

1st July, 1942.

Dear Hurst,

I am sorry that I did not prepare the ground a little by discussion before the last meeting of the External Committee. I hope that its deliberations were useful; but, to say the truth, I had wanted my "classification" to be a stalking horse for consideration of our general strategy. At the meeting I realised that this was too ambitious; I should have had to make an unconsciously long speech.

As I see it, the essence of our strategy is simple, and may be reduced to three or four points. As I see it too, we ought to feel very confident that, save in consequence of bad mishandling, we shall gain our main points.

But I am not convinced that all concerned are very clear about the strategy. I do not detect the pulse of confidence. Subordinate points are treated in a way which, if my view of the general aims were accepted, would be unaccountable. There is danger in all this. Great and difficult negotiations cannot be carried through with success without the greatest clarity about what exactly are our cardinal points and what flows from them.

I have accordingly written down my main ideas in the attached paper. When one has been thinking about a topic for some time and discussing it with others one may get a mistaken idea about the exact extent to which their minds have moved with one's own. I do not know how far Keynes would endorse what is of substance in the attached, or how far the Treasury would, or how far your committee as a whole would.

If there is sufficient agreement, I myself feel

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that a document on these lines should be drafted by the appropriate person for the committee and ultimately (but soon) for Ministers, as a supplement to the Bible, so that the officials and Ministers concerned may come to think alike, and thereby to decide and act in harmony in all matters that are relevant, even if only indirectly, to the main issues.

We have in mind that the Bible with its wealth of argument and erudition has left a rather hazy impression on all except those concerned in its drafting. The preamble did indeed bring the issues together but rather from the point of view of eliciting the necessary authority than of expounding the central strategy.

The attached note is only a skeleton. I have left out many connecting arguments. I have tried to put this in such a way as to emphasize the vital conclusions and elicit latent disagreement, if that exists.

Copies to: Sir Richard Hopkins, B.C.S.
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Prof. Lionel Robbins.