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W. C. Lubenow
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Introduction: The Apostles and intellectual and professional life

THE BACKGROUND

> The difficulty is under modern conditions to get a traditional aristocracy of any kind, and that is why I particularly value the universities and rejoice at their constant increase. For in the universities there is at least the recognition of the value of quality, otherwise disappearing with the disappearance of all forms of the aristocratic tradition. *G. M. Trevelyan*[1]

In 1955, a few years after G. M. Trevelyan retired as Master of Trinity College his friends gave him a dinner at Christ's College and presented him with a *Festschrift*. After feasting on Cholmondeley venison, Trevelyan rose and offered the comments quoted above. The *Festschrift* contained an essay called 'The Intellectual Aristocracy' by Noel Annan, who became Provost of King's College the next year.[2] Trevelyan was a member of the intellectual aristocracy of which the former spoke so feelingly and of which the latter wrote with such telling impact. Trevelyan and Annan were also Cambridge Apostles. The occasion, the speeches, and the essay brought together various themes in the history of the Apostles: duty, imagination, and friendship.

It is not quite right, nor is it British, to call the Apostles intellectuals, much less an intelligentsia.[3] They were not nearly so alienated, isolated or solipsistic as such terms imply.[4] The research on European and British intellectuals is vast and informative. One of the many things which can be learned from it is the exceptional variety of the life of learning in the

[1] Quoted in David Cannadine, *G. M. Trevelyan, A Life in History* (London, HarperCollins: 1992), p. 236.

[2] N. G. Annan, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy', in J. H. Plumb (ed.), *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan* (London, Longmans: 1955).

[3] Stanley Baldwin thought the word 'intelligentsia' was an 'ugly word for an ugly thing'. Churchill described them as 'glittering scum on the deep river of production'.

[4] M. S. Hickox, 'Has There Been a British Intelligensia?' *British Journal of Sociology*, 37, 2 (June 1986), pp. 263ff.

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nineteenth century;[5] intellectuals held not a single or a fixed role; their positions were many and relational.[6] Russian people of learning lived in a Muscovite tradition, buried in their own past, cut off from both medieval scholasticism and seventeenth-century rationalism. In Germany a person of learning required an office or a title to be taken seriously. They were state servants who recognized rather than criticized authority. In France they were a closed society, most frequently on the left, critics of authority and the church, pronouncing authoritatively on the moral condition of society. Bohemia was not a strange land in Central Europe; it was a country in which imagination dwelt on the fringe of bourgeois society.[7]

British men of letters, deployed within the old and the new professions, attached themselves to church and state, the law, and education. Never fancying themselves as an alternative government, they satisfied themselves with various forms of indirect influence.[8] Retaining independence, they belonged to the very regime they sought to change. Moreover, in contrast to Prussia where academically trained professionals imposed themselves from above,[9] British men of learning rose from the professional sectors of society. Members of bourgeois society, they used bourgeois means to criticize it. The Cambridge Apostles belonged to this 'forgotten middle class',[10] the learned

[5] See, for example, the informative essays in Ron Eyerman, Lennart G. Swensson, and Thomas Soderquist (eds.), *Intellectuals, Universities, and the State in Western Modern Societies* (Berkeley, University of California Press: 1987).

[6] Stefan Collini, Seminar in British History Since the Reformation, Princeton University, 2 December 1994.

[7] Edward Shils, 'Ideology and Civility: On the Politics of the Intellectual', *Sewanee Review*, 66, 3 (July–September 1958), pp. 450–2, and *The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1972), pp. 3, 7; Golo Mann, 'The Intellectuals – 3: Germany', *Encounter*, 4, 6 (June 1955), pp. 42–3; Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700–1914* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1980); Herbert Luthy, 'The Intellectuals – 4: France', *Encounter*, 5, 2 (August 1955), pp. 5–6; Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830–1930* (New York, Penguin Books: 1987).

[8] Stephen Toulmin, 'Review of Paul Levy, *Moore: G. E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles*', in *New Republic* (30 August 1980), pp. 29–30; Noel Annan, ' "Our Age": Reflections on Three Generations in England', *Daedalus* (Fall 1978), p. 83. Toulmin's and Annan's remarks are poignant. They yearn for greater influence for intellectuals. Toulmin was an Apostle also.

[9] Konrad Jarausch, 'The Decline of Liberal Professionalism: Reflections on the Social Erosion of German Liberalism, 1867–1933', in Konrad Jarausch and Larry Eugene Jones (eds.), *In Search of Liberal Germany; Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the Present* (New York, Oxford, Munich, Berg: 1990), p. 264.

[10] The phrase is Harold Perkin's, see *The Origins of Modern English Society* (London, Routledge: 1969), pp. 252–70.

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and professional sections of society whose capital was in their imagination, their education, and their talent. As a consequence, the history of the Apostles is tied to histories of the professions and the universities.

This history of the professions is a fraught subject because these groups ill fit the great social theories which have been used to describe the nineteenth century. Economic power was one thing; they enjoyed something different. Exercising an influence far greater than their numbers, clergymen, lawyers, civil servants, schoolmasters, and university dons constituted the political, administrative, and cultural force on which national power and prestige rested.[11] Arising as much from the bureaucratic needs of the modern state as from the economic demands of industrial change,[12] the professions were not confined to a single ideological position. They ranged widely, like Proteus the form-changer, drawing on impulses shared by other groups.[13]

Students of the professions have described their history in various ways. Some, using a kind of modernization theory, have seen the professions optimistically, as moving rather inevitably from simple to complex institutions, from impotent to powerful social forces, from status to occupational professions.[14] Others, as moral critics, find the professions wanting, regarding them as agents of monopoly and control and resistant to change and reform. Neither quite grapple with some of the details of the professions' history. There is more than one kind of profession. The Royal Historical Society is not the same sort of professional organization as the Institute of Electrical Engineers. Different standards of status apply to a profession depending on whether one is examining a professional group from within or from without.[15]

[11] According to Harold Perkin's reckoning, 2.1 per cent of the male occupied population consisted of professional people in 1881; in 1971 the proportion was 11.6 per cent. If one includes professional administrators and managers in the calculations the proportions are 6.8 per cent and 21.5 per cent respectively. 'Middle Class Education and Employment in the Nineteenth Century: A Critical Note', *Economic History Review*, 14 (1961), p. 129.

[12] P. M. Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes of Europe, 1879–1914* (London, Macmillan: 1990)

[13] Perkin, *Making of Modern English Society*, pp. 252ff.; *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London and New York, Routledge: 1989), pp. 5–7, 84ff., and *passim*.

[14] For this last distinction, see Philip Elliot, *The Sociology of the Professions* (London, 1972). An implicit teleology is also found in other writings on the subject, as in Heyck's *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* in which he talks about the conversion of sages into intellectuals and in Arthur Engel's *From Clergyman to Don: the Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1983).

[15] Andrew Abbott, 'Status and Strain in the Professions', *American Journal of Sociology*, 86, 4 (January 1981), pp. 820–7, 827–30.

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More information

The problem the professions faced in the nineteenth century was to escape from the old corruption, with its sinecures, bribes, gratuitous fees, and patronage, and to establish independent status and reputation. They sought separation from an *ancien régime* at the same time that their numbers exceeded available occupational opportunities.[16] Consequently, as one contemporary observer remarked, the professions were an 'uneasy class',[17] and many professional men reflected a deep sense of social anxiety. John Mitchell Kemble, for example, criticized both the mischievousness of lawyers and clerical control over education in describing the vulnerabilities he and those like him faced.[18] Rather than a social position based on privilege, the professions had to establish a standing based upon talent and ability and dignity and honour.[19]

The task of the professions was deeply political and set people with professional aspirations in conflict with their clients, the state, bureaucrats, and other professions.[20] To achieve authority, and to make claims of disinterestedness and civic virtue, the professions required both independence and learning, both freedom and knowledge.[21] Their knowledge could not be utilitarian expertise only. Mere information was the stuff of experience. As the Apostles would say, such things are phenomenal; they are often inexact, misleading and carry little moral authority. Fitzjames Stephen pointed out the ways in which knowledge might liberate, allowing us 'to be at distant places, & in past or future times, although the nature of things confines us to one portion of space at each successive moment in time'. Yet knowledge was always limited and uncertain because it was no substitute for the 'processes of sensation & perception of which it is an imperfect description'.[22]

[16] Lenore O'Boyle, 'The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe, 1800–1850', *Journal of Modern History*, 42 (1970), pp. 471–95.

[17] Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *England and America* (London: 1833), pp. 94–5 quoted in R. I. Neale, 'Class and Class Consciousness', *Victorian Studies*, 12 (September 1968), p. 14.

[18] Kemble to W. B. Donne, 29 June 1836 and [?] September 1839, Johnson Papers.

[19] Samuel Haber, *The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750–1900* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press: 1991); Bruce A. Kimball, *The 'True Professional Ideal' in America: A History* (Oxford, Blackwell: 1992).

[20] Jarausch, 'The Decline of Liberal Professionalism', p. 263.

[21] Konrad Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers, and Engineers, 1900–1950* (New York, Oxford University Press: 1990), pp. 3–24.

[22] James Fitzjames Stephen, 'An Unfinished Letter to his Children', Fitzjames Stephen Papers, Add. 7349 (C), 21.

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And liberty could not merely be freedom; duty had its obligations. G. O. Trevelyan saw similarities between the cadets of the old East India Company and the Romans in Egypt after Mark Antony fell under Cleopatra's spell. The officers of the East India Company were 'indolent, dissipating, grasping, almost oriental in their way of life'. The new civilians of the Indian Service were different because they were people of vocation. They were 'more simple, more hardy, more Christian'.[23] Sir Charles Trevelyan, the father of this Apostle and the grandfather of two others, had extensive experience of the East India Company and had observed its world of jobbery and incompetence. He had been unfavourably impressed by the poor education, the inferior training, and the low social standing of the Company's cadets. His goal was to create a service of abler people with talent and imagination.[24] The East India Company recruited its cadets from Haileybury where they had been steeped in utilitarian principles; the new civilians in the last half of the century were educated according to the ideals of the reformed public schools and universities.[25] In short, by adopting higher standards of duty and learning and by forming themselves into associations, the men of the new professions acquired greater prestige and status.

They also sought social recognition by presenting their daughters into London society and by the purchase of country houses.[26] In making claims for status, the nineteenth-century professions separated themselves from the older order of gentility based upon wealth, birth, privilege, and patronage,

[23] [G. O. Trevelyan], *Letters from a Competition Wallah* (London and Cambridge, Macmillan: 1864), quoted in Philip Mason, *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal* (New York, William Morrow: 1982), p. 170.

[24] J. M. Bourne, *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, Edward Arnold: 1986), pp. 31ff.

[25] C. J. Dewey, 'The Education of a Ruling Caste: The Indian Civil Service in the Era of Competitive Examinations', *English Historical Review*, 88 (1973), pp. 262–85.

[26] The proportion of women from aristocratic families who were presented at court between 1841 and 1891 declined from 71 per cent to 24 per cent. The proportion of gentry women remained fairly constant, increasing slightly from 16 per cent to 23 per cent. The proportion of women from business families increased from 3 per cent to 8 per cent. The proportion of women from professional families increased from 8 per cent to 23 per cent. The proportion of professional men purchasing country houses after 1800 was 14 per cent in Hertfordshire, 23 per cent in Northamptonshire, and 20 per cent in Northumberland. Nancy W. Ellenberger, 'The Transformation of London "Society" and the End of Queen Victoria's Reign: Evidence from the Court Presentation Records', *Albion*, 22, 4 (Winter 1990), p. 643; Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England, 1640–1880* (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1984), Table 7.1.

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and claimed to be gentlemen due to their talents. As Trollope put it, a profession is 'a calling by which a gentleman, not born to a gentleman's allowance of good things, might ingeniously obtain the same by the exercise of his abilities'.[27] Severing themselves from symbols of status based upon birth and wealth had its risks and dangers; it left them rootless and without social anchors. However, it was also exhilarating. They often felt at the 'centre of things', as Henry Sidgwick put it. 'It is a comfort to think what a rising profession I belong to.'[28] Joseph Williams Blakesley once described one Algerian official as having 'no ability except as an administrator' but another as 'a very cultivated person, of great German and English reading'.[29] By substituting culture for birth and property,[30] the Apostles and other members of the professions opened the world to wit and imagination where eloquence and persuasion was at least as important as technical knowledge.

Their liberation from the old order of things required the professions to attach themselves to a particular kind of learning, and this tied them to the universities. The universities, like the professions, sought to escape the hold the old corruption held over them. Reformers realized that the old system deprived the universities of talent. Among the Apostles, W. B. Donne and F. D. Maurice could not take degrees at Cambridge because they would not subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles.[31] C. J. Monro, the brilliant mathematician, had to give up his Trinity fellowship and could not become a member of the university governing body because he could not subscribe.[32] The question of religious oaths in the university was not, therefore, a matter of theology or class, it was the constitutional matter of the university's attachment to the Church of England. The old university was an institution whose consensus was enforced by a system of preferments which excluded those who were at odds with it. The reformed university of the nineteenth century, the liberal university, by abolishing religious tests, became an institution of

[27] Unfortunately, Trollope puts these words in the mouth of Sir Lionel Bertram who sought to acquire as many of these 'good things' as quickly and as easily as possible. Anthony Trollope, *The Bertrams* (London, Penguin Books: 1993), p. 75.

[28] Henry Sidgwick to his sister [n.d. but 1874], Sidgwick MSS, Add. MS c. $100^{35(1-2)}$

[29] Blakesley to W. E. Gladstone, 11 August 1859, British Library, Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 44392, f. 126.

[30] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, Princeton University Press: 1975), p. 500.

[31] Maurice conformed later and took an Oxford degree.

[32] *Proceedings of the London Mathematical Society*, 14 (November 1882–November 1883), pp. 323–4.

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'unconstrained agreements'.[33] The Apostles were among the creators of the liberal university.

John Stuart Mill was a sharp critic of the universities in 1833. Twenty years later the universities, in his view, were 'very much changed, and free energy and speculation on the deepest and highest questions, instead of being crushed and deadened, are now more rife there than almost anywhere else in England'.[34] The liberal university as it was reformed in the nineteenth century had a number of characteristics. Its system of honours examinations was the seminary for the children of professional families. Classical and mathematical learning persisted there. It would be wrong to think that the honours examinations excited all who went up to the university. Many took up the cult of athleticism. For those who occupied themselves with the river and the playing field, the university 'was more a place of privileged play than it was a centre of meritocratic cerebral effort'.[35] However, it would be equally wrong to think that the nineteenth-century university was an anachronism unsuited to the modern world. For those who sat for the honours examinations, the reformed university was the opening to the modern professions.

Actually little is known about the demography of Oxford and Cambridge in the nineteenth century, and what we do know is of dubious value because the methods for obtaining it have been marred by conceptual and taxonomical flaws. It is a situation the volumes of the histories of Oxford and Cambridge will rectify. For the present, this is what we do know. Of the Oxford and Cambridge students between 1752 and 1886, the largest single group, something more than a third, had fathers who were clergy, lawyers, civil servants, physicians, and teachers.[36] This pattern persisted through the nineteenth century. If one examines the fathers of Cambridge students alone in the period from 1800 to 1850 and compares them with fathers of

[33] For this distinction between 'the pre-liberal modern university' and the liberal university see, Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry* (London, Duckworth: 1990), pp. 223–31.

[34] John Stuart Mill to Mrs Henry Huth, 7 January 1863, *The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1849–1873*, Francis E. Minka and Dwight N. Ludley (eds.) *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. XV (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul: 1972), p. 819.

[35] J. A. Mangan, 'Lamentable Barbarians and Pitiful Sheep: Rhetoric of Protest and Pleasure in Late Victorian Oxbridge', *Victorian Studies*, 34, 4 (Summer 1991), p. 476.

[36] Slightly less than a third were nobility or gentry; less than 4 per cent were businessmen. C. Arnold Anderson and Miriam Schnaper, *School and Society in England: Social Backgrounds of Oxford and Cambridge Students* (Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press: 1952), p. 6.

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students in the latter half of the century, there was a decline in the percentage of landowners from 31 per cent to 19 per cent, an increase of bankers and businessmen from 6 per cent to 15 per cent, but the percentage of members of the educated middle classes remained stable at slightly more than 50 per cent.[37] The picture is the same at Oxford where at the end of the nineteenth century the sons of the clergy and gentry were 'swamped by the great tide of students from the *new* middle classes'.[38]

Scottish universities have always had a reputation for recruiting their members from a wider social range. Between 1860 and 1866 slightly more than 12 per cent of Edinburgh University's students came from industrial and commercial families. Between 1860 and 1910 slightly less than 25 per cent of Glasgow University's students came from business families.[39] On the other hand, medical students at Edinburgh principally came from clergy, military, medical, and legal families.[40] Moreover, even if students in Scottish universities came from business families in greater proportions, there is no evidence to show that they returned to business. Indeed, the principal role for the Scottish universities was to train generalists with honours degrees for occupations as civil servants and teachers.[41]

Classical and mathematical learning persisted to a marked degree in the liberal university in the age of reform. At Oxford between 1874 and 1884, 40 per cent of those students taking honours examinations sat for the Literae Humaniores and mathematics. At Cambridge the numbers sitting for the Mathematical and Classical Triposes increased throughout the nineteenth century. In the period between 1874 and 1885, because mathematics was stronger than at Oxford, nearly two-thirds sat for the Classical or Mathematical Tripos.[42] If one takes the yearly averages for students sitting the Cambridge triposes between 1880 and 1890, 125 sat the Mathematical

[37] Hester Jenkins and G. Caradog Jones, 'The Social Class of Cambridge University Alumni of the 18th and 19th Centuries', *British Journal of Sociology*, 1 (June 1950), p. 99.

[38] Lawrence Stone, 'The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body, 1500–1910', in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *The University and Society*, vol. I (Princeton, Princeton University Press: 1974), pp. 66–7.

[39] R. D. Anderson, *Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland* (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1983), Tables 4.11 and 8.7, pp. 150–1, 310–11.

[40] Lisa Rosner, *Medical Education in the Age of Improvement: Edinburgh and Apprentices, 1760–1826* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press: 1991), pp. 27f.

[41] Anderson, *Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland*, pp. 341–2.

[42] 'Return of the Following Particulars with Regard to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge', *Parliamentary Papers* (1886), 51, pp. 586–7.

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Excerpt
More information

1 View from Trinity Bridge

Tripos, 109 the Classical Tripos, 8 the Moral Sciences Tripos, 66 the Natural Sciences Tripos, and 23 the History Tripos.[43]

The newer studies suffered for want of scholarships to encourage students, fellowships to encourage dons, and laboratories for research and study because they lacked the intellectual prestige of classical and mathematical learning. The 'Naturals', those who sat the Natural Sciences Tripos, 'were greeted with pity mingled with contempt'.[44] Law and history, when James Strachey sat for them, were rather towards the bottom of respectable intellectual activities. A degree could be got with only an hour's reading a day during term time.[45] To succeed, new disciplines required viable ideas and the institutional protection universities could provide.[46] Geology was successful

[43] These figures are derived from information in J. R. Tanner (ed.), *The Historical Register of the University of Cambridge, 1910* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1917), pp. 477–986.

[44] D. A. Winstanley, *Later Victorian Cambridge* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1947), p. 205.

[45] D. W. Winnicott, 'James Strachey, 1887–1967', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 50, 129 (1969), p. 129.

[46] Reba Soffer, 'Why Do Disciplines Fail? The Strange Case of British Sociology', *English Historical Review*, 97 (October 1982), p. 774.

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More information

outside the university because of its attachment to the Geological Survey which served as a kind of 'outdoor relief' for gentlemanly amateurs favoured by government departments.[47] Anthropology, like geology, flourished in the empire rather than the university, and its early geniuses were often missionaries or civil servants gone native. The William Wyse Chair of Anthropology at Cambridge was established only in 1932 and its first occupants were civil servants rather than university trained academics.[48]

The new studies came into their own when they mimicked the objectives of classical and mathematical learning. The Natural Sciences Tripos combined precision with a broadly integrated intellectual training. Scientific excellence was secured alongside liberal educational values, rather than at the expense of them.[49] Oxford and Cambridge accepted history because it was at one with their institutional values and supported rather than defied the regnant conception of liberal education.[50] Alfred Marshall had been Second Wrangler in 1865 and then went to Balliol under Jowett where he absorbed the idea of preparing university people for worldly work. He believed it to be in the national interest to increase the number of economists because of a reciprocal relationship between material and moral progress. Rather than stressing a hedonistic calculus, Marshall emphasized the importance of public esteem, the intrinsic pleasure of intellectual activity, and duty, in forming the Economics Tripos. As Keynes put it, Marshall wished to 'speak with the tongues of businessmen', as he entered the 'vast laboratory of the world'. Yet, Marshall wished to 'observe all with the highly intelligent eye of an angel'.[51] In establishing the university at Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain followed the lead of those local magnates who insisted on commercial

[47] Roy Porter, 'Gentlemen and Geology: The Emergence of a Gentlemanly Career', *Historical Journal*, 21, 4 (December 1978), pp. 825–7.

[48] Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1991), p. 51 and *passim*.

[49] Porter, 'Gentlemen and Geology', p. 835.

[50] Reba Soffer, 'Nation, Duty, Character, and Confidence: History at Oxford, 1850–1915', *Historical Journal*, 30, 1 (1987); 'The Modern University and National Values, 1850–1930', *Historical Research*, 60, 142 (June 1987), p. 174; *Discipline and Power: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930* (Stanford, Stanford University Press: 1994).

[51] John Maloney, *Marshall, Orthodoxy, and the Professionalization of Economics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1985), pp. 1–2; John Maynard Keynes, 'Alfred Marshall', in *The Collected Works of John Maynard Keynes, Volume X, Essays in Biography* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press for the Royal Economic Society: 1972), p. 187; D. E. Moggridge, *Maynard Keynes: An Economist's Biography* (London and New York, Routledge: 1992), pp. 92–3.

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