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INTRODUCTION

Superior figures in the text refer to the appendix of notes beginning on page 265.

The Christian Socialist movement of 1848-54 has always baffled the historian. Most people agree as to what the Oxford Tractarians, the leaders of the previous religious revival stood for. But F. D. Maurice, the Prophet of Christian Socialism, is a peculiarly difficult theologian. Charles Kingsley, according to one of his biographers, 'was unpredictable for his star traced no recognised orbit'.[1] His friend, Tom Hughes, liked to use his fists, but it was not always clear with whom he was fighting.

Yet their activities were of some importance. The Christian Socialists were pioneer sanitary reformers; they played an important part in the history of co-operation and trade unions; they were—through the Working Men's College—influential in modern adult education. Their novels, theological treatises, pamphlets, articles and tracts were widely read.

This biography shows that there was in their midst someone of great political and administrative ability who knew much more clearly than any of the others what he wanted to do and was smitten with a strong determination to do it. This little-known figure was John Malcolm Ludlow.

It was he, the founder of the movement, who more than anyone else gave it a concreteness and definition which it would otherwise have lacked. His lucidity and powers of concentration compelled his colleagues to act for or against him, and alone make some of their actions and statements intelligible. His challenging behaviour produced a drama at the centre of the group which makes it apparent that, however much they may have supplemented his deficiencies, he also supplemented some of theirs. He was thus a dominant influence during a decisive phase of their lives and, as a result, in part the architect of their subsequent careers.

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The basic problem raised by Socialism has always been that of 'association' or 'solidarity', the challenging way it regarded human beings as members of groups rather than as unique or isolated individuals. Ludlow's relationship with his fellow workers throws much light on group psychology. His programme ultimately became so clearly defined that it raised issues which can only be fully appreciated in the light of the twentieth century, when Socialists or Communists, instead of trying to control and give a corporate faith to a number of artisans in a few co-operative workshops, are attempting something similar for gigantic empires.

Yet the movement he inaugurated is difficult for us to understand, and even though he was the most clear-headed of the group Ludlow, like his friends, inevitably remains something of a mystery man, living as he did during a period when the working class movement was only just beginning.

The Christian Socialists bestrode two worlds, that of the liberal nineteenth century, the heir to the individualist enlightenment which the early scientists helped to create, and the corporate collectivist world of the peoples, of which the twentieth century has felt the full impact. What makes their lives difficult for us to comprehend is that, whilst they saw the legacy of the Reformation and of the Enlightenment expressing itself in the politics of a liberal age, Socialism was for them primarily a religious ideal which challenged the Church rather than the State, partly because it recalled certain traditions of the medieval past, which the enlightenment had sought to banish as superstition.

The 1830 revolution in France, and the passing of the Great Reform Bill in England, implied for Ludlow the triumph of political Liberalism and the final overthrow of governments which had been based on predominantly medieval conceptions of religion and semi-feudal notions of politics. Ironically, what set him on the course that finally made him into a Socialist pioneer was the urge to acquire a detached understanding of the situation after a period of liberal reform, by reassessing not only the Radical dissenting tradition in which he had grown up and

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which appeared to be on the way to political triumph, but also the defeated Conservative movements which, up till then, had opposed it. He thought that such an understanding, besides revealing new lines of political and religious development for the future, might mitigate the violence of a revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggle into which he had been born. For him, as for many others, Socialism began as a position and a way of thinking rather than as a creed or a programme. He did not repudiate the enlightened Liberal dissenting outlook, but he more and more applied it to purely political questions. On the other hand, he took over from the defeated Reactionaries, who in the wilderness were showing a capacity for creative thought which had been far less marked when they were in power, ideals which would greatly modify his religious beliefs.

He was hardly aware, of course, of the transformation which was taking place in his views; but a European crisis, the revolution of 1848, made him aim at a new kind of synthesis, a political democracy and a religious Christian Socialism. It also pitched him into trying to give expression to this in practical, concrete action. His efforts were still of a tentative and exploratory nature; each step led to a minor spiritual earthquake which provided him with a slightly different view of the world and also revealed what his next step must be. Yet the final result seemed to be failure. The 1848 revolution, to borrow from Marxist terminology, was 'premature'. Democracy was overthrown in France, Chartism languished in England. After the revolution's demise, his actions appeared, to his friends at any rate, to become less and less relevant to the needs of the time. If there was some immediate achievement that could be followed up, the initiative Ludlow had taken was only fully appreciated much later, when it was reinterpreted for the subsequent Socialist movement (which it was now seen to have prefigured). The co-operative workshops he had tried to establish began, however, to lose their interest for a new generation which was turning from Socialism as a kind of religion to Socialism as a political programme, expressing itself through the government of municipality and State. They were more and more regarded as the

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antiquated equipment of a bygone age, to be conveniently dispensed with. But it is just the voluntary co-operative element in Ludlow's programme that is likely to arouse the greatest interest today, and to help us to see his special originality, not only for his own time but also for our own.

During Ludlow's life, it was the institutions of mutual aid which appealed to the rising working class, rather than the public institutions of the State. 'Their very names speak volumes. On the one side the Workhouse, the Poor Law Infirmary, the Reformatory, the National Society for the Education of the Poor in accordance with the Principles of the Established Church; and on the other, the Friendly *Society*, the Sick *Club*, the Co-operative *Society*, the Trade *Union*. One represents the tradition of fraternal association springing up from below, the other that of authoritarian institutions directed from above'.[1]

This kind of social fraternity was the basic inspiration of Ludlow's life even if he himself brought to its aid something of the harsh authoritarian efficiency of the Bleak Age. The stresses of his time were not quite the same as those of ours. For him intellectual freedom, for example, could be left to Lord John Russell, to Gladstone, to Cobden and Bright, and to the gradual evolution of the Liberal democratic state. But this Liberalism itself created new problems. Ludlow was one of the minority who were aware of these. This was partly due to the fact that he was fascinated by chastened aristocrats and clergy of the Established Church, heirs to the *ancien régime*, for it was from them that he learnt of corporate and social ideals of service and obligation which he mingled with his scientific, Radical and libertarian heritage to produce the minor explosion of Christian Socialism. It was among the voteless workers, still beyond the pale of the British constitution (in which rival factions were too busy fighting each other for their own interests 'to hear the children wailing, O my brothers'), that he sought in a startlingly original way for the kind of synthesis he was needing. The working-class leaders, the aristocracy of labour, although they, like Ludlow, remained Radicals in politics, were also quite willing to learn from chastened Tories and to use them for their own ends.

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Christian Socialism, therefore, was the very reverse of doctrinaire or partisan. Unlike the clerical Oxford movement of Keble, Newman and Pusey which preceded it, and which began as an uncompromising opposition to militant Whig Liberal reformers, Ludlow and his friends represented the reaction of a minority against the bitterness of religious and political strife itself, rather than against the doctrine of a party. They thus occupied a kind of cross-roads junction position; for they passionately desired that rival policies and creeds should be re-examined and re-assessed by men unblinkered by factious prejudice. This particular urge may indeed be described as the Ludlow complex, though it was shared by the rest of his colleagues.

Each of the Christian Socialists wished to disentangle himself from existing conflicts and each remained in part a product of the political and religious movements in which he had grown up. Thus Ludlow, though to some extent in rebellion against 'the left' of his day, had to a marked degree many of its most striking characteristics. As the heir both to puritan Radicalism and to the French Revolution—for he cannot be understood purely in terms of English history—he retained many traditional left wing characteristics. Among these were a universalistic cosmopolitan sectarianism, contentiousness, a belief in doctrinal debate, and a capacity to project reform, inspired by a passionate desire to see a changed society. His life thus brings out the Whig Liberal and European contribution to Christian Socialism, and links it with those stalwarts of the faith who are fighting against racial discrimination in many parts of the world today. This contribution of Ludlow's to the Christian Socialism of 1848-54 is too often ignored. Yet having these radical puritan characteristics, he was curiously attracted by the traditional world, in France of Roman Catholic legitimism, in England of Church of England parson and squire—which found expression in the persons of Charles Kingsley and Tom Hughes. Contact with them, however, was only possible because they, too, were to some extent in revolt against their traditional way of life and uprooted from it, and inevitably turned to him for assistance. Nevertheless, in spite of their desire for a certain amount of

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Liberal emancipation, they still possessed the characteristics of traditional Toryism: its realist, insular, common-sense empiricism; its capacity for the team work which the intellectual Ludlow preached so ardently but found so difficult to practise; its unwillingness to discuss, let alone to formulate, answers to fundamental questions, but readiness rather to accept, as a matter of tradition and good form, an inherited creed, without examining it too closely. Central to the Christian Socialist movement was F. D. Maurice, like Ludlow an ex-dissenter, who, when Liberalism and Nonconformity seemed to be triumphing, did the most dissenting thing possible. He joined the Church of England and denounced all forms of factiousness.

Because he possessed this complex, the biography of Ludlow (this quaint yet capable, potentially ruthless but not unlikeable, lawyer, who made a most interesting career for himself out of his spare time activities), gives from a kind of still centre of nineteenth-century civilisation a circular panoramic view of the political, social and religious movements of the time. Those movements may still be viewed, only slightly transformed, in the world of today. Furthermore one of the significant developments of the twentieth century has been the acceptance by the rest of mankind of the mixed blessings bequeathed to it by nineteenth-century Europe. Ludlow's life gives us a means of reassessing those movements which have been most dynamically expansive, at a time when they were still hatching out of the European egg. This reassessment is an essential preliminary to a fresh manifestation of the Ludlow complex in a world partly transformed by Ludlow's initiative. Those interested in his peculiar complaint may wonder what form it would take today. Possibly Victorian Liberalism is now in the position which was in Ludlow's lifetime occupied by feudal Toryism, whilst State and municipal Socialism today are where Liberalism then stood. Ludlow's life and achievement, rescued from oblivion, may suggest new policies for our own time for those who are discovering new perspectives; for others it will at least recall the ideals of those Socialists who preceded the Fabians, and who have never quite received their due.

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He complains of me sadly for professing to be merely a digger. He says a christian ought to build and not always to be looking after foundations, which I doubt.

F. D. MAURICE on J. M. LUDLOW to CHARLES KINGSLEY (19 September 1852).

* * *

Be assured that sooner or later a storm will break upon you, you will suffer persecution, you will have to make sacrifices for the social faith which is in you. But with the trial you will find consolation. No friendships are so precious as those which are found in struggling for the right. Then will come dark days, when you will feel as if your efforts have been thrown away, when perhaps your friends will turn away to paths into which you cannot conscientiously follow them, when you are utterly crushed with the sense of your own impotence, folly, hypocrisy even. And then again will come a calmer time, when you will find that God has his own ways of doing His work, that no single good purpose you have ever had has been frustrated, altho' the result may be quite different from what you looked to, nay, that seeds which you had sown and thought to have been trodden out of all vitality have grown and borne fruit in unexpected places. How I have run on!

J. M. LUDLOW in a letter to HAROLD WESTERGAARD (13 December 1898).

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CHAPTER I

THE PARISIAN SCHOOLBOY

On 25 July 1830, Charles X, the last and most *ultra* of the Bourbon monarchs, issued the famous Ordinances of St Cloud, limiting the freedom of the press, dissolving the Chamber, and altering the electoral law so as to be sure of a strong legitimist majority. Obviously he was planning a *coup d'état* whereby he would not only make himself absolute, but also give back to the nobility and the Church the privileges they had enjoyed before the French revolution.

In 4 Rue Neuve Luxemburg, a street leading into the Rue Rivoli, there lived at that time a widow, Mrs John Ludlow, her three daughters and one son.[1] The girls were Eliza (1812-77) who lived and died in Paris, about whom Ludlow tells us very little; Maria (1814-59), his favourite sister; and Julia Ann (1816-33), an invalid who died young. The family had come to Paris only a few years before, and none of them as yet was very interested in French politics. On the 26th, the day after the *Ordinances* had been published, the noise of the clinking of glasses and hurrahing could be heard from a barracks opposite.[2] Perhaps the corps was already drinking to a new dynasty. Suddenly there came a cry down the street, 'à bas les Ministres'. On hearing it, their stout servant, Marguerite, who could recall scenes from the first French revolution, became intensely excited, jumped on a chair and exclaimed: 'Ah Madame, c'est comme ça que la Révolution a commencé'. She was right; a new uprising had begun. Charles X had not succeeded in returning to a bygone era. But were the horrors of the first revolution to be repeated? At first this seemed likely. The Ludlows heard the sound of artillery. They closed the *persiennes* and prepared to remain indoors for a long time, though their eyes were fixed on the window. The tension however was comparatively short

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lived. For the army deserted the obscurantist monarch. After 'the three glorious days' of street fighting, the people triumphed. The result was a far more moderate change than might have been expected. The Republicans and Democrats, who had done most of the shooting, felt compelled to give way before the moderates, who demanded the constitutional monarchy of the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe, who was now elected king by a parliament. The franchise was still very limited. This new régime lasted for eighteen years.

While the fighting was still going on John Ludlow, the very precocious nine-year-old son, had seen at the end of the street some regiments of the *garde royale* of King Charles X being driven back by a mob, 'most of them nondescript vagabonds, many of them mere boys'. At first he felt some sympathy with the king's troops. His father, Colonel John Ludlow, C.B. (1777-1821), who always led his men into action with only a walking stick in his hand, had had a distinguished military career in the Indian Army until his early death six months after his son had been born. Up till 1830 Ludlow himself had wished to follow in his footsteps. But if a soldier's fate was now as ignominious as that of these French troops, he argued, he never could do so.

Though he had little sympathy for the *garde royale*, Ludlow had even less reason to feel much enthusiasm towards those before whom it had retreated; for after the fighting was over, he tells us, 'a half drunken mob came down the Rue Neuve Luxemburg, a motley lot, armed with all sorts of weapons, muskets, swords, pistols and what not, all with tricolor cockades'. Suddenly one of them cried out in revolutionary fashion that the people ought to 'mettre le feu à la caserne', which was now deserted. Those who lived in the neighbouring houses, however, knew that the barracks were full of gunpowder, but dared not say anything for fear of being taken for royalists. Fortunately, Ludlow saw the situation transformed by the sudden appearance of a student of one of the polytechnic schools—many of the polytechnicians having taken part in the revolution. His uniform begrimed with powder, his sword by his side, a tricolor round

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his waist, this young man pushed his way into the midst of the rioters. By appealing to the better feelings of some and by threatening to draw the sword against others, he gradually persuaded the mob to disperse. His action thus saved the neighbourhood from being blown up, a striking example, Ludlow noted later in life, of moral force influencing brutish natures.

The alarm he had felt at the threatened action of the mob and his gratitude towards the polytechnician did not cause Ludlow, like some of his elders, to wish for no further change. He continued, though he would not have realised the fact, to belong to the more daring 'party of movement' rather than to the 'party of resistance' which soon came to power, satisfied that all that needed to be done had now been achieved and that life must return again to normal; for he remarked to his mother and sisters, who were considerably older than he was, that it was 'very stupid' now that the revolution was over. Though they ridiculed him for this statement, with an eye to the future he decided to draw up a blueprint for further changes. 'The French Revolution of 1830', he tells us, 'was followed very soon by the Belgian one, and this by a movement in various other countries so that governments were felt to be very rickety things.' The precocious nine-year-old boy took to 'state making', remaking the map of the world, but chiefly of Europe and America. 'I used to spend hours on the floor', he tells us, 'on my stomach over my atlas, pencil and paper in hand, carving out and modelling according to what seemed to be their natural boundaries states new and old'.

This brief description of Ludlow's behaviour during the 1830 revolution was symbolic of his subsequent career. He remained true to the decision he had made as a boy, to find an outlet for his soldierly character in civilian life during the comparatively peaceful nineteenth century, when tyrannies seemed to collapse without any strong external pressure, and strange movements among the hitherto neglected people were often of more significance than were charges on battlefields. His enthusiasm for redrawing the map of Europe according to the demands of the new nationalist movements, on the other hand, became less

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