

Correspondence

May 21st 1993

Dear Sir,

Thank you for printing Leon Stover's helpful piece in the 1992 *Wellsian* ['Wells's Communist Revision, Perestroika, and the New World Order']. There is little doubt that Professor Stover is right to stress Wells's debt to St Simon, but he overlooks the influence of a thinker who stands behind St Simon, Marx, Comte and many others - Joachim of Fiore (1145-1202).

According to Norman Cohn (*The Pursuit of the Millenium*), Joachim was the first student to try to interpret the Bible as a means of understanding History. Joachim divided History into three ages, or Kingdoms, separated by incubation periods. The Kingdom of the Father (Abraham to Elijah) was preceded by a period of incubation (Adam to Abraham). The Kingdom of the Father represented an age of fear and servitude. After another incubation period (Elijah to Christ), the Kingdom of the Son (Christ to St Benedict) featured faith and filial submission. Joachim thought that he was living in a third period of incubation, which would soon be followed by the Kingdom of the Holy Ghost, an age of love and freedom, in which everyone would be a contemplative, singing the praises of God.

The relevance of all this to Wellsian studies can hardly be overstated. In the film *Things to Come*, of which Professor Stover rightly stresses the importance, we have, for example: incubation period (Christmas 1940); Kingdom of the Father (war); incubation period (war becomes military stalemate, and the Basra regime gets started); Kingdom of the Son (liberating angels/airmen descend on Everytown); incubation period (the airmen set to work to exploit the world's resources rationally); Kingdom of the Holy Ghost (Everytown is transformed into a super-

welfare state, and Man challenges Nature by leaving his planet.)

The failure of Marxist Communism in Russia was probably inevitable, because Marx was a great Joachite (he saw History as the succession of feudal, capitalist and proletarian ages) and because Joachim was fundamentally a Western thinker (he was encouraged by three popes), whose thought, introduced by westernised propagandists, had little appeal to an Orthodox people such as the Russians, whose religion is not 'of this world' after the fashion of Latin Christianity.

I believe that this mode of thinking identifies Wells's major weakness as a political philosopher. He never saw that his doctrine of secular salvation evolved from Latin Christianity (the current religion of the West may be said to be a combination of Latin Christianity and scientific method), and that therefore it was never likely to attract non-Latin peoples. (The failure of the Wellsian UN to make sense to the inhabitants of Bosnia is a good recent instance.)

Yours faithfully,

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