

Vetterli, they should do two things: first, they should direct their criticisms toward the major themes which he discusses and not subtly seek to undermine the influence of his work by stirring up dust over things of secondary importance; second, they should demonstrate that they have a thorough knowledge of the divine program for bringing peace, union, and progress to the world. Their criticism should be made in light of this divine plan. Zion is going to be built; the kingdom of God is going to be established; and the millennium is going to arrive. And America is the favored land where God has initiated and will carry forth His divine program for bringing true peace, freedom, and social justice to men. With these points in mind, where do we go from here? To the collectivistic world sought by modern liberals, or to the free and open union among all men that the kingdom of God seeks to establish?

## AN AMBIGUOUS HERITAGE

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*Prophets, Principles and National Survival.* By Jerreld L. Newquist. Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1964. xxx, 579 pp. \$5.50. Thomas G. Alexander, Assistant Professor of History at Brigham Young University and second counselor in his L.D.S. ward bishopric, is the author of many articles on Utah and the West.

Mr. Newquist attempts in this book to present a particular view of the relationship between the doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and current political, economic, and social philosophy. The method which he uses is a thirty-page introduction in which he states his general thesis, followed by 514 pages of excerpts from speeches and writings of members of the First Presidency and Council of Twelve Apostles, together with footnotes drawn from authors generally considered to be considerably right of center in the political spectrum. Prominently noted in footnotes in the chapter entitled "The Welfare State—Creeping Socialism," for instance, are such names as Ludwig Von Mises, Herbert Spencer, Dan Smoot, William Graham Sumner, Frederic Bastiat, F. A. Hayek, and Henry Hazlitt. Insofar as Mr. Newquist's methods are valid, one must conclude that in the text he has probably expressed the views of members of the General Authorities on the questions with which he deals.

The principal thesis of the book is stated by Newquist in his opening remarks. Newquist views collectivism as the major enemy of God's plan here on earth today. "The essence of the collectivist philosophy is that the majority of the people are not intelligent enough to do voluntarily what the collectivists feel should be done." Collectivism is related, according to Newquist, to the philosophy espoused by Lucifer before the pre-creation war in Heaven. He lumps "welfare staters, Fabians, socialists, fascists, [and] . . . communists" together as collectivists.<sup>1</sup>

The main problem of the book is one of method. Newquist seems convinced that if he can collect enough statements by Church leaders on a particular subject, all of which seem to lead to the same conclusion, he can demonstrate that

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<sup>1</sup>p. viii.

the particular point of view which is presented comes by revelation from God. If the views are revelations, it naturally follows that Church members are bound to adhere to them. It is clear also that the burden of accepting or rejecting the words of the Apostles lies with the members, and they do so as "moved upon by the Holy Ghost."

Newquist would probably deny that collecting documents involves any interpretation on his part, but any student of history knows that the inclusion or rejection of facts in the writing of history represents, however unconsciously, an interpretation on the part of the author. It is instructive, for instance, to note that statements from at least three prominent Apostles or members of the First Presidency who were also prominent political leaders do not appear in the book. They are: John Henry Smith, Reed Smoot, and Hugh B. Brown. It is also interesting to note that more references are cited from two members of the Council of Twelve Apostles who are generally conceded to be among the most conservative of the brethren, J. Reuben Clark (74) and Ezra Taft Benson (44), than from any president of the Church except President David O. McKay (60) and that there are more footnote citations from Dan Smoot (15) than text citations from Presidents Heber J. Grant (8), George Albert Smith (10), Joseph F. Smith (14), or Lorenzo Snow (2). Perhaps the short shrift given to former Church presidents is understandable in view of Newquist's opinion that there is a greater degree of relevance in the statements of living Prophets. If that were the case, however, the exclusion of President Brown and the numerous citations from Frederic Bastiat (9), Herbert Spencer (7), and William Graham Sumner (4), all of whom lived in the nineteenth century, seem odd.

The most glaring faults of Newquist's method, however, lie in his assumption that Prophets have always taken the same stand on the issues which he presents and in his pejorative definitions of the terms "welfare state" and "collectivism." The dictionary defines collectivism as a "politico-economic system of organization characterized by collective control over production and distribution," then proceeds to give current examples of such systems. Newquist uses the term to mean forced cooperation. Newquist defines the welfare state as a system in which people try to get something for nothing, rather than using the more general meaning (which the Founding Fathers used in the Constitution) of a state which promotes the general good of all.

To demonstrate that Newquist's method is faulty and that the principles which he thinks are immutable are simply expressions of points of view, it is necessary merely to show that at various times other Prophets than those whom he cites have advocated and practiced principles which are at variance with those which Newquist has concluded to be eternal. If opposition to collectivism and the general welfare state have always been in accord with the position taken by Prophets, then we can assume that Newquist's selection is representative. If, on the other hand, Prophets have at various times advocated and practiced principles in agreement with those which Newquist has condemned, it must be concluded that his selections represent merely a point of view and not doctrines which are binding upon members of the Church.

It seems probable that all of the General Authorities, and other members of the Church, too, for that matter, would agree with much of what Newquist has

to say. Who in the Church would deny, for instance, that members of the General Authorities have a right to speak out as citizens on secular as well as religious topics,<sup>2</sup> that people must live morally upright lives to be accepted by God, that Church members have a duty to vote for men of high principles, or even that Communism is an international movement against which all free men are bound to stand?

On some points, however, Newquist's ground is rather shaky. One of these is his view of collectivism. The Book of Mormon records that after the visit of Christ to the American continent, the Saints practiced collectivism just as they did in the Old World: "And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free and partakers of the heavenly gift." The book then explains that they lived in close harmony and in communion with God. This harmony broke down only when "they did have their goods and substance no more common among them." In other words, they were in harmony with the Lord until after they gave up collectivism.<sup>3</sup>

In February, 1831, a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith instituted a form of communitarianism through which all members of the Church were to "remember the poor, and consecrate of [their] . . . properties for their support. . . ." Every man was then made "steward over his own property, or that which he has received by consecration, as much as is sufficient for himself and family." Under this system, each man retained control of his property, but he was ultimately responsible to the Church for its use.<sup>4</sup>

In Utah, even more drastic measures were taken. Certain resources were to be held under community control. Brigham Young decreed that: "There shall be no private ownership of the streams that come out of the canyons, nor the timber that grows on the hills. These belong to the people: all the people."<sup>5</sup> The height of collectivism was reached in the United Order movement of the 1870's. Various types of orders were instituted, and in some of them, as at Orderville, Utah, there was no private ownership of real property. All who joined the order were required to contribute their property to the community, all worked together under the direction of a central board, and all ate and prayed together as well.<sup>6</sup>

Had opposition to collectivism been an eternal principle related to the War in Heaven and to man's free agency, the Lord would never have had His Church practice it. Though the members of the Church have enjoyed greater economic prosperity under a system of private rather than collective enterprise, the Lord directed them to practice collectivism at various times for His purposes.

It should be obvious that it is not collectivism as such, but rather the means

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<sup>2</sup>This point should not be misunderstood. No one, I think, would deny the right of a citizen to speak out on public issues. Some have questioned, however, whether such statements should be taken as revelation or merely as personal convictions.

<sup>3</sup>Book of Mormon, IV Nephi:3, 25. See also Acts 2:44-47.

<sup>4</sup>Doctrine and Covenants 42:31-32.

<sup>5</sup>Message of Brigham Young cited in Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of the United Order movement see Arrington, pp. 323-349.

used to institute it and the methods followed within the system which make it good or evil. Communism, which results in the aggrandizement of the state, the subordination of the individual, and the abolition of religion, is quite different from the United Order, which sought the will of God and the uplift of the individual through collective action.

In the same way, Newquist's lumping together of Communism and the general welfare state in this context is illogical. To demonstrate this, it is necessary only to show that at various times Church leaders who have uniformly condemned Communism have advocated governmental programs which were designed to promote the welfare of a certain sector of society at the expense of another sector. Such is the basis of the general welfare state.

It is clear that after the Saints got to Utah both the temporary government and the Church undertook welfare state measures. For instance, Albert Carrington, who was appointed assessor, collector, and treasurer of the temporary government, was vested by the Council "with . . . discretionary power, to pin down upon the rich & penurious, and when he comes to a Poor man or widow that is honest, instead of taxing them, give them a few dollars."<sup>7</sup>

The economic activities of Church members were often regulated and Brigham Young went as far as to forbid Church members to engage in mercantile pursuits from 1868 until 1882, when President John Taylor lifted the restriction. Brigham Young justified this action on the basis of the benefit to the community as a whole which came from restrictions placed upon part of the community. He said:

As to these little traders, we are going to shut them off. We feel a little sorry for them. Some of them have but just commenced their trading operations, and they want to keep them up. They have made, perhaps, a few hundred dollars, and they would like to continue so as to make a few thousands, and then they would want scores of thousands and then hundreds of thousands. Instead of trading we want them to go into other branches of business.<sup>8</sup>

Other programs which contain features of the general welfare state such as subsidies and protection of business were later promoted by Senator and Apostle Reed Smoot during the time he was Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. On one occasion, in defense of the protective tariff, he said:

The purpose of the Republican protective tariff system is to afford sufficient protection to American manufacturers and producers to place them on terms of equality with their foreign competitors. To determine the amount of duty each article must be taxed in order to accomplish that end, the cost of the materials entering into the fabrication of such articles is the essential element. . . .

Schedule-by-schedule revision [against which he spoke] is a plan to separate industries which are so correlated that the tariff on one affects

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<sup>7</sup>Order of the Council cited in Arrington, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup>Remarks of Brigham Young, April 6, 1869, Brigham Young, *et al*, *Journal of Discourses* (26 vols.; Liverpool: Albert Carrington, 1854-1886), XII, 374.

the other. Such a system will result in the destruction of our industries, and the great principle of protection, the keystone to the arch of the temple of Republicanism, will be nibbled to death by adherents to the principle of a tariff for revenue only.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, during the political campaign of 1966, this reviewer heard President Hugh B. Brown before the Brigham Young University student body introduce Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey and praise him for his efforts in the enactment of Civil Rights and other Great Society legislation.

The point of this discussion is not that the Church as such supports or has supported the general welfare state, but that at various times, various General Authorities, whom Newquist has failed to quote, have supported features of it. The fact is that the Church and its Prophets have not taken a uniform position on the matter. Unless Newquist is to condemn Brigham Young as a heretic for supporting economic regulation and public welfare measures and Reed Smoot as the tool of the Devil for supporting subsidies to business through a protective tariff, one must conclude that support or rejection of such measures is a matter of public policy and not divine revelation. Economic regulation or subsidization of various sectors of society cannot logically come under blanket condemnation as contrary to the plan of God or to the advice of all Prophets. Each program must be considered on its own merits, without prejudice. Each individual is obliged to weigh the good it does to that sector which is aided and the harm done to that sector from which something is taken, just as Brigham Young did in interdicting mercantile pursuits and Reed Smoot did in supporting a protective tariff.

Similar problems of method arise in Newquist's discussion of the nature of the Constitution of the United States. Newquist's selections would lead one to believe that General Authorities have always taken a conservative view of the Constitution and a strict definition of the powers of the federal government under the Constitution. To undercut this position, it is necessary only to show that Prophets have, on occasion, called for a broad or liberal interpretation of the Constitution.

In a pamphlet which he published to further his candidacy for the presidency in 1844, Joseph Smith espoused a version of the powers of the federal government much at variance with conservative opinion of his own time. He called, among other things, for three measures which some contemporary interpreters of the Constitution considered unconstitutional: a protective tariff, abolition of slavery, and a national bank.<sup>10</sup> Ever since 1792 advocacy of a national bank had been characteristic of those favoring a loose interpretation in the Hamiltonian tradition as contrasted to those supporting a strict interpretation in the Jeffersonian tradition. Joseph's stand on the bank put him on the

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Congress, *Congressional Record*, 61st Cong., 3rd Sess., January 24, 1911, pp. 1340 and 1342.

<sup>10</sup>Joseph Smith, "Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States," reproduced in G. Homer Durham, *Joseph Smith, Prophet-Statesman* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1944), pp. 146-167. See especially pp. 160 and 166. This is also reproduced in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Second Edition Revised. Introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts (6 Vols.; Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1949), VI, 197-209.

side of a loose or liberal interpretation. On another occasion, when called upon to give his views of the Constitution itself, he complained that: "The only fault I find with the Constitution is, it is not broad enough to cover the whole ground."<sup>11</sup>

Had Joseph Smith's interpretation of Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution been accepted, there would have been no need for the Fourteenth Amendment to protect the rights of persons against the states. Smarting still from the failure of the federal government to defend the Saints against their persecutors, Joseph said in a published letter to John C. Calhoun:

To close, I would admonish you . . . to read in the 8th section and 1st article of the Constitution of the United States, the *first, fourteenth and seventeenth* "specific" and not very "limited powers" of the Federal Government, what can be done to protect the lives, property, and rights of a virtuous people, when the administrators of the law and law-makers are unbought by bribes, uncorrupted by patronage, untempted by gold, unawed by fear, and uncontaminated by tangling alliances— . . . This will raise your mind above the narrow notion that the General Government has no power, to the sublime idea that Congress, with the President as Executor, is as almighty in its sphere as Jehovah is in his.<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly enough, Section 8 of Article 1 grants Congress the power to "provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States. . . ."

In addition to his arguments about the Constitution, Newquist argues also that members of the Church have considered themselves duty bound to obey the law of the land on all occasions. All Prophets, however, have not taken this view. When Apostle Rudger Clawson was convicted of unlawful cohabitation in November, 1884, more than five years after the Supreme Court in the Reynolds Case had declared that Congress had a right to prohibit polygamy, he told the court:

Your honor, since the jury that recently sat on my case have seen proper to find a verdict of guilty, I have only this to say, why judgment should not be pronounced against me. I may much regret that the law of my country should come in contact with the laws of God, but, whenever they do, I shall invariably choose the latter. If I did not so express myself I should feel myself unworthy of the cause that I represent.<sup>13</sup>

Newquist also attempts to show that members of the Church should be unified in their political views. This is at variance with statements of various General Authorities. President Heber J. Grant recognized in statements made in 1919 and 1920 that such an ideal was impossible to attain. He regretted further that members of the Church had attempted to use the Standard Works of the Church to try to prove one position or another with regard to the hotly debated League of Nations.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, VI, 57.

<sup>12</sup>Joseph Smith to John C. Calhoun, January 2, 1844, *History of the Church*, VI, 160.

<sup>13</sup>Statement of Rudger Clawson quoted in *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 4, 1884.

I regret exceedingly that the standard works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been brought into this controversy, which has now become practically a partisan controversy. It is my opinion that this important question should have been kept absolutely out of politics. . . .

I regret exceedingly that in political controversies men seem to lack that courtesy and that respect for their opponents that I believe all Latter-day Saints ought to have. I have never yet heard a Democrat make a political speech that I felt was fair to the Republicans. . . . From my own personal contact with dear and near friends, Republicans and Democrats, I have not been able to discover the exercise of what you might call charity, if you like, for the opinions of others who oppose them politically at least not as much charity as should exist among our people. *I am a thorough convert myself to the idea that it is not possible for all men to see alike.*<sup>14</sup>

At the annual conference in 1962, President Brown issued a further statement in the spirit of President Grant's. He referred to a statement of President Grant, President J. Reuben Clark, and President McKay that "The Church does not interfere, and has no intention of trying to interfere with the fullest and freest exercise of the political franchise of its members, under and within our Constitution." President Brown went on to say:

But, brethren, beware that you do not become extremists on either side. The degree of a man's aversion to communism may not always be measured by the noise he makes in going about and calling everyone a communist who disagrees with his personal political bias. There is no excuse for members of this Church, especially men who hold the priesthood, to be opposing one another over communism. . . .<sup>15</sup>

The point of this review has not been to prove the opposite of Newquist's case, i.e., that the General Authorities have been raging liberals rather than extreme conservatives. It is merely to show that the assumptions upon which Newquist has based his argument are faulty. The fact is that various members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have taken positions at variance with those presented in Newquist's selections. A basic unity over the long term of Church history in all economic, political, and social issues does not exist, and Newquist's position can be sustained only if one picks and chooses statements from various Prophets and excludes statements which contradict them.

In refutation of my argument relating to the development of collectivist policy by the Church in the nineteenth century, one might say that the measures of collectivist and general welfare state policy were undertaken by the Church, and were thus voluntary, not by the state, in which case they would have been

<sup>14</sup>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Conference Report, *Ninetieth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1919), pp. 16-17 and 19. See also Conference Report, *Ninety-First Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1920), p. 4. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>15</sup>Conference Report, *One Hundred Thirty-second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1962), p. 89.



involuntary. This position involves, however, a rather narrow view of both the power of the Church, especially in Utah after 1847, and also of the principles upon which our federal and state governments function. The Church was the only civil government in Utah until the territorial government began functioning in 1851 and it used its police power to enforce decisions of the Church leaders. In addition, the Church had at its disposal then and afterwards a tremendous persuasive power. If one believes in the principles of the gospel and is nevertheless unwilling to follow divine counsel, he is in danger of forfeiting his claim to Eternal Life. In nineteenth century Utah, as today, he might also suffer social ostracism or excommunication for his recalcitrance, with all that implied in a society predominantly L.D.S. In addition, though the state has temporal punishment at its disposal for non-conformity, the adoption of measures to which citizens are required to conform is not an involuntary procedure. In the United States, laws are passed by legislative bodies in which all adult citizens are represented.

It is obvious from Mr. Newquist's introduction that he disagrees with most of the regulatory and welfare legislation which Congress has passed since 1900. Instead of picking and choosing statements from his favorite General Authorities and arranging them in what seems an attempt to convince others of his point of view by persuading them that his way is the Lord's way, he might more profitably work in the traditional American way for majority support for repeal of that legislation.

The Founding Fathers and Church leaders such as President Grant have recognized that politics involves differences of interest. Members of the Church may have similar opinions on moral questions such as prostitution, murder, and theft, or they may be unified in their universal hatred of Communism, but because they represent different occupations, they will, of necessity, have differing political views. One cannot expect the interests of the dairy farmer who must sell milk to support his family to coincide with those of the urban housewife who must buy milk to feed her small children. Each may be a Church member and yet each has a legitimate point of view, and Newquist's picking and choosing of statements by General Authorities cannot change that. In a democratic republic such as ours, conflicting views can best be resolved by compromise in the legislative halls of our states and nation. If we allow writers like Newquist to convince us that there is only one Divinely authorized view of each controversial political problem, issues can no longer be debated on their merits, and the process of give and take which has been the genius of American politics since its beginning will be at an end. Then, when we can no longer reconcile conflicts of interest through compromise, will the Constitution surely "hang by a thread."

