Russian needs, with a view to genuine collaboration with Russia in rebuilding Europe and with the USA in reconstructing the Planet. I am afraid my views are not cutting much ice at present, but at least they permit me to take a positive attitude to the tasks of the hour.