

## The Efficient Mustapha Mond: Fordism, Capitalism, Totalitarianism

The shocking picture of the rigorously rationalized life in the future that emerges with the visit to the Hatchery and the lecture of the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (D.H.C.) on history remains to this day the most memorable aspect of *Brave New World*. Once Huxley has detailed the dehumanizing conditions he traces to Ford's assembly line, he turns his attention to Mustapha Mond, one of the seven World Controllers in charge of the highly Americanized London. It seems appropriate that the homogenized Fordian civilization should be governed by a totalitarian ruler. It is through this figure that Huxley examines the economic, political, and philosophical sources of the dehumanized future he imagines in such graphic terms. Addressed as 'his fordship, Mustapha Mond' (33) when he first appears during the D.H.C.'s lecture, Mond is unambiguously the representative of the industrial revolution Ford introduced with the assembly line and the Model T. Where his title ('his fordship') links him to Ford, his name conjures up economic and political associations intended to consolidate the standardizing impact of Fordism (as well as Taylorism). On the one hand, his first name alludes to 'a notorious seventeenth-century Turkish sultan' and, more recently, to 'Mustafa Kemal (Kemal Ataturk), president of Turkey since 1923' (430). For Meckier, this perhaps unexpected intrusion of the Orient into this Euro-centric novel can be explained as follows: 'Huxley feared a worldwide dystopia governed by sophisticated Western dictators wielding greater power than an oriental despot' (Meckier 430). Mond's first name thus draws attention to the political despotism that Huxley fears will arise with economic rationalization. His last name is French for 'world,' conjuring up the World Controller's political aspiration for global domination. But the name also alludes to the British industrialist Sir Alfred Mond, symbolizing the economic usurpation of politics the novel demonstrates. According to Meckier's research into the novel's genesis, Huxley had initially intended to caricature 'H.G. Wells and Sir Alfred Mond in the composite figure of Mustapha Mond because he considered both men proponents of antihumanistic rationalization – the reorganization of society on an allegedly more scientific, more efficient, more technological basis' (432–3). While Huxley did not visit the United States before the completion of *Brave New World*, he had 'toured Mond's Billingham plant for producing sodium and synthetic ammonia' (433). Although Ford as 'America's archetypal technocrat' (427) grew in metaphorical importance, Sir Alfred Mond remained a palpable target for Huxley's hostility to industrial capitalism.

The political impetus in the *Brave New World* is to ensure the economic control on which political power rests. As the D.H.C. stresses, the social engineering project is designed to adapt 'future demand to future industrial supply' (48). Compulsory production and consumption are carefully calculated so as to maintain an efficient equilibrium between input and output. Comparing the fictional Mond's attitudes with those expressed by Sir Alfred Mond, James Sexton indicates how much Huxley was indebted to the British industrialist who defined rationalization as follows: 'The application of scientific organization to industry, by the unification of the processes of production and distribution with the object of approximating supply to demand' (in Sexton, 93). What Huxley adopts from Mond's position is a 'fascination with rationalization and mechanization' that can be traced to the 'materialist legacy left by F.W. Taylor and Ford'

(89). But in Sir Alfred Mond, Huxley discovered a figure committed to rationalization not only as an industrial but also as a sociopolitical principle. For the historical as for the fictional Mond, rationalization presented itself as the solution to the 288

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threat of chaos. Faced with social turmoil and financial crises during the interwar years in Britain, Sir Alfred Mond responded by proposing an efficiently organized economic order: 'To Mond the solution to the failing market system was a growing rationalization of economic units – he hoped to see a kind of economic League of Nations, where industrialists could, effectively and co-operatively, shape the economic destiny of most of the world' (94). The emphasis on cooperation echoes Taylor's assumption that rational social agents, who are prepared to rationally pursue a rational purpose, would logically choose cooperation over competition. However, as Taylorism proved, this kind of cooperation easily deteriorates from embracing voluntary to taking on coercive forms. In 'Machinery, Psychology and Politics,' Huxley draws out the coercive dimensions of a society modelled on the logic of the factory. In a reference to Alphonse Séché, whose *La morale de la machine* (1929) he admired for its brutal frankness, he comments on the extrapolation from the factory to society at large in terms that apply directly to the conflation of economic and political power in the figure of the fictional Mond: the 'modern industrial State ... should be organized like a very efficient factory, or group of factories, with hierarchically graded experts in charge of every department and a single Henry Ford at the head to co-ordinate their activities and dictate the policy of the whole concern' ('Machinery' 749; in Sexton, 92). For Huxley, then, the economic and the political spheres are not incommensurate but continuous.