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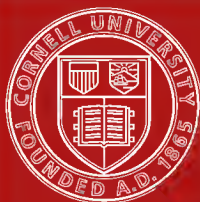
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FABIAN SOCIALIST SERIES. No. 3

Reprinted from Fabian Tracts, Revised

## SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

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FOUNDED 1883

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# SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

BY

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# SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

## I. THE DIFFICULTIES OF INDIVIDUALISM

By SIDNEY WEBB

*Reprinted, with minor changes,  
from the "Economic Journal" for June, 1891.*

OF all the intellectual difficulties of Individualism, the greatest, perhaps, is that which is presented by the constant flux of things. Whatever may be the advantages and conveniences of the present state of society, we are, at any rate, all of us, now sure of one thing—that it cannot last.

**The constant evolution of Society.**—We have learnt to think of social institutions and economic relations as being as much the subjects of constant change and evolution as any biological organism. The main outlines of social organization, based upon the exact sphere of private ownership in England to-day, did not "come down from Mount."

The last century and a half has seen an almost complete upsetting of every economic and industrial relation in the country, and it is irrational to assume that the existing social order, thus new-created, is destined inevitably to endure in its main features unchanged and unchangeable. History did not stop with the last great convulsion of the Industrial Revolution, and Time did

not then suddenly cease to be the Great Innovator. Nor do the Socialists offer us a statical heaven to be substituted for an equally statical world here present. English students of the last generation were accustomed to think of Socialism as a mere Utopia, spun from the humanity-intoxicated brains of various Frenchmen of the beginning of the nineteenth century. Down to the present generation every aspirant after social reform, whether Socialist or Individualist, naturally embodied his ideas in a detailed plan of a new social order, from which all contemporary evils were eliminated. Bellamy is but a belated Cabet, Babœuf, or Campanella. But modern Socialists have learnt the lesson of evolution better than their opponents, and it cannot be too often repeated that Socialism, to Socialists, is not a Utopia which they have invented, but a principle of social organization which they assert to have been discovered by the patient investigators into sociology, whose labours have distinguished the present century. That principle, whether true or false, has, during a whole generation, met with an ever-increasing, though often unconscious, acceptance by political administrators.

‡ Thus it is the constant flux of things which underlies all the "difficulties" of Individualism. Whatever we may think of the existing social order, one thing is certain—namely, that it will undergo modification in the future as certainly and steadily as in the past. Those modifications will be partly the result of forces not consciously initiated or directed by human will. Partly, however, the modifications will be the results, either intended or unintended, of deliberate attempts to readjust the social environment to suit man's real or fancied needs. It is therefore not a question of *whether* the existing social order shall be changed, but of *how* this inevitable change shall be made.

"Social problems."—In the present phase of acute social compunction, the mal-adjustments which occasion these modifications appear to us in the guise of "social problems." But whether or not they are the subjects of conscious thought or conscious action, their influence is

perpetually at work, silently or obtrusively modifying the distribution of social pressure, and altering the weft of that social tissue of which our life is made. The characteristic feature of our own age is not this constant evolution itself—for that, of course, is of all time—but our increasing consciousness of it. Instead of unconscious factors we become deliberate agents, either to aid or resist the developments coming to our notice. Human selection accordingly becomes the main form of natural selection, and functional adaptation replaces the struggle for existence as the main factor in social progress. Man becomes the midwife of the great womb of Time, and necessarily undertakes the responsibility for the new economic relations which he brings into existence.

Hence the growing value of correct principles of social action, of valid ideals for social aspiration. Hence, therefore, the importance, for weal or for woe, of the change in social ideals and principles which marks off the present generation of Socialists from the surviving economists and statesmen brought up in the "Manchester school." We may, of course, prefer not to accept the watchwords or shibboleths of either party; we may carefully guard ourselves against "the falsehood of extremes"; we may believe that we can really steer a middle course. This comforting reflection of the practical man is, however, an unphilosophical delusion. As each difficulty of the present day comes up for solution, our action or inaction must, for all our caution, necessarily incline to one side or the other. We may help to modify the social organism either in the direction of a more general Collectivism or in that of a more perfect Individualism; it will be hard, even by doing nothing, to leave the balance just as it was. It becomes, accordingly, of vital importance to examine not only our practical policy, but also our ideals and principles of action, even if we do not intend to follow these out to their logical conclusion.

**Individualism and Collectivism.**—It is not easy, at the present day, to be quite fair to the opinions of the little knot of noble-minded enthusiasts who broke for us the

chains of the oligarchic tyranny of the eighteenth century. Their work was essentially destructive, and this is not the place in which to estimate how ably they carried on their statical analysis, or how completely they misunderstood the social results of the industrial revolution which was falsifying all their predictions almost before they were uttered. But we may, perhaps, not unfairly sum up as follows the principles which guided them in dealing with the difficulties of social life: that the best government is that which governs least; that the utmost possible scope should be allowed to untrammelled individual enterprise; that open competition and complete freedom from legal restrictions furnish the best guarantees of a healthy industrial community; that the desired end of "equality of opportunity" can be ultimately reached by allowing to each person the complete ownership of any riches he may become possessed of; and that the best possible social state will result from each individual pursuing his own interest in the way he thinks best.

Fifty years' further social experience have destroyed the faith of the world in the validity of these principles as the basis of even a decent social order, and Mr. John Morley himself has told us (*Life of Cobden*, vol. i. ch. xiii. pp. 298, 303) that "the answer of modern statesmanship is that unfettered individual competition is not a principle to which the regulation of industry may be intrusted."

"It is indeed certain," sums up Dr. Ingram, at the end of his comprehensive survey of all the economic tendencies, "that industrial society will not permanently remain without a systematic organization. The mere conflict of private interests will never produce a well-ordered commonwealth of labour.\*"

| Modern Socialism is, accordingly, not a faith in an artificial Utopia, but a rapidly spreading conviction, as yet only partly conscious of itself, that social health and, consequently, human happiness is something apart from and above the separate interests of individuals, requiring to be consciously pursued as an end in itself; that the

\* Article "Political Economy," in *Ency. Britt.*, ninth edition, vol. xix., 1886, p. 382; republished as *History of Political Economy*.

lesson of evolution in social development is the substitution of consciously regulated co-ordination among the units of each organism for their internecine competition ; \* that the production and distribution of wealth, like any other public function, cannot safely be intrusted to the unfettered freedom of individuals, but needs to be organized and controlled for the benefit of the whole community ; that this can be imperfectly done by means of legislative restriction and taxation, but is eventually more advantageously accomplished through the collective enterprise of the appropriate administrative unit in each case ; and that the best government is accordingly that which can safely and successfully administer most.

**The new pressure for Social Reform.**—But although the principles of Individualism have long been tacitly abandoned by our public men, they have remained, until quite recently, enshrined in the imagination of the middle class citizen and the journalist. Their rapid supersession in these days, by principles essentially Socialist, is due to the prominence now given to “social problems,” and to the failure of Individualism to offer any practicable solution of these. The problems are not in themselves new ; they are not even more acute or pressing than of yore ; but the present generation is less disposed than its predecessors to acquiesce in their insolubility. This increasing social compunction in the presence of industrial disease and social misery is the inevitable result of the advent of political democracy. The power to initiate reforms is now rapidly passing into the hands of those who themselves directly suffer from the evils to be removed ; and it is therefore not to be wondered at that social reorganization is a subject of much more vital interest to the proletarian politicians of to-day than it can ever have been to the University professors or Whig proprietors of the past.

Now the main “difficulties” of the existing social order, with which Individualist principles fail to deal, are those

\* See Professor Huxley's pregnant declaration to this effect in the *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1888. Compare D. G. Ritchie's *Darwinism and Politics*.

immediately connected with the administration of industry and the distribution of wealth. To summarize these difficulties before examining them, we may say that the Socialist asserts that the system of private property in the means of production permits and even promotes an extreme inequality in the distribution of the annual product of the united labours of the community. This distribution results in excess in the hands of a small class, balanced by positive privation at the other end of the social scale. An inevitable corollary of this unequal distribution is wrong production, both of commodities and of human beings; the preparation of senseless luxuries whilst there is need for more bread, and the breeding of degenerate hordes of a demoralized "residuum" unfit for social life. This evil inequality and disastrous malproduction are enabled to continue through the individual ownership of the instruments of industry, one inevitable accompaniment of which is the continuance, in the commercial world, of that personal rule which is rapidly being expelled from political administration. The increasing integration of the Great Industry is, indeed, creating—except in so far as it is counteracted by the adoption of Socialist principles—a kind of new feudalism, based upon tenure, not of land, but of capital employed in the world-commerce, a financial autocracy against which the democracy sullenly revolts. In the interests of this oligarchy, the real interests of each community tend to be ignored, to the detriment of its capacity to hold its own in the race struggle—that competition between communities rather than between individuals in a community which is perhaps now becoming the main field of natural selection.

In examining each of these difficulties in greater detail, it will be fair to consider not only how far they can be solved by the existing order, and in what way they are actually being dealt with by the application of Socialist principles, but also what hope might, on the other hand, be found in the greatest possible development of Individualism. For to-day it is the Individualist who is offering us, as a solution of social difficulties, an untried and nebulous Utopia; whilst the Socialist occupies the

superior position of calling only for the conscious and explicit adoption and extension of principles of social organization to which the stern logic of facts has already driven the practical man. History and experiment have indeed changed sides, and rank now among the allies of the practical Socialist reformer. Factory Acts and municipal gas-works we know, but the voice of Auberon Herbert, advocating "voluntary taxation," remained, to the last, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

**Inequality of Income.**—Inequality in wealth distribution is, of course, no new thing, and it is unnecessary to contend that the inequality of the present age is more flagrant than that of its predecessors. The extreme depth of poverty of those who actually die of starvation is, indeed, obviously no less than before; and when thirty per cent of the five million inhabitants of London are found to be inadequately supplied with the bare necessities of life, and a fourth of the entire community become paupers at sixty-five, it would profit us little to inquire whether this percentage is greater or less than that during the Middle Ages. On the other hand, the wealth production of the community advances by leaps and bounds, being now far greater than ever it was, and greater than that of any other country of the Old World. The riches of a comparatively small number of the owners of our land and capital are colossal and increasing.

Nor is there any doubt or dispute as to the causes of this inequality. The supersession of the Small by the Great Industry has given the main fruits of invention and the new power over Nature to a comparatively small proprietary class, upon whom the mass of the people are dependent for leave to earn their living. When it suits any person having the use of land and capital to employ the worker, this is only done on condition that two important deductions, rent and interest, can be made from his product, for the benefit of two, in this capacity, absolutely unproductive classes—those exercising the bare ownership of land and capital. The reward of labour being thus reduced, on an average, by about one-third,

the remaining eightpence out of the shilling is then shared between the various classes who *have* co-operated in the production—including the inventor, the managing employer, and the mere wage-worker—but shared in the competitive struggle in such a way that at least fourpence goes to a favoured set of educated workers, numbering less than one-fifth of the whole, leaving four-fifths to divide less than fourpence out of the shilling between them. The consequence is the social condition we see around us. A fortunate few, owing to their legal power over the instruments of wealth-production, command the services of thousands of industrial slaves whose faces they have never seen, without rendering any service to them or to society in exchange. A larger body of persons contribute some labour, but are able, from their cultivated ability or special education, to choose occupations for which the competition wage is still high, owing to the small number of possible competitors. These two classes together number only one-fifth of the whole. On the other hand is the great mass of the people, the weekly wage-earners, four out of five of the whole population, toiling perpetually for less than a third of the aggregate product of labour, at an annual wage averaging at most £40 per adult, hurried into unnecessarily early graves by the severity of their lives, and dying, as regards at least one-third of them, destitute or actually in receipt of poor-law relief.

Few can doubt the fundamental causes of this inequality of condition. The abstraction from the total of over one-third of the product necessarily makes a serious inroad in that which the "niggardliness of Nature" allows us, and the distribution of the remaining two-thirds is, of course, itself fatally affected by the secondary results of the division into "two nations" which the private appropriation of rent and interest creates.

**Can we dodge the law of rent?**—Individualists may tell us of the good things that the worker could get for himself by thrift and sobriety, prudence and saving, but no economist will for a moment suggest that any conceivable advance in these virtues would remove the



fundamental inequality arising from the phenomenon of rent. The mere worker, *quâ* worker, is necessarily working, as far as his own remuneration is concerned, on the very worst land in economic use, with the very minimum advantage of industrial capital. Every development towards a freer Individualism must, indeed, inevitably emphasize the power of the owner of the superior instruments of wealth-production to obtain for himself all the advantages of their superiority. Individualists may prefer to blink this fact, and to leave it to be implied that, somehow or other, the virtuous artisan can dodge the law of rent. But against this complacent delusion of the philanthropist political economy emphatically protests. So long as the instruments of production are in unrestrained private ownership, so long must the tribute of the workers to the drones continue : so long will the toilers' reward inevitably be reduced by their exactions. No tinkering with the land laws can abolish or even diminish economic rent, however much it may result in the redistribution of this tribute. The *whole* equivalent of every source of fertility or advantage of all land over and above the worst in economic use is under free competition necessarily abstracted from the mere worker on it. So long as Lady Matheson can "own" the island of Lewis and (as she says) do what she likes with her own—so long as the Earls of Derby can appropriate at their ease the unearned increment of Bootle or Bury—it is the very emphatic teaching of political economy that the earth may be the Lord's, but the fullness thereof must inevitably be the landlord's.

There is an interesting episode in English history among James I's disputes with the Corporation of London, then the protector of popular liberties. James, in his wrath, threatened to remove the Court to Oxford. "Provided only your Majesty leave us the Thames," cleverly replied the Lord Mayor. But economic dominion is more subtle than kingcraft—our landlords steal from us even the Thames. No Londoner who is not a landlord could, under completely free Individualism, obtain one farthing's worth of economic benefit from the existence of London's ocean highway ; the whole equivalent of its industrial advantage

would necessarily go to swell the compulsory tribute of London's annual rental.

It has often been vaguely hoped that this iron law was true only of land, and that, in some unexplained way, the worker did get the advantage of other forms of industrial capital. But further economic analysis shows, as Whately long ago hinted, that rent is a genus of which land rent is only one species. The worker in the factory is now seen to work no shorter hours or gain no higher wages merely because the product of his labour is multiplied a hundred-fold by machinery which he does not own.

Whatever may be the effect of invention on the wages of one generation as compared with the last, it has now become more than doubtful to economists whether the worker can count on getting any more of the product of the machine, in a state of "complete personal liberty," than his colleague contemporaneously labouring at the very margin of cultivation with the very minimum of capital. The artisan producing boots by the hundred in the modern machine works of Southwark or Northampton gets no higher wages than the surviving hand cobbler in the by-street. The whole differential advantage of all but the worst industrial capital, like the whole differential advantage of all but the worst land, necessarily goes to him who legally owns it. The mere worker can have none of them. "The remuneration of labour, as such," wrote Cairnes in 1874 (*Some Leading Principles*, p. 348), "skilled or unskilled, can never rise much above its present level."

**The "Population Question."**—Neither can we say that it is the increase of population which effects this result. During the present century, indeed, in spite of an unparalleled increase in numbers, the wealth annually produced in England *per head* has nearly doubled. If population became stationary to-morrow, and complete personal liberty prevailed, with any amount of temperance, prudence, and sympathy, the present rent and interest would not be affected; our numbers determine, indeed, how bad the margin of cultivation will be, and this is of serious import enough; but, increase or no increase, the private

ownership of land and capital necessarily involves the complete exclusion of the mere worker, as such, from all the economic advantages of the fertile soil on which he is born, and of the buildings, machinery, and railways he finds around him.

**The "wickedness" of making any change.**—Few Individualists, however, now attempt to deny the economic conclusion that the private ownership of land and capital necessarily involves a serious *permanent* inequality in the distribution of the annual product of the community; and that this inequality bears no relation to the relative industry or abstinence of the persons concerned. They regard it, however, as impossible to dispossess equitably those who now levy the tribute of rent and interest, and they are therefore driven silently to drop their original ideal of equality of opportunity, and to acquiesce in the *perpetual* continuance of the inequality which they vainly deplore. It is immoral, we are told, to take any step, by taxation or otherwise, which would diminish even by a trifle the income of the present owners of the soil and their descendants for ever and ever. This cannot be done without sheer confiscation, which would be none the less confiscation because carried out gradually and under the guise of taxation.

The problem has, however, to be faced. Either we must submit for ever to hand over at least one-third of our annual product to those who do us the favour to own our country, without the obligation of rendering any service to the community, and to see this tribute augment with every advance in our industry and numbers, or else we must take steps, as considerately as may be possible, to put an end to this state of things. Nor does equity yield any such conclusive objection to the latter course. Even if the infant children of our proprietors have come into the world booted and spurred, it can scarcely be contended that whole generations of their descendants yet unborn have a vested interest to ride on the backs of whole generations of unborn workers. Few persons will believe that this globe must spin round the sun for ever charged with

the colossal mortgage implied by private ownership of the ground-rents of great cities, merely because a few generations of mankind, over a small part of its area, could at first devise no better plan of appropriating its surface.

There is, indeed, much to be said in favour of the liberal treatment of the present generation of proprietors, and even of their children. But against the permanent welfare of the community the unborn have no rights; and not even a living proprietor can possess a vested interest in the existing system of taxation. The democracy may be trusted to find, in dealing with the landlord, that the resources of civilization are not exhausted. An increase in the death duties, the steady rise of local rates, the special taxation of urban ground values, the graduation and differentiation of the income-tax, the simple appropriation of the unearned increment, and the gradual acquirement of land and other monopolies by public authorities, will in due course suffice to "collectivize" the bulk of the tribute of rent and interest in a way which the democracy will regard as sufficiently equitable even if it does not satisfy the conscience of the proprietary class itself. This growth of collective ownership it is, and not any vain sharing out of property, which is to achieve the practical equality of opportunity at which democracy aims.

**Why inequality is bad.**—Individualists have been driven, in their straits, to argue that inequality in wealth is in itself a good thing, and that the objection to it arises from the vain worship of a logical abstraction. But Socialists (who on this point are but taking up the old Radical position) base their indictment against inequality not on any metaphysical grounds, but on the plain facts of its effect upon social life. The inequality of income at the present time obviously results in a flagrant "wrong production" of commodities. The unequal value of money to our paupers and our millionaires deprives the test of "effective demand" of all value as an index to social requirements, or even to the production of individual happiness. The last glass of wine at a plutocratic orgy, which may be deemed not even to satisfy any desire, is economi-

cally as urgently "demanded" as the whole day's maintenance of the dock labourer for which its cost would suffice. Whether London shall be provided with an Italian Opera, or with two Italian Operas, whilst a million of its citizens are without the means of decent life, is now determined, not with any reference to the genuine social needs of the capital of the world, or even by any comparison between the competing desires of its inhabitants, but by the chance vagaries of a few hundred wealthy families. It will be hard for the democracy to believe that the conscious public appropriation of municipalized rent would not result in a better adjustment of resources to needs, or, at any rate, in a more general satisfaction of individual desires, than this Individualist appropriation of personal tribute on the labours of others.

**The degradation of character.**—A more serious result of the inequality of income caused by the private ownership of land and capital is its evil effect on human character and the multiplication of the race. It is not easy to compute the loss to the world's progress, the degradation of the world's art and literature, caused by the demoralization of excessive wealth. Equally difficult would it be to reckon up how many potential geniuses are crushed out of existence by lack of opportunity of training and scope. But a graver evil is the positive "wrong-population" which is the result of extreme poverty and its accompanying insensibility to all but the lowest side of human life. In a condition of society in which the *average* family income is not quite £4 per week, the deduction of rent and interest for the benefit of a small class necessarily implies a vast majority of the population below the level of decent existence. The slums at the East End of London are the corollary of the mansions at the West End. The depression of the worker to the product of the margin of cultivation often leaves him nothing but the barest livelihood. No prudential considerations appeal to such a class. One consequence is the breeding in the slums of our great cities, and the overcrowded hovels of the rural poor, of a horde of semi-barbarians, whose unskilled labour is neither

required in our present complex industrial organism, nor capable of earning a maintenance there. It was largely the recognition that it was hopeless to expect to spread a Malthusian prudence among this residuum that turned John Stuart Mill into a Socialist; and if this solution be rejected, the slums remain to the Individualist as the problem of the Sphinx, which his civilization must solve or perish.

**The loss of freedom.**—It is less easy to secure adequate recognition of the next, and in many respects the most serious "difficulty" of Individualism—namely, its inconsistency with democratic self-government. The Industrial Revolution, with its splendid conquests over Nature, opened up a new avenue of personal power for the middle class, and for every one who could force his way into the ranks either of the proprietors of the new machines, or of the captains of industry whom they necessitated. The enormous increase in personal power thus gained by a comparatively small number of persons, they and the economists not unnaturally mistook for a growth in general freedom. Nor was this opinion wholly incorrect. The industrial changes were, in a sense, themselves the result of progress in political liberty. The feudal restrictions and aristocratic tyranny of the eighteenth century gave way before the industrial spirit, and the politically free labourer came into existence. But the economic servitude of the worker did not disappear with his political bondage. With the chains of innate status there dropped off also its economic privileges, and the free labourer found himself in a community where the old common rights over the soil were being gradually but effectually extinguished. He became a landless stranger in his own country. The development of competitive production for sale in the world market, and the supremacy of the machine industry, involved, moreover, in order to live, not merely access to the land, but the use, in addition, of increasingly large masses of capital—at first in agriculture, then in foreign trade, then in manufacture, and finally now also in distributive industries. The mere worker became steadily less and less industrially independent as his political free-

dom increased. From a self-governing producing unit he passed into a mere item in a vast industrial army over the organization and direction of which he had no control. He was free, but free only to choose to which master he would sell his labour—free only to decide from which proprietor he would beg that access to the new instruments of production without which he could not exist.

In an age of the Small Industry there was much to be said for the view that the greatest possible personal freedom was to be obtained by the least possible collective rule. The peasant on his own farm, the blacksmith at his own forge, needed only to be let alone, to be allowed to follow their own individual desires as to the manner and duration of their work. But the organization of workers into huge armies, the directing of the factory and the warehouse by skilled generals and captains, which is the inevitable outcome of the machine industry and the world-commerce, have necessarily deprived the average workman of the direction of his own life or the management of his own work. The middle-class student, over whose occupation the Juggernaut Car of the Industrial Revolution has not passed, finds it difficult to realize how sullenly the workman resents his exclusion from all share in the direction of the industrial world. This feeling is part of the real inwardness of the demand for an Eight Hours Bill.

The ordinary journalist or member of Parliament still says: "I don't consult any one except my doctor as to my hours of labour. That is a matter which each grown man must settle for himself." We never hear such a remark from a working-man belonging to any trade more highly organized than chimney-sweeping. The modern artisan has learnt that he can no more fix for himself the time at which he shall begin and end his work than he can fix the sunrise or the tides. When the carrier drove his own cart and the weaver sat at his own loom they began and left off work at the hours that each preferred. Now the railway worker or the power-loom weaver knows that he must work the same hours as his mates.

It was this industrial autocracy that the Christian Socialists of 1850 sought to remedy by re-establishing the

“ self-governing workshop ” of associated craftsmen ; and a similar purpose still pervades the whole field of industrial philanthropy. Sometimes it takes the specious name of “ industrial partnership ” ; sometimes the less pretentious form of a joint stock company with one-pound shares. In the country it inspires the zeal for the creation of peasant proprietorships, or the restoration of “ village industries,” and behind it stalk those bogus middle-class “ reforms ” known as “ free land ” and “ leasehold enfranchisement.” But it can scarcely be hidden from the eyes of any serious student of economic evolution that all these well-meant endeavours to set back the industrial clock are, as regards any widespread result, foredoomed to failure.

The growth of capital has been so vast, and is so rapidly increasing, that any hope of the great mass of the workers ever owning under any conceivable Individualist arrangements the instruments of production with which they work can only be deemed chimerical.

Hence it is that irresponsible personal authority over the actions of others—expelled from the throne, the castle, and the altar—still reigns, almost unchecked, in the factory and the mine. The “ captains of industry,” like the kings of yore, are indeed honestly unable to imagine how the business of the world can ever go on without the continuance of their existing rights and powers. And truly, upon any possible development of Individualistic principles, it is not easy to see how the worker can ever escape from their “ beneficent ” rule.

**The growth of collective action.**—But representative government has taught the people how to gain collectively that power which they could never again individually possess. The present century has accordingly witnessed a growing demand for the legal regulation of the conditions of industry which represents a marked advance on previous conceptions of the sphere of legislation. It has also seen a progress in the public management of industrial undertakings which represents an equal advance in the field of government administration. Such an extension of collective action is, it may safely be asserted, an inevitable result of



political democracy. When the Commons of England had secured the right to vote supplies, it must have seemed an unwarrantable extension that they should claim also to redress grievances. When they passed from legislation to the exercise of control over the executive, the constitutional jurists were aghast at the presumption. The attempt of Parliament to seize the command of the military forces led to a civil war. Its control over foreign policy is scarcely two hundred years old. Every one of these developments of the collective authority of the nation over the conditions of its own life was denounced as an illegitimate usurpation foredoomed to failure. Every one of them is still being resisted in countries less advanced in political development. In England, where all these rights are admitted, each of them inconsistent with the "complete personal liberty" of the minority, the Individualists of to-day deny the competence of the people to regulate, through their representative committees, national or local, the conditions under which they work and live. Although the tyranny which keeps the railwayman away from his home for seventeen hours a day is not the tyranny of king or priest or noble, he feels that it is tyranny all the same, and seeks to curb it in the way his fathers took.

The captains of war have been reduced to the position of salaried officers acting for public ends under public control; and the art of war has not decayed. In a similar way the captains of industry are gradually being deposed from their independent commands, and turned into salaried servants of the public. Nearly all the railways of the world, outside of America and the United Kingdom, are managed in this way. The Belgian Government works its own line of passenger steamers. The Paris Municipal Council opens public bakeries. The Glasgow Town Council runs its own common lodging houses. Everywhere, schools, waterworks, gasworks, tramways, dwellings for the people, and many other forms of capital are passing from individual into collective control. And there is no contrary movement. No community which has once "municipalized" any public service ever retraces its steps or reverses its action.

Such is the answer that is actually being given to this difficulty of Individualism. Everywhere the workman is coming to understand that it is practically hopeless for him, either individually or co-operatively, to own the constantly growing mass of capital by the use of which he lives. Either we must, under what is called "complete personal freedom," acquiesce in the personal rule of the capitalist, tempered only by enlightened self-interest and the "gift of sympathy," or we must substitute for it, as we did for the royal authority, the collective rule of the whole community. The decision is scarcely doubtful. And hence we have on all sides, what to the Individualist is the most incomprehensible of phenomena, the expansion of the sphere of government in the interests of liberty itself. Socialism is, indeed, nothing but the extension of democratic self-government from the political to the industrial world, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that it is an inevitable outcome of the joint effects of the economic and political revolutions of the past century.

**Competition.**—Individualists often take refuge in a faith that the extension of the proprietary class, and the competition of its members, will always furnish an adequate safeguard against the tyranny of any one of them. But the monopoly of which the democracy is here impatient is not that of any single individual, but that of the class itself. What the workers are objecting to is, not the rise of any industrial Buonaparte financially domineering the whole earth—though American experience makes even this less improbable than it once was—but the creation of a new feudal system of industry, the domination of the mass of ordinary workers by a hierarchy of property owners, who compete, it is true, among themselves, but who are nevertheless able, as a class, to preserve a very real control over the lives of those who depend upon their own daily labour.

Moreover, competition, where it still exists, is in itself one of the Individualist's difficulties, resulting, under a system of unequal incomes, not merely in the production, as we have seen, of the wrong commodities, but also of

their production in the wrong way and for the wrong ends. The whole range of the present competitive Individualism manifestly tends, indeed, to the glorification, not of honest personal service, but of the pursuit of personal gain—not the production of wealth, but the obtaining of riches. The inevitable outcome is the apotheosis, not of social service, but of successful financial speculation, which is already the special bane of the American civilization. With it comes inevitably a demoralization of personal character, a coarsening of moral fibre, and a hideous lack of taste.

**The lesson of Evolution.**—This, indeed, is the lesson which economics brings to ethics. The “fittest to survive” is not necessarily the best, but much more probably he who takes the fullest possible advantage of the conditions of the struggle, heedless of the result to his rivals. Indeed, the social consequences of complete personal liberty in the struggle for existence have been so appalling that the principle has had necessarily to be abandoned. It is now generally admitted to be a primary duty of government to prescribe the plane on which it will allow the struggle for existence to be fought out, and so to determine which kind of fitness shall survive. We have long ruled out of the conflict the appeal to brute force, thereby depriving the stronger man of his natural advantage over his weaker brother. We stop as fast as we can every development of fraud and chicanery, and so limit the natural right of the cunning to over-reach their neighbours. We prohibit the weapon of deceptive labels and trade-marks. In spite of John Bright’s protest, we rule that adulteration is not a permissible form of competition. We forbid slavery; with Mill’s consent, we even refuse to enforce a lifelong contract of service. We condemn long hours of labour for women and children, and now even for adult men, and insanitary conditions of labour for all workers.

The whole history of social progress is, indeed, one long series of definitions and limitations of the conditions of the struggle, in order to raise the quality of the fittest who survive. This service can be performed only by the Government. No individual competitor can lay down the

rules of the combat. No individual can safely choose the higher plane so long as his opponent is at liberty to fight on the lower. In the face of this experience, the Individualist proposal to rely on complete personal liberty and free competition is not calculated to gain much acceptance. A social system devised to encourage "the art of establishing the maximum inequality over our neighbours"—as Ruskin puts it—appears destined to be replaced, wherever this is possible, by one based on salaried public service, with the stimulus of duty and esteem, instead of that of fortune-making.

**The struggle for existence between nations.**—But perhaps the most serious difficulty presented by the present concentration of energy upon personal gain is its effect upon the position of the community in the race struggle. The lesson of evolution seems to be that inter-racial competition is really more momentous in its consequences than the struggle between individuals. It is of comparatively little importance, in the long run, that individuals should develop to the utmost, if the life of the community in which they live is not thereby served. Two generations ago it would have been assumed, as a matter of course, that the most efficient life for each community was to be secured by each individual in it being left complete personal freedom. But that crude vision has long since been demolished. Fifty years' social experience have convinced every statesman that, although there is no common sensorium, a society is something more than the sum of its members; that a social organism has a life and health distinguishable from those of its individual atoms. Hence it is that we have had Lord Shaftesbury warning us that without Factory Acts we should lose our textile trade; Matthew Arnold, that without national education we were steering straight into national decay; and, finally, even Professor Huxley taking up the parable that, unless we see to the training of our residuum, France and Germany and the United States will take our place in the world's workshop. This "difficulty" of Individualism can be met, indeed, like the rest, only by the application of what are essentially Socialist principles.

**Argument and class bias.**—These “difficulties” will appeal more strongly to some persons than to others. The evils of inequality of wealth will come home more forcibly to the three millions of the submerged tenth in want of the bare necessities of life than they will to the small class provided with every luxury at the cost of the rest. The ethical objection to any diminution in the incomes of those who own our land will vary in strength according, in the main, to our economic or political prepossessions. The indiscriminate multiplication of the unfit, like the drunkenness of the masses, will appear as a cause or an effect of social inequality, according to our actual information about the poor and our disposition towards them. The luxury of the rich may strike us as a sign either of national wealth or of national maladjustment of resources to needs. The autocratic administration of industry will appear either as the beneficent direction of the appropriate captains of industry, or as the tyranny of a proprietary class over those who have no alternative but to become its wage-slaves. The struggle of the slaves among themselves, of the proprietors among themselves, and of each class with the other, may be to us “the beneficent private war which makes one man strive to climb on the shoulders of another and remain there” (Sir Henry Maine, *Popular Government*, pp. 49, 50); or it may loom to us, out of the blood and tears and misery of the strife, as a horrible remnant of the barbarism from which man has half risen since

*“ We dined, as a rule, on each other :  
What matter ? the toughest survived.”*

That survival from an obsolescent form of the struggle for existence may seem the best guarantee for the continuance of the community and the race; or it may, on the other hand, appear a suicidal internecine conflict, as fatal as that between the belly and the members. All through the tale two views are possible, and we shall take the one or the other according to our knowledge and temperament.

This power of prepossession and unconscious bias con-

stitutes, indeed, the special difficulty of the Individualists of to-day. Aristotle found it easy to convince himself and his friends that slavery was absolutely necessary to civilization. The Liberty and Property Defence League has the more difficult task of convincing, not the proprietary class, but our modern slaves, who are electors, and into whose control the executive power of the community is more and more falling. And in this task the Individualists receive ever less and less help from the chief executive officers of the nation. Those who have forced directly upon their notice the larger aspects of the problem, those who are directly responsible for the collective interests of the community, can now hardly avoid, whether they like it or not, taking the Socialist view. Each Minister of State protests against Socialism in the abstract, but every decision that he gives in his own department leans more and more away from the Individualist side.

**Socialism and liberty.**—Some persons may object that this gradual expansion of the collective administration of the nation's life cannot fairly be styled a Socialistic development, and that the name ought to be refused to everything but a complete system of society on a Communist basis. But whatever Socialism may have meant in the past, its real significance now is the steady expansion of representative self-government into the industrial sphere. This industrial democracy it is, and not any ingenious Utopia, with which Individualists, if they desire to make any effectual resistance to the substitution of collective for individual will, must attempt to deal. Most political students are, indeed, now prepared to agree with the Socialist that our restrictive laws and municipal Socialism, so far as these have yet gone, do, as a matter of fact, secure a greater well-being and general freedom than that system of complete personal liberty, of which the "sins of legislators" have deprived us. The sacred name of liberty is invoked, by both parties, and the question at issue is merely one of method. As each "difficulty" of the present social order presents itself for solution, the Socialist points to the experience of all advanced industrial

countries, and urges that personal freedom can be obtained by the great mass of the people only by their substituting democratic self-government in the industrial world for that personal power which the Industrial Revolution has placed in the hands of the proprietary class. His opponents regard individual liberty as inconsistent with collective control, and accordingly resist any extension of this "higher freedom" of collective life. Their main difficulty is the advance of democracy, ever more and more claiming to extend itself into the field of industry. To all objections, fears, doubts, and difficulties, as to the impracticability of doing in the industrial what has already been done in the political world, the democratic answer is, "*solvitur ambulando*"; only that is done at any time which is proved to be then and there practicable; only such advance is made as the progress in the sense of public duty permits. But that progress is both our hope and our real aim: the development of individual character is the Socialist's "odd trick," for the sake of which he seeks to win all others.

¶ Industrial democracy must therefore necessarily be gradual in its development, and cannot for long ages be absolutely complete. The time may never arrive, even as regards material things, when individual is entirely merged in collective ownership or control, but it is matter of common observation that every attempt to grapple with the "difficulties" of our existing civilization brings us nearer to that goal.

## A FOREWORD

THE following essay was read to a meeting of the Fabian Society on the 16th October, 1891. It has circulated ever since as a Fabian Tract, and is reprinted here without any substantial modification of the argument. I have added, perhaps, a dozen sentences, and omitted a dozen more, referring to events which have lost their interest or been forgotten: otherwise it stands as it did. I had hoped to be able to claim that my essay had done its work as far as organized Socialism is concerned, because since 1891 Socialism all over Europe has become definitely constitutional and parliamentary, and is no longer confused with Anarchism by ordinarily well-informed and reasonably honest political journalists. But now that the middle classes are crowding into the Socialist movement, I find that another dose of the antidote to Anarchism is badly needed. The errors of Anarchism are thoroughly popular errors: the middle classes, little as they suspect it and indignantly as they would repudiate it, are saturated with these errors, which they call Individualism, Protestantism, French Revolution principles, and so forth. To them I recommend this reprint.

" The word Social-Democrat is used in these pages in its proper sense, to denote a Socialist who is also a Democrat. In England it has come to be used in a narrower sense, to denote doctrinaire Marxism and the characteristic propaganda of the Social-Democratic Federation. Whilst this transient misunderstanding lasts, my readers will have to allow for it by remembering that all Socialists who postulate democracy as the political basis of Socialism, including, of course, the members of the Fabian Society, are entitled to describe themselves as Social-Democrats.

G. BERNARD SHAW.

AYOT ST. LAWRENCE,  
26th December, 1907.



## II. THE IMPOSSIBILITIES OF ANARCHISM

BY BERNARD SHAW

**Anarchists and Socialists.** In many of the newspapers which support the existing social order, no distinction is made between Socialists and Anarchists, both being alike hostile to that order. In the columns of such papers all revolutionists are Socialists ; all Socialists are Anarchists ; and all Anarchists are incendiaries and assassins, thieves and libertines. One result of this is that the imaginative French or Italian criminal who reads the papers, sometimes declares, when taken red-handed in the commission of murder or burglary, that he is an Anarchist acting on principle. And in all countries the more violent and reckless temperaments among the discontented are attracted by the name Anarchist merely because it suggests desperate, thorough, uncompromising, implacable war on existing injustices. It is therefore necessary to remark at the outset that there are some persons abusively called Anarchists by their political opponents, and others ignorantly so described by themselves, who are nevertheless not Anarchists within the meaning of this paper. On the other hand, many persons who are never called Anarchists either by themselves or others, take Anarchist ground in their opposition to Socialism, just as clearly as the writers with whom I shall more particularly deal. They distrust State action, and are jealous advocates of the prerogative of the individual, proposing to restrict the one and to extend the other as far as is humanly possible, in opposition to the Social-Democrat, who proposes to democratize the State and throw upon it the whole work of organizing the primary industries upon which our lives and liberties depend, and without the ownership and control of which we must necessarily remain slaves to those who do own and control

them, thereby making the State the most vital organ in the social body. Obviously there are natural limits to the application of both views; and Anarchists and Social-Democrats are alike subject to the fool's argument that since neither collective provision for the individual nor individual freedom from collective control can be made complete, neither party is thoroughly consistent. No dialectic of that kind will, I hope, be found in the following criticism of Anarchism. It is confined to the practical measures proposed by Anarchists, and raises no discussion as to aims or principles. As to these we are all agreed. Justice, Virtue, Truth, Brotherhood, the highest interests of the people, moral as well as physical: these are dear not only to Social-Democrats and Anarchists, but also to Tories, Whigs, Radicals, and probably also to Moonlighters and Dynamitards. It is with the methods by which it is proposed to give effect to them that I am concerned here; and to them I shall now address myself.

**Individualist Anarchism.** The full economic detail of Individualist Anarchism may be inferred with sufficient completeness from an article entitled "State Socialism and Anarchism: how far they agree, and wherein they differ," which appeared in March, 1888, in *Liberty*, an Anarchist journal, then published in Boston, Mass., and still issued and edited by the author of the article, Mr. Benjamin R. Tucker. An examination of any number of this journal will show that as a candid, clear-headed, and courageous demonstrator of Individualist Anarchism by purely intellectual methods, Mr. Tucker may safely be accepted as one of the most capable spokesmen of his party.

"The economic principles of Modern Socialism," says Mr. Tucker, "are a logical deduction from the principle laid down by Adam Smith in the early chapters of his *Wealth of Nations*: namely, that labor is the true measure of price. From this principle, these three men [Josiah Warren, Proudhon, and Marx] deduced 'that the natural wage of labor is its product.'"

Now the Socialist who is unwary enough to accept this

economic position will presently find himself logically committed to the Whig doctrine of *laissez-faire*. To this Mr. Tucker will not object. He may say, "Why not? *Laissez-faire* is exactly what we want. Destroy the money monopoly, the tariff monopoly, and the patent monopoly. Enforce then only those land titles which rest on personal occupancy or cultivation; and the social problem of how to secure to each worker the product of his own labor will be solved simply by everyone minding his own business."

Perhaps I had better give Mr. Tucker's own words to justify my paraphrase:—

"Second in importance comes the land monopoly, the evil effects of which are seen principally in exclusively agricultural countries, like Ireland. This monopoly consists in the enforcement by government of land titles which do not rest on personal occupancy and cultivation. It was obvious to Warren and Proudhon that as soon as individuals should no longer be protected by their fellows in anything but personal occupation and cultivation of land, ground rent would disappear, and so usury have one less leg to stand on." Mr. Tucker adds, in an article entitled "A Singular Misunderstanding," in *Liberty* of the 10th September, 1892, "Regarding land, it has been steadily maintained in these columns that protection should be withdrawn from all land titles, except those based on personal occupancy and use." Also, "Nor does the Anarchistic scheme furnish any code of morals to be imposed on the individual. 'Mind your own business,' is its only moral law."

Let us see. Suppose we decree that henceforth no more rent shall be paid in England, and that each man shall privately own his house, and hold his shop, factory, or place of business jointly with those who work with him in it. Let every one be free to issue money from his own mint without tax or stamp. Let all taxes on commodities be abolished, and patents and copyrights be things of the past. Try to imagine yourself under these promising conditions with life before you. You may start in business as a crossing sweeper, shopkeeper, collier, farmer, miller,

banker, or what not. Whatever your choice may be, the first thing you find is that the reward of your labor depends far more on the situation in which you exercise it than on yourself. If you sweep the crossing between St. James's and Albemarle Streets you prosper greatly. But if you are forestalled not only there, but at every point more central than, say, the corner of Holford Square, Islington, you may sweep twice as hard as your rival in Piccadilly, and not take a fifth of his toll. At such a pass you may well curse Adam Smith and his principle that labor is the measure of price, and either advocate a democratically constituted State Socialist municipality, paying all its crossing sweepers equally, or else pitch your broom into the Thames and turn shopkeeper. Yet here again the same difficulty crops up. Your takings depend not on yourself, but on the number of people who pass your window per hour. At Charing Cross or Cheapside fortunes are to be made: in the main street at Putney one can do enough to hold up one's head: further out, a thousand yards right or left of the Portsmouth Road, the most industrious man in the world may go whistle for a customer. Evidently retail shopkeeping is not the thing for a man of spirit after Charing Cross and Cheapside have been appropriated by occupying owners on the principle of first come first served.

You must aspire then to wholesale dealing—nay, to banking. Alas! the difficulty is intensified beyond calculation. Take that financial trinity, Glyn, Mills, and Currie; transplant them only a few miles from Lombard Street; and they will soon be objects of pity to the traditional sailor who once presented at their counter a cheque for £25 and generously offered to take it in instalments; as he did not wish to be too hard on them all at once. Turning your back on banking, you meddle in the wheat trade, and end by offering to exchange an occupying ownership of all Salisbury Plain for permission to pay a rack rent for premises within hail of The Baltic and its barometer.

Probably there are some people who have a blind belief that crossing sweepers, The Baltic, Lombard Street, and

the like, are too utterly of the essence of the present system to survive the introduction of Anarchism. They will tell me that I am reading the conditions of the present into the future. Against such instinctive convictions it is vain to protest that I am reading only Mr. Tucker's conditions. But at least there will be farming, milling, and mining, conducted by human agents, under Anarchism. Now the farmer will not find in his perfect Anarchist market two prices at one time for two bushels of wheat of the same quality; yet the labor cost of each bushel will vary according to the fertility of the farm on which it was raised, and the proximity of that farm to the market. A good soil will often yield the strongest and richest grain to less labor per acre or per bushel than must be spent on land that returns a crop less valuable by five shillings a quarter. When all the best land is held by occupying owners, those who have to content themselves with poorer soils will hail the principle that labor is the measure of price with the thumb to the nose.

Among the millers, too, there must needs be grievous mistrust of Proudhon and Josiah Warren. For of two men with equally good heart to work and machinery to work with, one may be on a stream that will easily turn six millstones; whilst the other, by natural default of water, or being cut off by his fellow higher up stream, may barely be able to keep two pairs of stones in gear, and may in a dry season be ready to tie these two about his neck and lie down under the scum of his pond. Certainly he can defy drought by setting to work with a steam or electro motor, steel rollers, and all the latest contrivances; yet, after all his outlay, he will not be able to get a penny a sack more for his stuff than his competitor, to whose water-wheel Nature is gratuitously putting her shoulder. "Competition everywhere and always" of his unaided strength against that of his rival he might endure; but to fight naked against one armed with the winds and waves (for there are windmills as well as watermills) is no sound justice, though it be sound Anarchism.

And how would occupying ownership of mines work, when it is an easier matter to get prime Wallsend and Silk-

stone out of one mine than to get slates and steam fuel out of another, even after twenty years preliminary shaft-sinking? Would Mr. Tucker, if he had on sale from a rich mine some Silkstone that had only cost half as much labor as steam coal from a relatively poor one, boldly announce: "Prices this day: Prime Silkstone, per ton, 25s.; best steam ditto, 50s. Terms, cash. Principles, those of Adam Smith: see *Wealth of Nations, passim*"? Certainly not with "competition everywhere and always," unless custom was no object to him in comparison with principle.

It is useless to multiply instances. There is only one country in which every square foot of land is as favorably situated for conducting exchanges, and as richly endowed by nature for production, as any other square foot; and the name of that country is Utopia. In Utopia alone, therefore, would occupying ownership be just. In England, America, and other places rashly created without consulting the Anarchists, Nature is all caprice and injustice in dealing with Labor. Here you scratch her with a spade; and earth's increase and foison plenty are added to you. On the other side of the hedge twenty steam-diggers will not extort a turnip from her. Still less adapted to Anarchism than the fields and mines is the crowded city. The distributor flourishes where men love to congregate: his work is to bring commodities to men; but here the men bring themselves to the commodities. Remove your distributor a mile, and his carts and travellers must scour the country for customers. Nobody knows this better than the landlords. Up High Street, down Low Street, over the bridge and into Crow Street, the toilers may sweat equally for equal wages; but their product varies; and the ground rents vary with the product. Competition levels down the share kept by the worker as it levels up the hours of his labor; and the surplus, high or low according to the fertility of the soil or convenience of the site, goes as high rent or low rent, but always in the long run rack rent, to the idle owner of the land.

Now Mr. Tucker's remedy for idle landlordism is to make the occupier—the actual worker—the owner. Obviously the effect would be, not to abolish his advantage

over his less favorably circumstanced competitors, but simply to authorize him to put it into his own pocket instead of handing it over to a landlord. He would then, it is true, be (as far as his place of business was concerned) a worker instead of an idler ; but he would get more product as a manufacturer and more custom as a distributor than other equally industrious workers in worse situations. He could thus save faster than they, and retire from active service at an age when they would still have many years more work before them. His ownership of his place of business would of course lapse in favor of his successor the instant he retired. How would the rest of the community decide who was to be the successor ? Would they toss up for it or fight for it ? Or would he be allowed to nominate his heir ? in which case he would either nominate his son or sell his nomination for a large fine.

Again, his retirement from his place of business would leave him still in possession, as occupying owner, of his private residence ; and this might be of exceptional or even unique desirability in point of situation. It might, for instance, be built on Richmond Hill, and command from its windows a beautiful view of the Thames valley. Now Richmond Hill will not hold all the people who would rather live there than in the Essex marshes. It is easy to say, Let the occupier be the owner ; but the question is, Who is to be the occupier ? Suppose it were settled by drawing lots, what would prevent the winner from selling his privilege for its full (unearned) value under free exchange and omnipresent competition ? To such problems as these, Individualist Anarchism offers no solution. It theorizes throughout on the assumption that one place in a country is as good as another.

Under a system of occupying ownership, rent would exist in its primary form of an excess of the prices of articles over the expenses of producing them, thus enabling owners of superior land to get more for their products than cost price, and to sell their occupancy for the capital value of the rent. If, for example, the worst land worth using were only one-third as productive as the best land, then the owner-occupiers of that best land would

get in the market the labor cost of their wares three times over. This 200 per cent premium would be just as truly ground rent as if it were paid openly as such to the Duke of Bedford or the Astors; and the occupancy could be sold as easily as any stock yielding the same dividend.

It may be asked why prices must go up to the expenses of production on the very worst land. Why not ascertain and charge the average cost of production, taking good and bad land together? Simply because nothing but Socialism can put the good and bad lands into the same ownership, and their accounts into the same ledger. Under Anarchism, with the good and bad lands in separate competing hands, nothing short of the maximum labor cost would repay the owners of the worst land. In fact, the worst land would not be cultivated until the price had risen. The process would be as follows. Suppose the need of the population for wheat were more than satisfied by crops raised from the best available land only. Free competition in wheat-producing would then bring the price down to the labor cost or expenses of production; and no inferior land would be cultivated. Now suppose an increase of population sufficient to overtax the wheat-supplying capacity of the best land. The supply falling short of the demand, the price of wheat would rise. When it had risen to the labor cost of production from land one degree inferior to the best, it would be worth while to cultivate that inferior land. When that new source came to be overtaxed by the still growing population, the price would rise again, until it would repay the cost of raising wheat from land yet lower in fertility than the second grade. But these descents would in nowise diminish the fertility of the best land, from which wheat could be raised as cheaply as before, in spite of the rise in the price, which would apply to all the wheat in the market, no matter where raised. That is, the holders of the best land would gain a premium, rising steadily with the increase of population, exactly as the landlord now enjoys a steadily rising rent.

English readers need not baulk themselves here because of the fall of agricultural rents in this country. Rent, in the economic sense, covers payment for the use of land



for any purpose, agricultural or otherwise ; and town rents have risen oppressively. Also, the normal progress of cultivation from rich to poorer soils is often upset by the discovery of new regions, and their commercial annexation by new railways and shipping lines ; so that English agricultural rents, after rising with the spread of English farming from good soil to bad, got knocked down again by the appearance of American and Russian wheat in the English market.

A much more puzzling discrepancy between the facts and the theory is presented by the apparent absence of any upward tendency in the prices of general commodities. However, an article may be apparently no less cheap or even much cheaper than it was twenty years ago ; and yet its price may have risen enormously relatively to its average cost of production, owing to the average cost of production having been reduced by machinery, higher organization of the labor of producing it, cheapened traffic with other countries, etc. Thus, in the cotton industry, machinery has multiplied each man's power of production eleven hundred times ; and Sir Joseph Whitworth was quoted by the President of the Iron and Steel Institute some years ago as having declared that a Nottingham lace machine can do the work formerly done by 8,000 lace-makers. In the production of pins, pens, etc., automatic machinery has led to such profuse production that single articles cannot be purchased, there being no coin small enough to effect the transaction. Suppose, then, that an article which cost, on the average, fivepence to make in 1850, was then sold for sixpence. If it be now selling for threepence, it is apparently twice as cheap as it was. But if the cost of production has also fallen to three-halfpence, which is by no means an extravagant supposition, then the price, considered relatively to the cost of production, has evidently risen prodigiously, since it is now twice the cost, whereas the cost was formerly five-sixths of the price. In other words, the surplus, or rent, per article, has risen from  $16\frac{2}{3}$  per cent to 100 per cent, in spite of the apparent cheapening. This is the explanation of the fact that though the workers were probably

never before so monstrously robbed as they are at present, it is quite possible for statisticians to prove that on the whole wages have risen and prices fallen. The worker, getting five shillings a week more than his father got, and having to pay only threepence where he formerly paid sixpence, forgets that the share of his threepence that goes to an idler may be much larger than that which went out of each of the two threepences he paid formerly.

As the agricultural industry is typical of all industries, it will be seen now that price does not rise because worse land is brought into cultivation, but that worse land is brought into cultivation by the rise of price. Or, to put it in another way, the price of the commodity does not rise because more labor has been devoted to its production, but more labor is devoted to its production because the price has risen. Commodities, in fact, have a price before they are produced: we produce them expressly to obtain that price; and we cannot alter it by merely spending more or less labor on them. It is natural for the laborer to insist that labor *ought to be* the measure of price, and that the *just* wage of labor is its average product; but the first lesson he has to learn in economics is that labor is not and never can be the measure of price under a competitive system. Not until the progress of Socialism replaces competitive production and distribution, with individual greed for its incentive, by Collectivist production and distribution, with fair play all round for its incentive, will the prices either of labor or commodities represent their just value.

Thus we see that "competition everywhere and always" fails to circumvent rent whilst the land is held by competing occupiers, who are protected in the individual ownership of what they can raise from their several holdings. And "the great principle laid down by Adam Smith," formulated by Josiah Warren as "Cost is the proper limit of price," turns out—since in fact price is the limit of cost—to be in practice merely a preposterous way of expressing the fact that under Anarchism that small fraction of the general wealth which was produced under the least favorable circumstances would fetch at least its cost, whilst all

the rest would fetch a premium which would be nothing but privately appropriated rent with an Anarchist mask on.

We see also that such a phrase as "the natural wage of labor is its product" is a misleading one, since labor cannot produce subsistence except when exercised upon natural materials and aided by natural forces external to man; nor can any human lawgiver ever settle the question of how much of the crop of a farm has been produced by the horses, how much by the ploughman, how much by the farmer, and how much by the agricultural chemist in his laboratory. And in any case the value in exchange of the product depends in nowise on the share taken by labor in its production, but solely on the demand for it in society. The economic problem of Socialism is the just distribution of the premium given to certain portions of the general product by the action of demand. As Individualist Anarchism not only fails to distribute these, but deliberately permits their private appropriation, Individualist Anarchism is the negation of Socialism, and is, in fact, Unsocialism carried as near to its logical completeness as any sane man dare carry it.

**Communist Anarchism.** State Socialism and Anarchism, says Mr. Tucker, "are based on two principles, the history of whose conflict is almost equivalent to the history of the world since man came into it; and all intermediate parties, including that of the upholders of the existing society, are based upon a compromise between them." These principles are Authority, the State Socialist principle, and Liberty, the Anarchist principle. State Socialism is then defined as "the doctrine that all the affairs of men should be managed by the Government, regardless of individual choice," whereas Anarchism is "the doctrine that all the affairs of men should be managed by individuals or voluntary associations, and that the State should be abolished."

Now most revolutionists will admit that there was a stage in the growth of their opinions when the above seemed an adequate statement of the alternatives before them. But, as we have seen, when the Individualist Anarchist proceeds to reduce his principle to practice, he

is inevitably led to Mr. Tucker's program of "competition everywhere and always" among occupying owners, subject only to the moral law of minding their own business.

No sooner is this formulated than its effect on the distribution of wealth is examined by the economist, who finds no trouble in convicting it of privilege, monopoly, inequality, unjust indirect taxation, and everything that is most repugnant to Anarchism. But this startling reverse, however it may put the Anarchist out of conceit with his economic program, does not in the least reconcile him to State Socialism. It only changes his mind on one point. Whilst his economic program satisfied him, he was content to admit that State Socialism was the only possible alternative to Individualist Anarchism: nay, he rather insisted on it, because his dislike of the State Socialist alternative was a strong incentive to the acceptance of the other. But the moment it becomes apparent that neither of them can abolish rent, the disillusioned Individualist Anarchist seeks a *tertium quid*, or third system which shall collect and justly distribute the rent of the country, and yet prevent the collecting and distributing organ from acquiring the tyrannous powers of governments as we know them. There are two such systems at present before the world: Communism and Social-Democracy. Now there is no such thing as Anarchist Social-Democracy; but there is such a thing as Anarchist Communism or Communist Anarchism. It is true that Mr. Tucker does not recognize the Communist Anarchist as an Anarchist at all: he energetically repudiates Communism as the uttermost negation of true Anarchism, and will not admit any logical halting place between thoroughgoing State Socialism and thoroughgoing Individualist Anarchism. But why insist on anybody occupying a logical halting place? We are all fond of shewing that on any given subject there are only two of these safe spots, one being the point of agreement with us, and the other some inconceivable extremity of absurdity. But for the purposes of the present criticism it will be more practical to waive such crude ratiocination, and concede that to deal

with Mr. Tucker without also dealing with Peter Kropotkin is not to give Anarchism fair play.

The main difficulty in criticizing Kropotkin lies in the fact that, in the distribution of generally needed labor products, his Communism is finally cheap and expedient, whereas Mr. Tucker's Individualism, in the same department, is finally extravagant and impossible. Even under the most perfect Social-Democracy we should, without Communism, still be living like hogs; except that each hog would get his fair share of grub. High as that ideal must seem to any one who complacently accepts the present social order, it is hardly high enough to satisfy a man in whom the social instinct is well developed. So long as vast quantities of labor have to be expended in weighing and measuring each man's earned share of this and that commodity—in watching, spying, policing, and punishing in order to prevent Tom getting a crumb of bread more or Dick a spoonful of milk less than he has a voucher for, so long will the difference between Unsocialism and Socialism be only the difference between unscientific and scientific hoggishness. I do not desire to underrate the vastness of that difference. Whilst we are hogs, let us at least be well fed, healthy, reciprocally useful hogs, instead of—well, instead of the sort we are at present. But we shall not have any great reason to stand on the dignity of our humanity until a just distribution of the loaves and fishes becomes perfectly spontaneous, and the great effort and expense of a legal distribution, however just, is saved. For my own part, I seek the establishment of a state of society in which I shall not be bothered with a ridiculous pocketful of coppers, nor have to waste my time in perplexing arithmetical exchanges of them with booking clerks, bus conductors, shopmen, and other superfluous persons before I can get what I need. I aspire to live in a community which shall be at least capable of averaging the transactions between us well enough to ascertain how much work I am to do for it in return for the right to take what I want of the commoner necessities and conveniences of life. The saving of friction by such an arrangement may be guessed from the curious fact that only specialists in

sociology are conscious of the numerous instances in which we are to-day forced to adopt it by the very absurdity of the alternative. Most people will tell you that Communism is known in this country only as a visionary project advocated by a handful of amiable cranks. Then they will stroll off across the common bridge, along the common embankment, by the light of the common street lamp shining alike on the just and the unjust, up the common street, and into the common Trafalgar Square, where, on the smallest hint on their part that Communism is to be tolerated for an instant in a civilized country, they will be handily bludgeoned by the common policeman, and haled off to the common gaol.\* When you suggest to these people that the application of Communism to the bread supply is only an extension, involving no new principle, of its application to street lighting, they are bewildered. Instead of picturing the Communist man answering the knock of the Communal baker, and taking what bread he needs (the rate collector presenting the bill at the end of the half year), they imagine him bursting obstreperously into his neighbor's house and snatching the bread off his table on the "as much mine as yours" principle—which, however, has an equally sharp edge for the thief's throat in the form "as much yours as mine." In fact, the average Englishman is capable of understanding Communism only when it is explained as a state of things under which everything is paid for out of the taxes, and taxes are paid in labor. And even then he will sometimes say, "How about the brainwork?" and begin the usual novice's criticism of Socialism in general.

Now a Communist Anarchist may demur to such a definition of Communism as I have just given; for it is evident that if there must be rates and taxes, there must also be some authority to collect them. I submit, however, that if any article—bread, for instance—be communized, by which I mean that there shall be public daily

\* Written in the 1887-92 period, during which Trafalgar Square was forcibly closed against public meetings by the Salisbury administration.

house-to-house distributions of bread, sufficient to satisfy everybody, which all may share without question or payment, wheat must be grown, mills must grind, and bakers must sweat daily in order to keep up the supply. There is no more difficulty about such a distribution than about the present house-to-house collection of dust; but the first condition of solvency for the enterprise is that every consumer of the bread shall contribute to its support as much as the bread he consumes costs to produce. Communism or no Communism, he must pay, or else leave somebody else to pay for him. Communism will cheapen bread—will save the cost of scales and weights, coin, bookkeepers, counter-hands, policemen, paupers, and other expenses of private property; but it will not do away with the cost of the bread and its storage and distribution. Now supposing voluntary co-operation and public spirit prove equal to the task of elaborately organizing the farming, milling, and baking industries for the production of bread, how will the voluntary co-operators recover the cost of their operations from the consumers? If they are given powers to collect the cost from the public, and to enforce their demands by punishing or distraining non-payers, then they at once become a State department levying a tax for public purposes; and the Communism of the bread supply becomes no more Anarchistic than our present Communistic supply of street lighting is Anarchistic. Unless the taxation is voluntary—unless the bread consumer is free to refuse payment without incurring any penalty save the reproaches of his conscience and his neighbors, the Anarchist ideal will remain unattained. Now the pressure of conscience and public opinion is by no means to be slighted. Millions of men and women, without any legal compulsion whatever, pay for the support of institutions of all sorts, from churches to tall hats, simply out of their need for standing well with their neighbours. But observe, this compulsion of public opinion derives most of its force from the difficulty of getting the wherewithal to buy bread without a reputation for respectability. Under Communism a man could snap his fingers at public opinion without starving for it. Besides,

public opinion cannot for a moment be relied upon as a force which operates uniformly as a compulsion upon men to act righteously. Its operation is for all practical purposes quite arbitrary, and is as often unrighteous as righteous. It is just as hostile to the reformer as to the criminal. It hangs Anarchists and worships Nitrate Kings. It insists on a man wearing a tall hat and going to church, on his marrying the woman he lives with, and on his pretending to believe whatever the rest pretend to believe; and it enforces these ordinances in a sufficient majority of cases without help from the law: its tyranny, in fact, being so crushing that its little finger is often thicker than the law's loins. But there is no sincere public opinion that a man should work for his daily bread if he can get it for nothing. Indeed, it is just the other way: public opinion has been educated to regard the performance of daily manual labor as the lot of the despised classes. The common aspiration is to acquire property and leave off working. Even members of the professions rank below the independent gentry, so called because they are independent of their own labor.

These prejudices are not confined to the middle and upper classes: they are rampant among the workers. The man who works nine hours a day despises the man who works sixteen. A country gentleman may consider himself socially superior to his solicitor or his doctor; but they associate on much more cordial terms than shopmen and carmen, engine drivers and railway porters, bricklayers and hodmen, barmaids and general servants. One is almost tempted in this country to declare that the poorer the man the greater the snob, until you get down to those who are so oppressed that they have not enough self-respect even for snobbery, and thus are able to pluck out of the heart of their misery a certain irresponsibility which it would be mockery to describe as genuine frankness and freedom. The moment you rise into the higher atmosphere of a pound a week, you find envy, ostentation, tedious and insincere ceremony, love of petty titles, precedences and dignities, flourishing rankly. In fact, the notion that poverty favors virtue was clearly invented



to persuade the poor that what they lose in this world they will gain in the next.

Kropotkin, too optimistically as I think, disposes of the average man by attributing his unsocialism to the pressure of the corrupt system under which he groans. Remove that pressure, and he will think rightly, says Kropotkin. But if the natural man be indeed social as well as gregarious, how did the corruption and oppression under which he groans ever arise? Could the institution of property as we know it ever have come into existence unless nearly every man had been, not merely willing, but openly and shamelessly eager to quarter himself idly on the labor of his fellows, and to domineer over them whenever the law enabled him to do so? Granted that he is not morally responsible for the iniquity of our present distribution of wealth; granted that if he had understood and foreseen the phenomenon of economic rent, he would never have allowed land and industrial capital to be privately appropriated; granted that the Socialist movement is a proof that now he sees the mischief he is seeking the remedy; granted that he voluntarily pays a good deal of Income Tax that he could evade if he chose; granted that if four-fifths of the population were habitually to do the utter worst in the way of selfishness that the present system invites them to do, society would not stand the strain for six weeks. So far we can claim to be better than our institutions. But the fact that we are too good for complete Unsociatism by no means proves that we are good enough for complete voluntary Communism. The practical question remains, How many men trained under our present system could be trusted to pay for their food scrupulously if they could take it for nothing with impunity? Clearly, if a very large proportion did not so pay, Anarchist Communism would go bankrupt.

The answer is that all the evils against which Anarchism is directed are caused by men already taking advantage of the institution of property to commit this very sin—consume their subsistence without working for it. What reason is there for doubting that many of them would attempt to take exactly the same advantage of Anarchist

Communism? And what reason is there to doubt that the community, finding its bread store bankrupt, would instantly pitch its Anarchism to the four winds, and come down on the defaulters with the strong hand of a law to make them pay, just as they are now compelled to pay their Income Tax? I submit, then, to our Communist Anarchist friends that Communism requires either external compulsion to labor, or else a social morality which the evils of existing society shew that we have failed as yet to attain. I do not deny the possibility of the final attainment of that or any other degree of public conscience; but I contend that the path to it lies through a transition system which, instead of offering fresh opportunities to men of getting their living idly, will destroy those opportunities altogether, and wean us from the habit of regarding such an anomaly as possible, much less honorable.

It must not be supposed that the economic difficulties which I pointed out as fatal to Individualist Anarchism are entirely removed by Communism. It is true that if all the bread and coal in the country were thrown into a common store from which each man could take as much as he wanted whenever he pleased without direct payment, then no man could gain any advantage over his fellows from the fact that some farms and some coal mines are better than others. And if every man could step into a train and travel whither he would without a ticket, no individual could speculate in the difference between the traffic from Charing Cross to the Mansion House and that from Hatfield to Dunstable. One of the great advantages of the extension under Socialism of our existing non-Anarchist Communism will undoubtedly be that huge masses of economic rent will be socialized by it automatically. All rent arising from the value of commodities in general use which can be produced, consumed, and replaced at the will of man to the full extent to which they are wanted, can be made rent free by communizing them. But there must remain outside this solution, first, the things which are not in sufficiently general use to be communized at all; second, things of which an unlimited

free supply might prove a nuisance, such as gin or printing ; and, thirdly, things for which the demand exceeds the supply.

The last is the instance in which the rent difficulty recurs. It would take an extraordinary course of demolition, reconstruction, and landscape gardening to make every dwelling house in London as desirable as a house in Park Lane, or facing Regent's Park, or overlooking the Embankment Gardens. And since everybody cannot be accommodated there, the exceptionally favored persons who occupy those sites will certainly be expected to render an equivalent for their privilege to those whom they exclude. Without this there would evidently be no true socialization of the habitation of London. This means, in practice, that a public department must let the houses out to the highest bidders, and collect the rents for public purposes. Such a department can hardly be called Anarchistic, however democratic it may be. I might go on to enlarge considerably on the limits to the practicability of direct Communism, which varies from commodity to commodity, but one difficulty, if insurmountable, is as conclusive as twenty.

It is sufficient for our present purpose to have shewn that Communism cannot be ideally Anarchistic, because it does not in the least do away with the necessity for *compelling* people to pay for what they consume ; and even when the growth of social conscience removes that difficulty there will still remain the question of those commodities to which the simple Communist method of so-called " free distribution " is inapplicable.

One practical point more. Consider the difficulty of communizing any branch of distribution without first collectivizing it. For instance, we might easily communize the postal service by simply announcing that in future letters would be carried without stamps just as they now are with them, the cost being thrown entirely upon imperial taxation. But if the postal service were, like most of our distributive business, in the hands of thousands of competing private traders, no such change would be directly possible. Communism must grow out of Collectivism,

not out of anarchic private enterprise. That is to say, it cannot grow directly out of the present system.

**Personal Liberty.** And now, must the transition system be a system of despotic coercion? If so, it will be wrecked by the element of natural anarchism in humanity. In 1888 a Russian subject, giving evidence before the Sweating Inquiry in the House of Lords, declared that he left the Russian dominion, where he worked thirteen hours a day, to work eighteen hours in England, *because he is freer here*. Reason is dumb when confronted with a man who, exhausted with thirteen hours' toil, will turn to for another five hours for the sake of being free to say that Mr. Gladstone is a better man than Lord Salisbury, and to read Mill, Spencer, and Reynolds' Newspaper in the six hours left to him for sleep. It brings to mind the story of the American judge who tried to induce a runaway slave to return to the plantation by pointing out how much better he had been treated than the free wage-negro of the Abolitionist states. "Yes," said the runaway; "but would you go back if you were in my place?" The judge turned Abolitionist at once. These things are not to be reasoned away. Man will submit to fate, circumstance, society, anything that comes impersonally over him; but against the personal oppressor, whether parent, schoolmaster, overseer, official chief, or king, he eternally rebels. Like the Russian, he will rather be compelled by "necessity" to *agree* to work eighteen hours than ordered by a master to work thirteen. No modern nation, if deprived of personal liberty or national autonomy, would stop to think of its economic position. Establish a form of Socialism which shall deprive the people of their sense of personal liberty, and, though it double their rations and halve their working hours, they will begin to conspire against it before it is a year old. We only disapprove of monopolists: we *hate* masters.

Then, since we are too dishonest for Communism without taxation or compulsory labor, and too insubordinate to tolerate task work under personal compulsion, how can we order the transition so as to introduce just distribution without Communism, and maintain the incentive to labor

without mastership? The answer is, by Democracy. And now, having taken a positive attitude at last, I must give up criticizing the Anarchists, and defend Democracy against Anarchist criticism.

**Democracy.** I now accordingly return to Mr. Tucker's criticism of State Socialism, which, for the sake of precision, had better be called Social-Democracy. There is a State Socialism—that of Bismarck; of the extinct young England party; of the advocates of moralized Capitalism; and of mob contemners generally—which is not Social-Democracy, but Social-Despotism, and may be dismissed as essentially no more hopeful than a system of Abstemious Gluttony or Straightforward Mendacity would be. Mr. Tucker, as an American, passes it over as not worth powder and shot: he clearly indicates a democratic State by his repeated references to the majority principle, and in particular by his assertion that "there would be but one article in the constitution of a State Socialistic country: 'The right of the majority is absolute.'" Having thus driven Democracy back on its citadel, he proceeds to cannonade it as follows:—

"Under the system of State Socialism, which holds the community responsible for the health, wealth, and wisdom of the individual, the community, through its majority expression, will insist more and more on prescribing the conditions of health, wealth, and wisdom, thus impairing and finally destroying individual independence, and with it all sense of individual responsibility.

"Whatever, then, the State Socialists may claim or disclaim, their system, if adopted, is doomed to end in a State religion, to the expense of which all must contribute, and at the altar of which all must kneel; a State school of medicine, by whose practitioners the sick must invariably be treated; a State system of hygiene, prescribing what all must and must not eat, drink, wear, and do; a State code of morals, which will not content itself with punishing crime, but will prohibit what the majority decide to be vice; a State system of instruction, which shall do away with all private schools, academies and colleges; a State nursery, in which all children must be brought up in common at the public expense; and, finally, a State family, with an attempt at stirpiculture, or scientific breeding, in which no man or woman will be allowed to have children if the State prohibits them, and no man or woman can refuse to have children if the State orders them. Thus will Authority achieve its acme, and Monopoly be carried to its highest power."

In reading this one is reminded of the danger of assuming that whatever is not white must be black. Mr. Tucker, on the ground that "it has ever been the tendency of power to add to itself, to enlarge its sphere, to encroach beyond the limits set for it," admits no alternative to the total subjection of the individual, except the total abolition of the State. If matters really could and did come to that I am afraid the individual would have to go under in any case; for the total abolition of the State in this sense means the total abolition of the collective force of society, to abolish which it would be necessary to abolish society itself. There are two ways of doing this. One, the abolition of the individuals composing society, could not be carried out without an interference with their personal claims much more serious than that required, even on Mr. Tucker's shewing, by Social-Democracy. The other, the dispersion of the human race into independent hermitages over the globe at the rate of twenty-five to the square mile, would give rise to considerable inequality of condition and opportunity as between the hermits of Terra del Fuego and those of the Riviera, and would suit only a few temperaments. The dispersed units would soon reassociate; and the moment they did so, good-bye to the sovereignty of the individual. If the majority believed in an angry and jealous god, then, State or no State, they would not permit an individual to offend that god and bring down his wrath upon them: they would rather stone and burn the individual in propitiation. They would not suffer the individual to go naked among them; and if he clothed himself in an unusual way, which struck them as being ridiculous or scandalous, they would laugh at him, refuse him admission to their feasts, object to be seen talking with him in the streets, and perhaps lock him up as a lunatic. They would not allow him to neglect sanitary precautions which they believed essential to their own immunity from zymotic disease. If the family were established among them as it is established among us, they would not suffer him to intermarry within certain degrees of kinship. Their demand would so rule the market that in most places he would find no commodities in the

shops except those preferred by a majority of the customers ; no schools except those conducted in accordance with the ideas of the majority of parents ; no experienced doctors except those whose qualifications inspired confidence in a whole circle of patients. This is not "the coming slavery" of Social-Democracy : it is the slavery already come. What is more, there is nothing in the most elaborately negative practical program yet put forward by Anarchism that offers the slightest mitigation of it. That in comparison with ideal irresponsible absolute freedom it is slavery, cannot be denied. But in comparison with the slavery of Robinson Crusoe, which is the most Anarchistic alternative Nature, our taskmistress, allows us, it is pardonably described as liberty. Robinson Crusoe, in fact, is always willing to exchange his unlimited license and puny powers for the curtailed license and relatively immense powers of the "slave" of majorities. For if the individual chooses, as in most cases he will, to believe and worship as his fellows do, he finds temples built and services organized at a cost to himself which he hardly feels. The clothes, the food, the furniture which he is most likely to prefer are ready for him in the shops ; the schools in which his children can be taught what their fellow-citizens expect them to know are within fifteen minutes walk of his door ; and the red lamp of the most approved pattern of doctor shines reassuringly at the corner of the street. He is free to live with the women of his family without suspicion or scandal ; and if he is not free to marry them, what does that matter to him, since he does not wish to marry them ? And so he rubs along, in spite of his slavery.

"Yes," cries some eccentric individual, "but all this is untrue of me. I want to marry my deceased wife's sister. I am prepared to prove that your authorized system of medicine is nothing but a debased survival of witchcraft. Your schools are child prisons, boy farms, where our future citizens are tamed and broken like performing beasts. Your universities stamp men as educated when they have lost all power to think for themselves. The tall hats and starched shirts which you force me to wear, and with-

out which I cannot successfully practice as a physician, clergyman, schoolmaster, lawyer, or merchant, are inconvenient, unsanitary, ugly, pompous, and offensive. Your temples are devoted to a god in whom I do not believe; and even if I did believe in him I should still regard your popular forms of worship as only redeemed from gross superstition by their obvious insincerity. Science teaches me that my proper food is good bread and good fruit: your boasted food supply offers me cows and pigs instead. Your care for my health consists in tapping the common sewer, with its deadly typhoid gases, into my house, besides discharging its contents into the river, which is my natural bath and fountain. Under color of protecting my person and property you forcibly take my money to support an army of soldiers and policemen for the execution of barbarous and detestable laws; for the waging of wars which I abhor; and for the subjection of my person to those legal rights of property which compel me to sell myself for a wage to an idle class, the maintenance of which I hold to be the greatest evil of our time. Your tyranny makes my very individuality a hindrance to me: I am outdone and outbred by the mediocre, the docile, the time-serving. Evolution under such conditions means degeneracy: therefore I demand the abolition of all these officious compulsions, and proclaim myself an Anarchist."

The proclamation is not surprising under the circumstances; but it does not mend the matter in the least, nor would it if every person were to repeat it with enthusiasm, and the whole people to fly to arms for Anarchism. The majority cannot help its tyranny even if it would. The giant Winkelmeier must have found our doorways inconvenient, just as men of five feet or less find the slope of the floor in a theatre not sufficiently steep to enable them to see over the heads of those in front. But whilst the average height of a man is 5ft. 8in. there is no redress for such grievances. Builders will accommodate doors and floors to the majority, and not to the minority. For since either the majority or the minority must be accommodated, evidently the more powerful must have its way. There may be no indisputable reason why it ought, and



any clever Tory can give excellent reasons why it ought not ; but the fact remains that it will, whether it ought or not.

And this is what really settles the question as between democratic majorities and minorities. Where their interests conflict, the weaker side must go to the wall, because, as the evil involved is no greater than that of the stronger going to the wall, the majority is not restrained by any scruple from compelling the weaker to give way. Indeed, the evil is decidedly less if the calculation proceeds by the popular method of always estimating an evil suffered by a hundred persons as a hundred times as great as the same evil suffered by only one. This, however, is absurd. A hundred starving men are not a hundred times as hungry as one starving man, any more than a hundred five-foot-eight men are each five hundred and sixty-six feet eight inches high. But they are a hundred times as strong a political force. Though the evil may not be cumulative, the power to resist it is.

In practice this does not involve either the absolute power of majorities or "the infallibility of the odd man." There are some matters in which the course preferred by the minority in no way obstructs that preferred by the majority. There are many more in which the obstruction is easier to bear than the cost of suppressing it. For it costs something to suppress even a minority of one. The commonest example of that minority is the lunatic with a delusion ; yet it is found quite safe to entertain dozens of delusions, and be generally an extremely selfish and troublesome idiot, in spite of the power of majorities ; for until you go so far that it clearly costs less to lock you up than to leave you at large, the majority will not take the trouble to set itself in action against you. Thus a minimum of individual liberty is secured, under any system, to the smallest minority.

It is true that as minorities grow, they sometimes, in forfeiting the protection of insignificance, lose more in immunity than they gain in numbers ; so that probably the weakest minority is not the smallest, but rather that which is too large to be disregarded and too weak to be

feared; but before and after that dangerous point is weathered, minorities wield considerable power. The notion that they are ciphers because the majority could vanquish them in a trial of strength leaves out of account the damage they could inflict on the victors during the struggle. Ordinarily an unarmed man weighing thirteen stone can beat one weighing only eleven; but there are very few emergencies in which it is worth his while to do it, because if the weaker man resists to the best of his ability (which is always possible) the victor will be considerably worse off after the fight than before it. In 1861 the Northern and Southern States of America fought, as prize-fighters say, "to a finish"; and the North carried its point, yet at such a heavy cost to itself that the Southern States have by no means been reduced to ciphers; for the victorious majority has ever since felt that it would be better to give way on any but the most vital issues than to provoke such another struggle. But it is not often that a peremptory question arises between a majority and minority of a whole nation. In most matters only a fragment of the nation has any interest one way or the other; and the same man who is in a majority on one question is in a minority on another, and so learns by experience that minorities have rights which must be attended to. Minorities, too, as in the case of the Irish Party in the English Parliament, occasionally hold the balance of power between majorities which recognize their rights and majorities which deny them. Further, much can be done by decentralization to limit the power of the majority of the whole nation to questions upon which a divided policy is impracticable.

In short, then, Democracy does not give majorities absolute power, nor does it enable them to reduce minorities to ciphers. Such limited power of coercing minorities as majorities must possess, is not given to them by Democracy any more than it can be taken away from them by Anarchism. A couple of men are stronger than one: that is all. There are only two ways of neutralizing this natural fact. One is to convince men of the wickedness of abusing the majority power, and then to make them virtuous

enough to refrain from doing it on that account. The other is to realize Lytton's fancy of *vril* by inventing a means by which each individual will be able to destroy all his fellows with a flash of his own electricity, so that the majority may have as much reason to fear the individual as he to fear the majority. No method of doing either is to be found in Individualist or Communist Anarchism; consequently these systems, as far as the evils of majority tyranny are concerned, are no better than the Social-Democratic program of adult suffrage with maintenance of representatives, payment of polling expenses from public funds, &c. Faulty devices enough, no doubt, but capable of accomplishing all that is humanly possible at present to make the State representative of the nation; to make the administration trustworthy; and to secure the utmost power to each individual and consequently to minorities. What better can we have whilst collective action is inevitable? Indeed, in the mouths of the really able Anarchists, Anarchism means simply the utmost attainable thoroughness of Democracy. Kropotkin, for example, speaks of free development from the simple to the composite by "the free union of free groups"; and his illustrations are "the societies for study, for commerce, for pleasure and recreation," which have sprung up to meet the varied requirements of the individual of our age. But in every one of these societies there is government by a council elected annually by a majority of voters; so that Kropotkin is not at all afraid of the democratic machinery and the majority power. Mr. Tucker speaks of "voluntary association," but gives no illustrations, and indeed avows that "Anarchists are simply unterrified Jeffersonian Democrats." He says, indeed, that "if the individual has a right to govern himself, all external government is tyranny"; but if governing oneself means doing what one pleases without regard to the interests of neighbors, then the individual has flatly no such right. If he has no such right, the interference of his neighbors to make him behave socially, though it is "external government," is not tyranny; and if it were they would not refrain from it on that account. On the other hand, if governing one-

self means compelling oneself to act with a due regard to the interests of the neighbors, then it is a right which the individual cannot exercise without external government, because the neighbors must have a say in the matter. Either way, the phrase comes to nothing; for it would be easy to shew by a little play upon it, either that altruism is really external government or that democratic State authority is really self-government.

Mr. Tucker's adjective, "voluntary," as applied to associations for defence or the management of affairs, must not be taken as implying that there is any very wide choice open in these matters. Such association is really compulsory, since if it be neglected affairs will remain unmanaged and communities defenceless. Nature makes short work of our aspirations towards utter impunity. She leaves communities in no wise "free" to choose whether they will labor and govern themselves. It is either that or starvation and chaos. Her tasks are inexorably set: her penalties are inevitable: her payment is strictly "payment by results." All the individual can do is to shift and dodge his share of the task on to the shoulders of others, or filch some of their "natural wage" to add to his own. If they are fools enough to suffer it, that is their own affair as far as Nature is concerned. But it is the aim of Social-Democracy to establish fair sharing in the inevitable labor imposed by the eternal tyranny of Nature, and so secure to every individual no less than his fair quota of the nation's product in return for no more than his fair quota of the nation's labor. These are the best terms humanity can make with its tyrant. In the eighteenth century it was easy for the philosophers and for Adam Smith to think of this rule of Nature as being "natural liberty" in contrast to the odious and stupid despotism of castes, priests, and kings—the detested "dominion of man over man." But we, in detecting the rashness of Adam Smith's trust in private property and *laissez-faire* as a recipe for natural liberty, begin to see that though there is political liberty, there is no natural liberty, but only natural law remorselessly enforced. And so we shake our heads when we see LIBERTY on the title-page of Mr. Tucker's paper, just as we laugh when we

see THE COMING SLAVERY on Herbert Spencer's Man and The State.

We can now fasten the threads of our discussion. We have seen that private appropriation of land in any form, whether limited by Individualist Anarchism to occupying owners or not, means the unjust distribution of a vast fund of social wealth called rent, which can by no means be claimed as due to the labor of any particular individual or class of individuals. We have seen that Communist Anarchism, though it partly—and only partly—avoids the rent difficulty, is, with the morals developed under existing Unsocialism, impracticable. We have seen that the delegation of individual powers by voting; the creation of authoritative public bodies; the supremacy of the majority in the last resort; and the establishment and even endowment, either directly and officially or indirectly and unconsciously, of conventional forms of practice in religion, marriage, medicine, education, food, clothing, and criminal law, are, whether they be evils or not, inherent in society itself, and must be submitted to with the help of such protection against their abuse as democratic institutions more than any others afford. When Democracy fails, there is no antidote for intolerance save the spread of better sense. No form of Anarchism yet suggested provides any escape. Like bad weather in winter, intolerance does much mischief; but as, when we have done our best in the way of overcoats, umbrellas, and good fires, we have to put up with the winter; so, when we have done our best in the way of Democracy, we must put up with the State.

In thus demonstrating the impossibilities of Anarchism, I have cast a net wide enough to catch more popular fish. For I have also demonstrated the final impossibility of current Conservatism and Liberalism. These also ignore the phenomenon of economic rent, and assume that industrious and sober men will thrive, and idle and dissolute ones starve, if only contracts are enforced and the peace kept by the police on the basis of private property. That error will kill any civilization in the long run, Anarchists or no Anarchists.

**The Anarchist Spirit.** I suppose I must not leave the subject without a word as to the value of what I will call the Anarchist spirit as an element in progress. Not that I would disarm the Anarchist debater by paying him compliments. On the contrary, when I have to deal with the gentlemen who declaim against all national and municipal projects, and clamor for the abolition of Parliaments and County Councils; who call for a desperate resistance to rent, taxes, representative government, and organized collective action of every sort; I always invite them to regard me as their inveterate opponent—as one who regards such doctrine, however sincerely it may be put forward, as at best an encouragement to the workers to neglect doing what is possible under pretext of waiting for the impossible, and at worst as furnishing the reactionary newspapers in England, and the police agents on the Continent, with evidence as to the alleged follies and perils of Socialism. But at the same time it must be understood that I do not stand here to defend the State as we know it. Bakounine's comprehensive aspiration to destroy all States and Established Churches, with their religious, political, judicial, financial, criminal, academic, economic, and social laws and institutions, seems to me perfectly justifiable and intelligible from the point of view of the ordinary "educated man," who believes that institutions make men instead of men making institutions. I fully admit and vehemently urge that the State at present is a huge machine for robbing and slave-driving the poor by brute force. You may, if you are a stupid or comfortably-off person, think that the policeman at the corner is the guardian of law and order; that the gaol, with those instruments of torture, the treadmill, plank bed, solitary cell, cat o' nine tails, and gallows, is a place to make people cease to do evil and learn to do well. But the primary function of the policeman, and that for which his other functions are only blinds, is to see that you do not lie down to sleep in this country without paying an idler for the privilege; that you do not taste bread until you have paid the idler's toll in the price of it; that you do not resist the starving blackleg who is dragging you down to his level

for the idler's profit by offering to do your work for a starvation wage. Attempt any of these things and you will be haled off and tortured in the name of law and order, honesty, social equilibrium, safety of property and person, public duty, Christianity, morality, and what not, as a vagrant, a thief, and a rioter. Your soldier, ostensibly a heroic and patriotic defender of his country, is really an unfortunate man, driven by destitution to offer himself as food for powder for the sake of regular rations, shelter, and clothing; and he must, on pain of being arbitrarily imprisoned, punished with petty penances like a naughty child, pack-drilled, flogged or shot, all in the name of "discipline," do anything he is ordered to, from standing in his red coat in the hall of an opera house as a mere ornament, to flogging his comrade or committing murder. And *his* primary function is to come to the rescue of the policeman when the latter is overpowered. Members of Parliament whose sole qualifications for election were £1,000 loose cash, an "independent" income, and a vulgar strain of ambition; parsons quoting scripture for the purposes of the squire; lawyers selling their services to the highest bidder at the bar, and maintaining the supremacy of the moneyed class on the bench; juries of employers masquerading as the peers of proletarians in the dock; University professors elaborating the process known as the education of a gentleman; artists striving to tickle the fancy or flatter the vanity of the aristocrat or the plutocrat; workmen doing their work as badly and slowly as they dare, so as to make the most of their job; employers starving and overworking their hands and adulterating their goods as much as *they* dare: these form the bulk of the actual living material of those imposing abstractions known as the State, the Church, the Law, the Constitution, Education, the Fine Arts, and Industry. Every institution, as Bakounine saw, religious, political, financial, judicial, and so on, is corrupted by the fact that the men in it either belong to the propertied class themselves or must sell themselves to it in order to live. All the purchasing power that is left to buy men's souls with after their bodies are fed is in the hands of the rich; and everywhere, from the

Parliament which wields the irresistible coercive forces of the bludgeon, bayonet, machine gun, dynamite shell, prison and scaffold, down to the pettiest centre of shabby-genteel social pretension, the rich pay the piper and call the tune. Naturally, they use their power to steal more money to continue paying the piper ; and thus all society becomes a huge conspiracy and hypocrisy. The ordinary man is insensible to the fraud just as he is insensible to the taste of water, which, being constantly in contact with his mucous membrane, seems to have no taste at all. The iniquitous conditions on which our social system is based are necessarily in constant contact with our ethical mucous membrane ; and so we lose our sense of their omnipresent meanness and dishonor. The insensibility, however, is not quite complete ; for there is a period in life which is called the age of disillusion, which means the age at which a man discovers that his generous and honest impulses are incompatible with success in business ; that the institutions he has revered are shams ; and that he must join the conspiracy or go to the wall, even though he feels that the conspiracy is fundamentally ruinous to himself and his fellow-conspirators. The secret of writers like Ruskin, Morris, and Kropotkin, is that they see the whole imposture through and through, in spite of its familiarity, and of the illusions created by its temporal power, its riches, its splendor, its prestige, its intense respectability, its unremitting piety, and its high moral pretension. But Kropotkin, as I have shewn, is really an advocate of free Democracy ; and I venture to suggest that he describes himself as an Anarchist rather from the point of view of the Russian recoiling from a despotism compared to which Democracy seems to be no government at all, than from the point of view of the American or Englishman who is free enough already to begin grumbling over Democracy as " the tyranny of the majority " and " the coming slavery." I suggest this with the more confidence because William Morris's views were largely identical with those of Kropotkin ; yet Morris, after patient and intimate observation of Communist Anarchism as a working propaganda in England, definitely dissociated



himself from it, and shewed by his sketch of the Communist folk-mote in his News from Nowhere how sanely alive he was to the impossibility of any development of the voluntary element in social action sufficient to enable individuals or minorities to take public action without first obtaining the consent of the majority.

On the whole, then, I do not regard the extreme hostility to existing institutions which inspires Communist Anarchism as being a whit more dangerous to Social-Democracy than the same spirit as it inspires the peculiar Toryism of Ruskin. Much more definitely opposed to us is the survival of that intense jealousy of the authority of the government over the individual which was the mainspring of the progress of the eighteenth century. Only those who forget the lessons of history the moment they have served their immediate turn will feel otherwise than reassured by the continued vitality of that jealousy among us. But this consideration does not remove the economic objections which I have advanced as to the practical program of Individualist Anarchism. And even apart from these objections, the Social-Democrat is compelled, by contact with hard facts, to turn his back decisively on useless denunciation of the State. It is easy to say, Abolish the State; but the State will sell you up, lock you up, blow you up, knock you down, bludgeon, shoot, stab, hang: in short, abolish you if you lift a hand against it.

Fortunately there is, as we have seen, a fine impartiality about the policeman and the soldier, who are the cutting edge of the State power. They take their wages and obey their orders without asking questions. If those orders are to demolish the homestead of every peasant who refuses to take the bread out of his children's mouths in order that his landlord may have money to spend as an idle gentleman in London, the soldier obeys. But if his orders were to help the police to collect an Income Tax (of not more than twenty shillings in the pound) on unearned incomes, the soldier would do that with equal devotion to duty, and perhaps with a certain private zest that might be lacking in the other case. Now orders of this kind come ultimately from the State: meaning, in this country, the

House of Commons. A House of Commons consisting of 660 gentlemen and 10 workers will order the soldier to take money from the people for the landlords. A House of Commons consisting of 660 workers and 10 gentlemen, will probably, unless the 660 are fools, order the soldier to take money from the landlords to buy the land for the people. With that hint I leave the matter, in the full conviction that the State, in spite of the Anarchists, will continue to be used against the people by the classes until it is used by the people against the classes with equal ability and equal resolution.

### III

## THE MORAL ASPECTS OF SOCIALISM

By SIDNEY BALL, M.A.

### Socialism and Character.

**M**ODERN Socialism, or Collectivism, is often regarded as a typical expression of the neglect, or even the denial, of the principle that in social reform "character is the condition of conditions." At first sight, it seems true that character has not been put in the foreground of Socialist discussion: its emphasis appears to be laid almost exclusively on machinery, on a reconstruction of the material conditions and organization of life. But machinery is a means to an end, as much to a Socialist as to any one else; and the end, at any rate, as conceived by the Socialist, is the development of human power and capacity of life. The quarrel with Socialists cannot be, then, that they mistake the means for the end, but either that they take a low or narrow view of human nature, or that the means they suggest will lower rather than raise the scale of human life.

**The evolution in modern Socialism.**—It is important that we should realize the nature of the development which has been at work in the conception of Socialism. If Socialism repeats itself, it repeats itself with a difference. If we fairly compare the Socialism of the earlier with that of the latter part of the century, we shall find that, however much they have in common, there is a sense in which the conception of Socialism is entirely modern. Socialism would not be the vital thing it is if it remained unaffected by the development of social and industrial experience and the general progress of scientific thought.

The context is different, and even when the language is the same the meaning is changed. The claim of modern Socialism to be "scientific" may be just or not, but it means by "scientific" such an economy as shall be on a line with the modern scientific treatment and conception of life. Its dominating idea is that of conscious selection in social life, or of the expression of practical economics in terms of quality of life. From the point of view of its alleged indifference to character the aims of modern Socialism may be described as an endeavour to readjust the machinery of industry in such a way that it can at once depend upon and issue in a higher kind of character and social type than is encouraged by the conditions of ordinary competitive enterprise. If it does, in a sense, want to make things easier, it is only for the worker, and not for the idler; and the problem with which it is concerned is not primarily a more or less of enjoyment, but a more or less of opportunity for development of character and individuality. Its criterion of economic machinery is simply—does it or does it not make for a greater amount and quality of life and character?

The older Socialism rested upon such ideas as "the right to live," "the right to work," "payment according to needs," the denial of "the rent of ability," "expropriation without compensation," "minimizing" or "materializing" of wants—all ideas of retrogressive rather than of progressive "selection." But it would not be too much to say that all these ideas are either silently ignored or expressly repudiated by modern Socialism. The "ideology" of the older Socialists has given way to a deliberately, and in some ways rigidly, scientific treatment of life. Modern Socialism recognizes the laws of social growth and development in setting itself against catastrophic impossibilism and the manufacture of mechanical Utopias; it recognizes the moral continuity of society in its consideration for vested interests; it does not base industrial organization on "the right to work" so much as on the right of the worker, not on "payment according to needs" so much as "payment according to services"; it recognizes the remuneration of ability,

provided that the ability does not merely represent a monopoly of privileged and non-competitive advantage; it is aware of the utility of capital, without making the individualist's confusion between the employment of capital and the ownership of it, between the productive and proprietary classes; it is not concerned about the inequality of property, except so far as it conflicts with sound national economy; it does not desire so much to minimize as to rationalize wants, and attaches the utmost importance to the qualitative development of consumption; and, finally, not to enumerate more distinctly economic developments, it recognizes "the abiding necessity for contest, competition, and selection," as means of development, when it presses for such an organization of industry as shall make selection according to ability and character the determining factor in the remuneration of labour.

**Socialism and competition.**—So far from attempting to eliminate "competition" from life, it endeavours to raise its plane, to make it a competition of character and positive social quality. The competition which takes the form not of doing one's own work as well as possible, but of preventing any one else from doing the same work—the form of competition, that is, in which the gain of one man is the loss of another—is of no social value. The only competition that can advance individual or social life is simply a corollary of co-operation; it implies the recognition of a common good and a common interest which gives to our "individual" work its meaning, its quality, and its value; and the further recognition that a competitor is also a co-operator. If a seeker after truth regards another seeker merely as a competitor, it is a sure sign that it is not truth he cares for; and we are only too familiar with the consequences of a system of industry which does not provide for the disinterestedness of all genuine production. The competition to get as much as possible for one's self is incompatible with the competition to get a thing done as well as possible. It is this kind of socially selective rivalry that Socialism is concerned to

maintain ; and the two kinds of competition belong, as Plato said, to two distinct " arts."

**Socialism affirms a standard.**—This is the meaning, for instance, of a " standard " as opposed to a " market " wage. The Collectivist policy of the " Union " wage for skilled, and a minimum wage for unskilled labour, is a deliberate preference of a form of competition which promotes efficiency over a form of competition which aims at (apparent) cheapness. Which is the most productive method of selection ? The Individualist policy results in the degradation of labour and the increase of burdens upon the State ; the Socialist policy, so far from favouring the weak, favours the strong, if weakness and strength are interpreted as relevant to social value ; it is a process of conscious social selection by which the industrial residuum is naturally sifted and made manageable for some kind of restorative, disciplinary, or, it may be, " surgical " treatment. The organization of dock labourers and the extension of factory inspection to sweated industries follow the same lines. Any such form of collective interference as the freeing of education, or the weakening of protected and non-competitive privilege, is in favour of the competition which is not simply a struggle for (unqualified) individual existence, but for existence in a society which rests upon the distribution of " rights " according to character and capacity. In this way it not only favours the growth of the fittest within the group, but also of the fittest group in the world-competition of societies. The whole point of Collectivism is the recognition by society of its interest as a society in a certain type of character and quality of existence. " Can there be anything better for the interests of a State," Plato asks, " than that its men and women should be as good as possible ? " It is just this social reference that explains the demand which Socialists make upon the organization of industry. Their whole quarrel with private competitive enterprise is that it does not give a qualitative form to the struggle for existence, and does not—or rather cannot—concern itself with the maintenance of a standard of life

**Individualism denies a standard.**—To speak therefore of the principles of Collectivism as “lying at the root of a compulsory poor rate” reveals an astonishing incapacity for grasping the distinction between the organization of industry (upon selective lines) and the distribution of relief—a *rôle* which Socialists would contend the individualistic system and method of industry has forced upon “the State.” The Poor Law system, so far from being a concession to Socialism, is a device of Individualism; which indeed could not “work,” unless its logical consequences were intercepted by the workhouse and the infirmary. The Poor Law ministers to a system which, in the judgment of Socialists, makes for deterioration—a system which lends itself with fatal facility to partial and discontinuous employment, starvation wages, cheap and nasty production, wasteful, useless, and characterless competition. Collectivism is nothing if not constructive, and constructive on lines of social selection; the Poor Law system as it now exists serves the purpose of a waste-receiver of “private enterprise.” Collectivism would not, indeed, dispense with the necessity of a poor law; so far, however, as it provided for the able-bodied idler, the workhouse would be simply a branch of the criminal department of the State. Collectivism would provide for the “deserving” and incapable, partly by providing against them, partly by public and humane institutions, partly by the more effective use to which weakness can be put under a better organization of industry; while pensions in old age would be the logical complement of honourable public service. It is no doubt true that this kind of selection is forcing itself upon the system of private commercial enterprise in the interests of economic production, and Professor Loria has based upon this fact his forecast of the gradual evolution of capitalistic industry into some form of associated labour. But the economy of high wages, of regular and organized labour, and of genuine production, is discounted by the active competition of low wages, casual labour, cheap and adulterated product. And we find, in fact, that the competition of quality is only made possible by the cessation of “the competition of the market.”

**Monopoly *versus* Competition.**—This is the significance of the modern Combination, conceived not as a temporary speculation, but as a permanent organization of a particular industry, based upon the extinction of wasteful rivalry between competitive firms. Whatever may be the abuse of the Combination, it is clearly a higher type of industrial organization; and its abuse is the occasion of Collectivism. It certainly makes a standard of work and a standard of industrial conditions possible; and it also renders the particular industry much more amenable to public opinion and, if need be, public control. And the interest of the modern Combination is that it is not an artificial creation, but a normal development of modern business: it represents a monopoly not of privilege, but of efficiency. It has become, in fact, no longer a question between Competition and Collectivism, but between private and public monopoly—between monopolies controlled by private capitalists and monopolies controlled by the community. Monopolies of local service, again, are still higher in the industrial scale, so far as they represent the organization of production by the consumers (that is, on the basis of rational and persistent wants), and are under direct public control. And the policy of practical Collectivism lies in exacting from such monopolies the full measure of their capacity, and making them object-lessons in co-operative industry.

**Monopoly as a result of selection.**—It is, after all, only by selection that the collective organization of industry can itself prevail, and this is an argument, if any were needed, against any catastrophic closure of the present system. Hence the significance of the demand that government and public bodies should proceed upon a more scientific method than private competitive enterprise “can well afford”—in the direction of better organization of employment, standard wages for standard work, shorter hours, and other model conditions of industry. In Glasgow, at the present moment, there is actually a competition between municipal tramways and private means of transit; and the whole (if short) history of the municipalization of



tramways is full of interest and instruction. Municipal management is a higher type of industry, and represents a competition of quality. It might be objected that this argument points to a mixed system of public and private industry, and does not meet the difficulty that a monopoly once established is liable to deterioration. It does point to the means by which public will supersede private administration of certain industries: that is, by competition and proved superiority of type. But it also assumes that the inferior type must give way. Still, the standard remains; it has been to a certain extent set, and to a greater extent recognized and approved, by the community. It could only fall back with a falling back in the community itself—that is, in its standard of satisfaction, material and moral. The higher type at once makes and depends upon its environment. It may, indeed, have become an object of local pride and civic self-consciousness; a competition may be set up between one municipality and another, and that again would be a competition of quality. Readers of *Unto This Last* will remember a suggestion of the same kind—not the least fruitful idea of the economist who has best understood the real significance of the pre-established harmony between ethics and economics. In the same way it may be said that the real evil of the “drink traffic” is that it is a private, instead of a public, enterprise.

Collectivism will, in fact, proceed by selective experiments of the kind I have indicated, granting the moral and intellectual conditions required by a higher type of administration; and where it does not take the form of social ownership, the principle may be just as effective in the form of social control—control, that is, in the direction of a higher type of industrial character. Mining, railway, and factory legislation is, from this point of view, simply the application of “standard” ideas to competitive industry.

**Socialism and its critics.**—If, then, this general account of the drift of Collectivism and of its real inwardness be at all true, what becomes of the polemic against Collectivist ideals that underlies the criticism of eminent social

philosophers, and of the false antithesis that is so often set up between "moral" and "economic" Socialism. All the tendencies they attack, Collectivists attack; but while "moral" Socialists are content with ascribing them generally to (abstract) moral and intellectual causes, Collectivists, rightly or wrongly, find that they are moral and intellectual causes which are logically connected with the whole principle and practice of individualistic or private competitive industry, and refuse to believe that some undefined miracle of moral agency is better than any intelligible causation. I propose to deal in detail with this kind of objection to Collectivism, mainly with a view to exhibiting in a clearer light the logical idea and consequences of that position. For I will readily admit that this task is necessary, in view of the language that has been, and to a certain extent still is, used by responsible Socialists. I admit that there is some excuse for the perversion, or rather the construction, of Collectivist philosophy on which the "moral" case against Socialism is supposed to rest. For in some cases the teaching is ambiguous, in others it is evasive, and in certain cases it is demonstrably illogical. The philosophy of Collectivism is still in the making, and reasonable Collectivists themselves are perfectly aware of the extent to which their social doctrine has still to be thought out. But if we can once disengage the root idea, we can at any rate say what are logical consequences and what are not; and I hope to show that neither "free meals," nor "relief works," nor "pensions without services," nor "the abolition of private property" are logical deductions from the Collectivist principle; they are, in fact, the denial of it, and could not be part of a strictly Socialist economy.

**The idea of Collectivism.**—What, then, is the idea of modern Socialism, or Collectivism? I take it, Socialism implies, first and foremost, the improvement of society by society. We may be told that this is going on every day; yes, but not with any clear consciousness of what it is about, or of an ideal. Moreover, empirical social reform does not go beyond improvements within the existing

system, or consider the effects of that system as a whole. As a rule, it means the modification of the system by an idea which does not belong to it, with the result that it is either ineffective or that it hampers the working of the system itself. When a prominent statesman can say that "We are all socialists now," he has reduced the idea of socializing individualistic commerce to its logical absurdity; it only means that we are endeavouring to rearrange the handicap between labourer, capitalist, employer, and landlord, according as either becomes the predominating partner in legislation. It is impossible to get out of the confused aims of social reformers anything like a point of view, or an idea of social progress; it is a question of *evils* rather than *ideals*. Collectivism, as I have said, implies the consciousness by society of a social ideal, of a better form of itself, and its distinction lies in its clearer consciousness of the end to be attained and its conception of the means of attaining it. The means, as we know, are the collective control or collective administration of certain industries by the community as a whole—by the people for the people—"the community" meaning parish, district, municipality, or nation, as democratically organized. (The ordinary formula of the "nationalization of the means of production" is unnecessarily prophetic, and is rather a hindrance than a help to the understanding of the ideal; by itself, it does not give the point of Socialism, and belongs to the picture-book method of social philosophy, which presents us rather with a ready-made system than a principle of action to be progressively applied.) But, clearly, "control," "organization," "administration," are merely forms, the body without the soul; we want to know—organization in what direction, control to what end? And the answer in quite general and formal terms is (as already suggested) a certain kind of existence and a certain standard of life to be maintained in and through the industrial organization of social needs. Mere nationalization, or mere municipalization, of any industry is not Socialism or Collectivism; it may be only the substitution of corporate for private administration; the social idea and purpose with which Collectivism is concerned may be

completely absent. The presence of the idea is recognized by the extent to which the public machinery is made the conscious and visible embodiment of an ideal type of industry, taking form in certain standard conditions of production as also certain standard requirements of consumption. It is agreed that there are certain things which society is so concerned in getting done in a certain way and after a certain type, that it cannot leave them to private enterprise. We may recall Aristotle's arguments in favour of public as against private education; the important consideration being that education involves principles affecting the kind of social type and character which a particular society is interested in maintaining. The modern industrial state is beginning to realize that it is as deeply concerned in the conditions of industry that determine for better or worse the type and character of its citizens and the standard of its social life. This recognition implies the action of the general or collective will and purpose (which is, of course, also the will and purpose of individuals) represented by the social regulation of industry in the interest of a standard of industrial character and production—a standard of life which society as society is concerned to maintain. The Collectivist calls upon society to face the logical requirements of the situation; rightly or wrongly, he conceives that a requirement of this kind is incompatible with the existence and the *raison d'être* of "private competitive enterprise." He is trying to familiarize the community with the incompatibility by example and practice, and at the same time to show that it is not with business, but with modern competitive business, that the requirement is incompatible. What is good in ethics cannot be bad in economics, and vice versa, is an axiom of Socialism. A standard wage, for instance, is from the point of view of modern commerce a non-competitive wage, for it is not regulated by the supply and demand of the market; but from the point of view of good business and also good ethics, it is competitive; men are selected for their efficiency, and not for their cheapness. The attempt to enforce this method of remuneration upon government and public bodies, as also to eliminate the

contractor, is described and resented by the rate-payer as "Collectivist"; he is right in his description, not in his resentment. The School Board, again, adapts its scale of salaries not to the supply of the market, but to the service required. It is only an Individualist who can talk of "high" wages and "high" salaries in this connection; a high wage is simply a wage that is adequate to a certain kind of work done at its best; the wage is high according as the conception of the conditions required for the highest performance of the work is high. The Socialism of the School Board is, in the last resort, nothing else than a high standard of education, and therefore of the educator and his conditions of life. It is well to put it in this way, because it is often supposed that Collectivism or Socialism is simply a policy of securing better conditions of life for the worker, which gives the impression that it is a class and not a social point of view. The starting-point of social economics is, after all, consumption, and again its qualitative, not merely its quantitative development, rather than the conditions of work and worker as such; they are, of course, really aspects of the same thing, as readers of Ruskin are in no danger of forgetting. Accordingly, we find that the economic problem is not approached by the modern Socialist primarily from the side of "distribution," except so far as it affects the character of "production" or "consumption." Anyhow, the great thing is that the point of view is qualitative; or, the regulative idea of Socialism is the maintenance of a certain standard of life, whether it is looked at from the point of view of the condition of the producer or his product. The whole point of factory legislation, again, lies in its attempt to exercise such social control over the conditions of industry as will prevent them from lowering the standard of life which society as society is interested in maintaining; it is becoming less sentimental, and more scientific in its scope; and, again, it is now called "Collectivist."

**Socialism and Humanism.**—From the standpoint of such an interpretation of the idea and the phenomena of Collectivism (which is, after all, sufficiently justified by the

language of its opponents), the suggestion that it is theoretically careless of the type, indifferent to any standard of life, or to the value of character, is somewhat wide of the mark. So long as Socialism remains true to its scientific conception and treatment of life, it is not likely to commit itself to means of improvement at the cost of the type. Its animating idea is neither pity nor benevolence—at least, not as usually understood—but the freest and fullest development of human quality and power. It is characteristic of modern Socialism or Collectivism that its typical representatives are men who have been profoundly influenced by the positive and scientific conception of social life; while its popular propagandists have derived their inspiration from Ruskin, who is, in economics at least, a profound humanist. What is common to the indictment of modern Industrialism, set out in “good round terms” by Ruskin, Morris, Wagner (not to mention others), on the one hand, and *Merrie England* on the other, is their sense of the frightful and quite incalculable waste and loss of quality (in producer and product) that it seems to involve. Whether this finding is just or not, Socialism is a principle which stands or falls by a qualitative conception of progress. It is bound up with ideas of qualitative selection and competition, and with the endeavour to raise in the scale the whole machinery, the whole conception and purpose, of industrial activity, so as to give the fullest scope to the needs and means of human development. Increase of human power over circumstance, increase of humanizing wants, increase of powers of social enjoyment—these are the ends of state or municipal activity, whether it take the form of model conditions of employment, and model standards of consumption, or the provision of parks and libraries, and all such things as are means, not of mere, but of high existence. And in all these directions it would be true to say that the State or municipality operates through character and through ideas, and that, as the organized power of community, it helps the individual not to be less but more of an individual—more of a distinctively human being.

**The meaning of State activity (national and international).**—State activity, as thus conceived, is not the substitution of machinery for the mainspring of character, but a process of training and adaptation, or it may be of restriction and elimination—the human analogues of “natural selection” in the physical world. In this way the State, while it endeavours to give the personal struggle for existence a distinctively human and qualitative form, gains a clearer consciousness of the meaning of its own struggle for existence in the social world as a whole. And just as it raises the plane of competition within its own social group, so it raises it in relation to other groups in the wider social organism. The study of great social experiments in Germany, the comparison of “experiences” at International Congresses, and other movements, suggest that there may be a more valuable kind of rivalry between nations than that of mere power, mere trade, or mere territory—a rivalry of social type and efficiency, within the limits of the specific part each is most fitted to discharge in the whole. The law of national self-preservation upon such a view passes from a non-moral to a moral stage, for it is not a mere and exclusive, but a specific and inclusive “self.” Anyhow, one effect of Collectivism would be to increase the self-consciousness of a State as organized for the attainment of a common good and a certain kind of social existence; and this consciousness is, from the Socialist’s point of view, an increasingly determinate factor in social evolution, just as it is the worst effect of competitive industry that the idea of the State and the conception of a social ideal either disappears or becomes vulgarized and materialized.

**The distinction between “State” and “Society.”**—It is worth while to dwell for a moment upon a distinction which is often placed to the credit of modern, as distinguished from Greek, political philosophy—the distinction between “Society” and “the State.” When the political community is regarded as “Society” it is looked at as a number of individuals or classes, or professions—as an aggregate of units. When we speak of the “State,” we

understand a single personality, as it were, representing all these interests and endowed with force which it can exercise against any one of them. In other words, "the State" cannot be reduced to "Society" or to "Government," which is only one of its functions, but is Society organized and having force. This distinction in one way implies an advance: we can and do leave more than the Greeks to social influence, as distinguished from the action of the State, because the foundation of social morality is stronger and deeper, and because we lay more stress on individual freedom and the value of the individual. But in another way it implies a loss, and is apt to degenerate into the idea that the State has no moral function, and that the individual possesses separate rights which only belong to him as a member of a community. To vulgar political Economy, for instance, as to the Liberty and Property Defence League, "the State" simply means Society; and there has been a tendency on the part of economists, who start with the commercial point of view to push to the extreme the view that the best result will come from the free interaction of conflicting interests, to take this view as final and make it a "law." Modern thought and modern practice are reverting to the position of Aristotle, that the State ought to put before itself "the good of the whole," by interfering with the "natural" course of economic events in favour of collective ends. And it is Democracy that has made Collectivism possible: the State is not some mysterious entity outside individuals, but simply represents the individuals organized for a common purpose, whether in parochial or national assembly. When, therefore, German Social-Democracy avows its aim to be the substitution of "Society" for the "State," this is simply a sign of arrested political and social development: the State is not co-extensive with the self-governing community, but represents oligarchic and centralized bureaucracy. To depreciate the stress which Collectivists lay upon "organization" is really to depreciate the value of the moral atmosphere any particular manifestation of Collectivism may generate in familiarizing the members of the community with the idea of the social reference and



destiny of industry, and of the State as the expression of the nation's will and conscience.

**General view of Socialism and its justification.**—Whatever else, then, Socialism may be, it certainly implies organized action for a social purpose, and this purpose may always be reduced to the conception of a certain standard of life other than mere animal existence.

I am aware that this representation of Socialism, as concerned with the maintenance of natural selection under rational human conditions, does not cover all the visible phenomena of Socialism. But the philosophic student is justified in limiting his view to the conception of Socialism as a reasoned idea of social progress; and it is its shortcomings in this respect that the "moral reformer" selects for condemnation. His criticism may, perhaps, be roughly indicated as follows: Socialism, it is suggested, aims at the substitution of machinery for character, in the sense that it fails to recognize that the individual is, above all things, a character and a will, and that society, as a whole, is a structure in which will and character "are the blocks with which we build"; it attaches, therefore, undue, if not exclusive, importance to material conditions and organization; and, further, it is fatal to the conditions of the formation of character, these conditions being private property and free competition. In all these points we may discover a confusion between the appearance and the reality of Socialism.

**Socialism and Machinery.**—No doubt at first sight it seems to be the common idea of all Socialists that, by reconstructing the machinery of the actual material organization of life, certain evils incidental to human life, of which that organization is regarded as the stronghold, can be greatly mitigated, if not wholly removed. The theory of modern Socialism gives no countenance to this conception of the matter. It suggests neither Utopias nor revolutions in human nature or modern business; it does suggest a method of business which makes rather larger demands upon human nature, but which, at the

same time, and for the same reason, is "better" business. Even if that were not so, it is clear that Collectivism is, as I have said, not machinery, but machinery with a purpose; what it is concerned with is the machinery appropriate to a certain spirit and conception of industry. It implies, therefore, emphatically ideas, and can only operate through "will and character." If, for instance, the machinery of public industry is not directed to keeping this idea before its employees from the highest to the lowest, then they stand in just as much a material and mechanical relation to their work as the employee of a private person or company; and, on the other hand, in proportion as the employee, through want of will or character or intelligence, fails to enter into that social purpose, his work would be as inferior in itself and in its relation to his character as it might be under any individualistic administration. As a practical corollary, the machinery of public industry must be organized in such a way that the workman can feel its interest and purpose as his interest and purpose. The mere substitution of public for private administration is the shadow and not the substance. The forces required to work Collectivist machinery are nothing if not moral; and so we also hear the complaint that Socialists are too ideal, that they make too great a demand upon human nature and upon the social will and imagination. Of the two complaints, this is certainly the more pertinent. A conception, however, which is liable to be dismissed, now as mere mechanism, now as mere morality, may possibly be working towards a higher synthesis. May it not be the truth that Socialism is emphatically a moral idea which must have the machinery fitted to maintain and exercise such an idea—for a moral idea which is not a working idea is not moral at all—and this machinery is, formally speaking, the public control and administration of industry. Every advance in ethics must be secured by a step taken in politics or economics. Socialism implies both a superior moral idea and a superior method of business, and neither could work without the other. The superiority of the moral idea can only show itself by its works, by its business capacity, so to speak; and the

superiority of a method of business lies in what it can do for and with human nature. It follows, therefore, that just as Democracy is the most difficult form of government, Socialism is the most difficult form of industry, because, like Democracy, it requires the operation of ideas; and the test of the perfection of Socialist machinery is just its capacity to give to the routine industries of the community that spirit and temper which are the note of the freest and highest work. Apart from this atmosphere of interest and purpose, the State and municipality are distinctly inferior as employers of labour, and the history of the co-operative movement itself provides a series of object lessons in the divorce of machinery from ideas. In its complete form, as the organization of production by the consumers, Socialism presupposes a responsiveness in producer and consumer, and Trades Unions of producers would be as much a part of Socialist as of individualistic organization, as witness the National Union of Elementary Teachers. On the other hand, if it has sufficient ground-work in moral and intellectual conditions, then the material organization itself helps to create the character it presupposes, and will be educative, in proportion as the employee of the community feels his social recognition in a raised standard of life all round—shorter hours, dignity and continuity of status, direct responsibility. It cannot be said that Socialists are insensible to the amount of education—in ideas and character—that is required before any sensible advance can be made in the direction of co-operative industry. On the other hand they do not believe that grapes can grow upon thorns: they believe that things make their own morality. The idea of industry is what habits and institutions make it: it is impossible to put the social idea into institutions which make for the artificial preservation and encouragement of an antagonistic idea—the plutocratic ideal; and it is impossible to get it out of them. It is not enough to modify the bias of the individualistic organization of society: that organization itself makes the whole idea of the organization of society on the basis of public service or labour “the baseless fabric of a vision.” The moralist demands, and

rightly (in theory) demands, that the working-man should realize that he exists only on the terms of recognizing and discharging a definite social function. But what is there in the economic arrangements under which he finds himself, to suggest such an idea—the idea on which Socialism rests—either to the propertied or to the propertyless man? How is a man who depends for his employment upon a mechanism he can in no wise control or count upon, and upon the ability of a particular employer to maintain himself against rivals, enabled to realize a definite position in the social structure? What he does feel, for the most part, is that he is dependent on a system in which the element of chance is incalculable, and it is just this feeling which makes for a materialistic and hand-to-mouth conception of life. Or what is there in the economic structure of society which suggests to the employer or the capitalist that their *raison d'être* is not so much to make a fortune as to fulfil a function? In what way, in a word, does the individualistic organization of industry make for the extension of the sense of duty which a man owes to society at large? Moral ideas must have at least a basis in the concrete relations of life. In the same way, we are told, and rightly told, that the value of property lies in its relation to the needs of personality. But how can a man who cannot count on more than ten shillings a week, or at any rate the man who depends upon casual employment or speculative trades, regard property as “the unity of his material life”? “A man must know what he can count on and judge what to do with,”—this is stated to be a requirement of morality (as it certainly is of Socialism). But how is this condition realized under a system which not only lends itself to the most violent contrasts between careless ease and careworn want, between lavish indulgence and narrow penury, but makes it the (apparent) interest of the employing classes that the employed shall not have property—a situation which Trade Unions were meant to meet. Moral ideas are, after all, relevant to a particular working organization of life. The “moral Socialist” seems to require a Socialist ethics of property and employment from an economic system which is worked upon an

individualistic conception of property and employment. But the moralist who insists on the fulfilment by society of ideas for which its actual institutions and everyday life give no warrant seems to suggest that ethics are not relative, that moral conceptions are not ideas *of* life, but ideas *about* life. To this abstract moral idealism and transcendentalism, Socialism, at any rate, furnishes a needful corrective. Is there anything, the Socialist asks, in men's ordinary industrial life which suggests the "lofty and ennobling" ideas they are to have about it? And I conceive that the Socialist who criticizes the economic arrangements of society from the standpoint of these ideas is the more helpful moralist of the two. He has done well if he has simply called attention to the antinomy; and, in a sense, that is the only remedy, for, unless it is felt and recognized, there is nothing from which anything better can grow up. If institutions depend on character, character depends on institutions: it is upon their necessary interaction that the Socialist insists. The greatness of Ruskin as a moralist lies in his relevance, and in his recognition of the inseparability of the moral and the material, of ethics and economics. But the practical man calls him a moral rhetorician and an insane economist.

**"Moral" and "Material" reform.**—Apart from the general value of economic organization or of the consideration of it, the moral Socialist certainly tends (in theory) to minimize, if not to discount, the influence of material conditions on the betterment of life. The great thing, we are told, is to "moralize" the employer, or "moralize" the workman. The only radical cure for the sanitary atrocities of the Factory system lies, it is said, in a wider interpretation of their duty by the employers. Why is it, one may ask, that a system against which it is considered superficial, or indeed immoral, to "agitate," lends itself to this appeal from the employer's sense of interest to the employer's sense of duty? The Socialist suggests a system of industry in which self-interest does not require to be checked. And is it quite reasonable or consistent to complain, on the one hand, that Socialism does not pro-

vide the economic motive of private profit, and, on the other hand, to look for the improvement of the conditions of the labourer to the moralization or socialization of the motives of the employer? The evils which the moral Socialist admits are just those for which a radical cure can only be found in the popular control of industry. Or are we to say that "the morality of the working classes" depends not upon "circumstances," but upon some mysterious gift of grace or redemption? The intimate connection between "circumstances" and drinking, the degrading effect of material uncertainty (which the doctrinaire moralist seems to regard as an unmixed moral benefit—for the working classes), are, at any rate, as normal phenomena as the powerlessness of a "degenerate" to cope with such conditions at all. A good deal more investigation is surely needed of the conditions under which "character and ideas" operate before we can so easily assume their spontaneous generation and their indefinite possibilities. Universalize the principle, and it is doubtless good for all persons that they should not be above the possibility of falling into distress by lack of wisdom and exertion; competition is in this sense a sovereign condition of life, and the Socialist regrets that more room is not made for its beneficent operation in the "moral development" of our "splendid paupers." There seems to be just a tendency on the part of the Charity Organization Society to treat the working classes as if they had peculiar opportunities for independent life, just because their circumstances are so difficult; the eye of the moral disciplinarian should surely also be turned upon the many people who are as much pensioners of society as if they were maintained in an almshouse. The poor man's poverty (it would seem) is his moral opportunity. But this kind of beatitude for the poor would have more point if it were always their own lack of wisdom and exertion which occasions their "falling into distress." It must be admitted that the existence of an unemployed rich is as great a source of danger and deterioration to society as that of an unemployed poor, and to a great extent the one is an aggravating cause of the other. Much of the casual employment of the

unemployed classes directly ministers to the unproductive and exclusive consumption of the rich; and one great difficulty in the way of the organization of production on the basis of rational and persistent wants, and the provision of a true industrial basis to the life of the worker, lies in the irregular, capricious, and characterless expenditure of superfluous incomes.

### **Insufficiency of the Charity Organization Society.**

—All that our "Poor Law Reformers" have to say about the policy of "relief works," "shelters," and relaxation of the Poor Law is undeniable; but the corollary that in "refraining from action" we are helping on a better time seems hardly adequate, however graphically it can be illustrated from the history of unwise philanthropy. So long as the Charity Organization Society contents itself with the demonstration that devices of this kind only drive the evil further in, it is really helpful; but in refusing to look for any source of the evils except foolish benevolence on the one side and reckless improvidence on the other, it seems to be unduly simplifying the conditions of the problem. It is, at any rate, scarcely justified in deprecating the inquiry as to whether the absence of any rational organization of industry may not be a part of the situation. Thinkers of this school are so much concerned for the moral independence of the worker that his actual economic dependence hardly enters into their consideration. The circumstances beyond the control of great masses of workers engaged in machine industries are much larger than those that their own action goes to make up, and here again Collectivism endeavours to bring these circumstances much more within their control. Lack of employment means, we are told, lack of character; but where, after all, does character come from? The contention of Socialists is that the absence of any permanent organization of industry, by setting a premium upon partial and discontinuous employment, is itself a contributory cause of shiftless character; and where the character is hopeless, the best way of dealing with it is such an organization as would really sift out and eliminate the industrial resi-

duum. All permanent organization means the withdrawal of partial and inadequate employment from a certain class.

Surely in this case system and character act and react : discourage intermittent employment, and you save the "marginal" cases from social wreckage ; while it becomes possible to deal with the industrial residuum in some restorative or restrictive way. But is not this the point of Collectivism ? The Fabian Society has repudiated the false economics of "relief works" with quite as much energy as the Charity Organization Society. But the real objection to relief works, as also to "Old Age Pensions," is that they have no logical connection with the system they are designed to palliate. "Continuity of employment" and "superannuation pensions" would be a logical part of a Socialist state ; but the idea of "the State" as a relief society to the employees of private industry can only be satisfactory to the employer, whose irresponsibility it would effectually sanction. Under a system of individualistic industry, "State relief" and "State pensions" can only mean an allowance in aid of reckless speculation and low wages ; and these devices only serve to distract reform from the true line of deliverance—the best possible organization of industry and the improvement of the conditions of labour. It is not the Socialist who contemplates the "ransom" of the capitalistic system by relief work and old age pensions. On the other hand, pensions—and even carefully guarded and exceptional relief schemes—might be regarded as part of a transitional policy. The Socialist who advocates Old Age Pensions is at the same time advocating a different conception and consequent method of industry, and not simply trying to save the credit of a discredited system. I do not think that even the most impatient Socialist has ever suggested that outdoor relief in any shape was Socialism ; while the scientific Socialist has never regarded so-called wholesale "Socialistic remedies" of this kind as other than the herring across the track. } Socialism means the organization not of charity, nor of relief, but of industry, and in such a way that the problem of finding work which is not apparently wanted,



and of devising pensions for no apparent service, would not be "normal."

**Socialism and natural selection.**—The real danger of Collectivism, indeed, is not that it would take the form of the charity that fosters a degraded class, but that it would be as ruthless as Plato in the direction of "social surgery." It may take a hard and narrow view of the "industrial organism" and the conditions of its efficiency. For the progress of civilization gives a social value to other qualities, other kinds of efficiency, than merely industrial or economic capacity. "Invalidism" may be said to develop valuable states of mind, and to strengthen the conception of human sympathy and solidarity. It is possible to apply the conception of an industrial organism in two ways: the State is an organism, and therefore it should get rid of its weak; the State is an organism, and therefore it should carry its weak with it. Perhaps it might be said that the modern problem is not so much to get the weak out of the way, as to help them to be useful. There is no reason in the process of natural selection as such, why every member of society, provided he be not criminal, should not be preserved and helped to live as effectively as possible. But this would depend upon the possibility of such a readjustment of the economic system that would enable all members to maintain an efficient existence under it, and, conversely, upon the condition that each person should do the work for which he is best fitted. "Weakness" and "unfitness" are, after all, relative; and in any more systematic organization of society what is now a man's weakness might become his strength. One advantage of the organization of industry would be the increased possibility of "grading" work, as also of estimating desert. The problem is no other than that of finding a distribution of work which would allow the weak to render a service proportioned to their ability in the same ratio as the service is required of the strong. The present system makes too little use of the weak and too much of the strong; instead of helping the growth of all after their kind, it fosters an overgrowth of an exclusive and imperfect kind. And,

lastly, if it be said that any form of Socialism would be immoral if it denied the necessity for individual responsibility, it may also be urged that the compulsory elevation by municipal and State activity of the most degraded classes is a necessary preliminary to their further elevation by individual effort and voluntary association. But none of these considerations seem germane to private competitive enterprise, which can hardly afford to "treat life as a whole." From all these points of view, therefore, I venture to think that the question of morality is largely a question of machinery, and that the consideration of morality apart from machinery reduces ethics to the level of a merely "formal" science.

**Socialism and property.**—Socialism recognizes the value of property by demanding its wider distribution. The social situation is, upon its showing (rightly or wrongly), largely created by the divorce of the worker from property and the means of production, which means that the arrangement and disposition of his life is outside his control. Private property may be said to have an ethical value and significance so far as it is at once a sign and expression of individual worth, and gives to individual life some sort of unity and continuity. It follows that wages and salaries, on which society is largely, and under Collectivism would be wholly based, fulfil the principle of private property so far as they are in some degree permanent and calculable; otherwise, there is a discontinuity in the life of the individual; he cannot look before and after, cannot organize his life as a whole. Socialists not only accept the "idea" of individual property, but demand some opportunity for its realization. One point of the public organization of industry is that it would admit of more permanency, stability, and continuity in the life of the worker than is provided by the precariousness of modern competition. His life, it is contended, is much more exposed than it need be to the worst of material evils—uncertainty. The "Trust" organization of industry, as also the organization of dock labour, are in this respect on the line of Socialist advance; and it is well known that

the Civil Service attracts because it not only secures the livelihood of the employed, but leaves him time for volunteer work in pursuit of his interests and duties, private and public. Or, again, we are told that the social need is to make the possession of property more responsive to the character and capacity of the owner. Could the endeavour of Socialism be better expressed? Socialism does not, like certain forms of Communism, rest upon the idea that no man should have anything of his own; it is concerned with such an organization of industry as shall enable a man to acquire property in proportion to his character and capacity, but will cease to make the mere accumulation of private property a motive force of industry. Just to the extent that property serves the needs of individuality, Socialism would encourage its acquisition: the idea of hand-to-mouth existence or "dependence," the ideal of the slave or the child, is probably much more encouraged by the fluctuations of competitive industry than by the routine but regular and calculable vocation of the public servant.

It may be further considered that it is the object of Collectivism not merely to give a true industrial and calculable basis to the life of the worker, but to give to the possession of property character and propriety. There is a justifiable pleasure in surrounding oneself with things which really express and respond to one's own character and choice of interest, and in the feeling that they are one's own in a peculiar and intimate sense. But the number of books, pictures, and the like, which one "desires for one's own," is comparatively small, and would be much smaller if one had within reach a museum, a library, and a picture gallery. The property that is revolting is that which is expressive, not of character, but of money; the house, for instance, of "a successful man" made beautiful "by contract." Emerson's exhortation to put our private pictures into public galleries is perhaps extreme, and not altogether practical or reasonable. But the public provision of libraries and galleries, and of things that can be best enjoyed in common, not only enlarges the background of the citizen's life and adds to his possessions,

but suggests a reasonable limit to the accumulation of property; as it would most certainly give a social direction to art, when it could minister to the needs of a nation rather than the ostentation of the few. And the same may be said of public parks, means of transit, and the like—all in the direction of levelling those inequalities of property which serve no social purpose. Whether, then, property be regarded as a “means of self-expression,” or as “materials for enjoyment,” the Collectivist ideal may be said to lie in the direction, not of denying, but of affirming and satisfying the need; and the Socialists criticize the distribution of property under individualistic institutions just from the point of view of its failure to satisfy a need of human nature. Mr. Bosanquet (in *Some Aspects of the Social Problem*), for instance, really expresses the Socialist’s position when he says: “The real cause of complaint to-day, I take it, is not the presence, but the absence of property, together with the suggestion that its presence may be the cause of its absence.” He points out, moreover, that the principle of unearned private property and the principle of Communism really meet in the common rejection of the idea of earning, of some quasi-competitive relation of salary to value or energy of service—in fact, of the organization of Society upon a basis of labour which *is* the ideal of Socialism. Similarly he puts himself at the point of view of the Socialist when he says: “The true principles of State interference with acquisition—and alienation—would refer to their tendency, if any, to prevent acquisition of property on the part of other members of society,” a principle which omits nothing in Collectivist requirements, and opens up a series of far-reaching considerations.

**Socialism and competition.**—I have already endeavoured to show that Socialism is a method of social selection according to social worth (in the widest sense): that it desires to extend the possibilities of usefulness to as many as possible, and would measure reward by the efficiency of socially valuable work. The differences in reward would, however, be of less account in proportion as social

consideration and recognition, and the collective privileges and opportunities of civilization, are extended to any kind of worker, and as the motives to personal accumulation are reduced within social limits. Indeed, it is a question whether the conventional idea of reward is relevant to the system of industry contemplated by the Socialist, a system under which the freest industrial motive—the motive of work for work's and enjoyment's sake, the stimulus of self-expression—could be extended from the highest to the humblest industry. The incompatibility of pure industrial motive with our modern industrial system is, indeed, as Ruskin and Morris and Wagner have witnessed, its profoundest condemnation.

**The benefits of commercial competition.**—It is not to be denied that competitive private enterprise may develop character and discharge social services. But the character and the services are of a partial and inferior type: partial, because a few grow out of proportion to the rest, and therefore in a narrow and anti-social direction; inferior, because the character of the economically strong is not of the highest type; if it is of a type fittest to survive in a commercial and non-social world, it is not the fittest to survive in a moral and social order. And what can one say about commercial standards of production or consumption? Are they as such directed to develop quality of life? Matthew Arnold's description of an upper class materialized, a middle class vulgarized, and a lower class brutalized, is a fairly accurate description of modern commercial types.

**Competition and population.**—Not only is commercial competition inferior in form, but it is directly responsible for an increase in quantity over quality of population. The idea that unchecked competition makes for the natural selection of the fittest population is singularly optimistic. It is just that part of the population which has nothing to lose that is most reckless in propagating itself. The fear of falling below the standard of comfort at one end of the social scale, and the hopelessness of ever reaching it at

the other, combine to increase the quantity of population at the cost of its quality. And what is a loss to society is a gain to the sweater; he is directly interested in the lowering of the standard of life, and in the competition of cheap labour; and the sweater is a normal product of commercial competition. Collectivism deliberately aims at the maintenance and elevation of the standard of life, and at such an organization of industry as would not enable one class of the community to be interested in the over-production of another. It treats the "population question" as a problem of quality.

**Socialism and progress.**—There are of course many other aspects of Socialism than its adequacy to the requirements of a moral and social idea; that is, of a principle of progressive social life. It may be thought that Socialism is essentially a movement from below, a class movement; but it is characteristic of modern Socialism that its protagonists, in this country at any rate, approach the problem from the scientific rather than the popular view; they are middle-class theorists. And the future of the movement will depend upon the extent to which it will be recognized that Socialism is not simply a working-man's, or an unemployed, or a poor man's question. There are, indeed, signs of a distinct rupture between the Socialism of the street and the Socialism of the chair; the last can afford to be patient, and to deprecate hasty and unscientific remedies. It may be that the two sides may drift farther and farther apart, and that scientific Socialism may come to enjoy the unpopularity of the Charity Organization Society. All that I am, however, concerned to maintain is that there is a scientific Socialism which does attempt to treat life as a whole, and has no less care for character than the most rigorous idealist; and I believe I am also right in thinking that this is the characteristic and dominant type of Socialism at the present day. It may not be its dominant idea in the future, but it is the idea that is wanted for the time, the idea that is relevant, and it is with relevant ideas that the social moralist is concerned.

**Other moral aspects: Socialism and religion.**—There are, again, other moral aspects than those with which I have been concerned. I have said nothing as to the moral sentiment of Socialism, nothing as to the creation of a deeper sense of public duty. I have taken for granted the sentiment, and confining myself to Socialism, as a moral idea, have tried to see how it works, or whether it is a working idea at all. The question of moral dynamics lies behind this, and the question of faith—of Socialism as a religion—still further behind. Perhaps in an anxiety to divorce Socialism from sentimentality, we may appear to be divorcing it from sentiment. But the sentiment of Socialism must rest on a high degree of intellectual force and imagination, if it is not to be altogether vague and void. There is no cheap way, or royal road, to the religion of humanity, though there may be many helps to it short of a reflective philosophy. But it would be idle to deny that Socialism involves a change which would be almost a revolution in the moral and religious attitude of the majority of mankind. We may agree with Mill that it is impossible to define with any sort of precision the coming modification of moral and religious ideas. We may further, however, agree that it will rest upon the idea of solidarity, and that “there are two things which are likely to lead men to invest this with the moral authority of a religion; first, they will become more and more impressed by the awful fact that a piece of conduct to-day may prove a curse to men and women scores and even hundreds of years after the author is dead; and second, they will more and more feel that they can only satisfy their sentiment of gratitude to seen or unseen benefactors, can only repay the untold benefits they have inherited, by diligently maintaining the traditions of service.” This, or something like it, is the true Socialist faith.

## IV. PUBLIC SERVICE *VERSUS* PRIVATE EXPENDITURE

By SIR OLIVER LODGE

*Originally given as an address to the Ancient Order of Foresters at their Annual Gathering in Birmingham Town Hall, on Sunday, October 9th, 1904. The Society is indebted to Sir Oliver Lodge for permission to print and issue this Address.*

“**PUBLIC WEALTH**” means wealth belonging to a Community or Corporate Body; and the possessor of such wealth can utilize and administer it as Corporate Expenditure. By “Corporate Expenditure” I mean not municipal expenditure alone, nor trade union expenditure alone, nor benefit society expenditure alone, but something of all of them; combined expenditure for corporate ends, as distinguished from private and individual expenditure. I wish to maintain that more good can be done and greater value attained by the thoughtful and ordered expenditure of corporate money, than can be derived from even a lavish amount distributed by private hands for the supply of personal comfort and the maintenance of special privileges.

It sounds like a secular subject, but no subject is really secular, in the sense of being opposed to sacred, unless it is a subject intrinsically bad; and if the truth be as I imagine myself now to conceive it, the subject I am endeavouring to bring forward has possible developments of the most genuinely sacred character. I shall not have time to develop this fully, but I can make a beginning.

**Careless spending.**—First I would direct your attention to a fact and ask you to observe how little thought is expended by mankind in general on the spending of money,



and how much time and attention are devoted to the earning of it. That may seem natural; it is considered easy to spend and hard to earn. I am by no means sure that it is easy to spend wisely. Men who have much money to spend—and few of us are in that predicament—if they are conscientious and good men, feel the difficulty seriously; they realize that it is so easy to do harm, so difficult to know how to do real good. Charity may seem a safe and easy method of disbursing, and much of it at present, alas, is necessary, but few things are more dangerous: it is an easy salve to the conscience, but it by no means conduces to fulness and dignity of life.

But eliminating men of large fortunes, let us attend to our own case. We, the ordinary citizens, how little time do we find to consider our manner of spending; we mostly do it by deputy, all our time is occupied in earning. It may be said roughly that men earn the money and that their wives spend it: a fair division of labour. They spend it best: and if the man insists on retaining and spending much of it, he is liable to spend it very far from wisely or well.

**Public *v.* Private Expenditure.**—I will not labour the point; we get something by private expenditure undoubtedly: we get the necessaries of life, and we get some small personal luxuries in addition. We do not get either in the most economical fashion. Buying things by the ounce or by the pint is not the cheapest way of buying; nor is a kitchen fire in every household the cheapest way of cooking, especially in the summer. Without going into details, and without exaggerating, we must all see that individualism results in some waste. If each man pays for the visits of his own doctor it is expensive. If each man provides his own convalescent home it is expensive. If each man goes on his own excursion or travels it is not so cheap as when several club together and run the journey on a joint purse. Private and solitary travel may be luxurious, but it is not cheap. A cab is dearer than an omnibus; a private garden is far dearer in proportion than a public park. Of private expenditure altogether it may be said:

some of it is necessary, much of it is luxurious, but none of it is economical.

Corporate or combined expenditure achieves a greater result, not only for the whole, but actually for each individual. "Each for himself" is a poor motto; the idea of "Each for all" is a far more powerful as well as a more stimulating doctrine than "Each for himself." Thus already you see our subject shows signs of losing its secular character and of approaching within hailing distance of the outposts of Christianity.

**The objects of thrift.**—Very well, now go on to consider the subject of *thrift*—not personal spending, but personal saving. What is the saving for? There are two chief objects:—

(1) To provide for sickness, for old age, and for those who are dependent upon us, and whom we should otherwise leave helpless when we go. This is clearly the chief and especially forcible motive for saving: it is the main-spring and original motive-power of this and all other benefit societies. But there is also another not at all unworthy motive, though it is one less generally recognized or admitted, and to this I wish incidentally to direct attention.

The second great motive for thrift and wise accumulation is—

(2) To increase our own power and influence and effective *momentum* in the world.

**The power of wealth.**—The man of wealth is recognized as a force in the world, sometimes indeed a force for evil, sometimes for good, but undeniably and always a power. People often complain of this and abuse the instinct which recognizes wealth as being such a power. But it is inevitable. It does not indeed follow that great wealth need be concentrated in a few hands, or that one single individual shall have the disposal of it: it is an accidental and, as I think, an unfortunate temporary arrangement of society which brings about that result; but, whether in many hands or in few, wealth is bound to be a power: it

is no use abusing what is inevitable, we must study and learn how to utilize the forces of nature. Wealth is one of those forces.

Why is it so powerful? Because it enables its owner to carry out his plans, to execute his purposes, to achieve his ends. He has not to go cap in hand to somebody and ask permission; he can do the thing himself. He cannot do everything indeed, his power is limited, but he can do much. So also the members of a wealthy corporate body, if they want to do something, if they want to meet elsewhere than in a public-house, for instance, encounter no difficulty, they can have a hall of their own, or they can hire one. Wealth is accumulated savings. Considered as power, it does not matter whether the wealth is in many hands or in few. The owners of it are important people; and if they mean to do good the material accessories are at their command. A rich corporation, like a rich man, has great power. Suppose he wants to bring out an invention, his own or some one else's, he has the means. Suppose he wants to build a laboratory or endow a university, he can do it. Suppose he wants to plant waste land with forest trees, who will stop him? But he cannot do everything. A genius has powers greater than his. A rich man's power is great, but it is limited; for suppose he wants to compose an oratorio, to paint a picture, to make a scientific discovery, and has not the ability; his wealth is impotent, he cannot do it. No, his power is strictly limited, but it is not so limited as that of the poor man.

**The weakness of poverty.**—We are poor men, and some of us want to renovate the Black Country and cover up its slag heaps with vegetation and with forests—a beautiful and sane ideal—but it is a difficult task. I do not own a square foot of soil, nor do most of you. What right have we to go to plant trees on some one else's land? We should be trespassers; and, at a whim of the owner, they might be rooted up. The owners of the soil, however, may be willing for the reafforestation of the Black Country, they may give us assistance, they may enable us to carry out

the scheme. I sincerely hope they will, but we must go and ask them. Without the wealth we are powerless. We see so many things that might be done if we had the means: for instance, we helplessly lament the existence of slums, we see numerous ways in which to improve cities, we would like to suppress smoke and show how the air could be kept pure for the multitudes herded in cities to breathe and enjoy; but we cannot do it, we are not rich enough. Moreover, if we did, what would happen, at least at first? Rents would rise, and the improved property would become too dear for the present inhabitants to live in. Clear and purify the air of towns, and they would at once, with their good drainage and fine sanitary conditions, become the best and healthfullest places to live in. Now they are too dirty, then they would be too dear.

But if the land near all large towns belonged to the community, if we had corporate ownership of land, what would we not do! Then the improvements would be both possible and profitable, and the community who made them would reap the benefit.

Some day: some day an approach to this condition of things is bound to come. It feels to me almost like part of the meaning of that great prayer, "Thy kingdom come"; and if so we are again not far away from the atmosphere of Christianity.

**Public wealth and public debts.**—For accumulation of wealth to be really beneficial it should contribute to the common weal, it should conduce to well-being, and so be worthy of the name of *weal-th* or wealth.

The only way probably you and I can ever become wealthy is by becoming corporately wealthy, by clubbing our savings and becoming an influence and a power in the land.

Already I see, by your Report, that this organization or corporate body owns more than seven millions: not seven millions free to be dealt with as you like, it is all ear-marked to good and beneficent objects, and all needed for the achievement of those objects; but still it is a substantial

sum, and it can increase. Roll it up to seventy millions, apply it to other objects than sickness and death, and you will become capitalists, able to execute your behests, an influence and a power in the world.

Would this be a good thing? Ah, that is a large question. There are always dangers in great capital, it is a serious responsibility; and if badly and domineeringly used it may become a fearful evil. In unwise and unscrupulous hands, if they are ignorant and foolish, it is far from safe. But let it come gradually, let it be owned by mankind or by the community at large, and I for one would trust them—we are bound to trust mankind—would trust them at first to endeavour to make a good use of it, and ultimately to succeed in so doing.

I believe in public capital and public expenditure, so it be clean and honest and well managed; everything depends upon that; but in this fortunate city that is already accomplished. What is known as a public debt is really a public investment, and anything not spent in the waste of war should have public works, or elevated humanity, or other good results, to show for it. Then it at once becomes capital, and is no more appropriately called debt; it has not been spent, but invested. "Funds" is a better name for it.

**The economy of rising rates.**—That is why I believe in rates—not altogether in the Poor Rate, for I am unable to feel that the Poor Law is on a satisfactory basis, though it is administered with the best intentions by the guardians: the system is, as I think, in some respects mistaken, but I will not go into that now; I only say parenthetically that the Poor Rate I do not welcome—but rates for public works, education rates, rates for municipal and corporate services generally, rates for museums and libraries and recreation grounds and parks and rational amusements, all these I would welcome and wish to grow.

We should not try to economize in these things, we should put our heads together so as to spend the public money wisely and well, and then, we should spend it. Private thrift, public expenditure; that is the way to raise a town or a nation in the standard of civilization.

The spendings of an individual, what are they? They are gone in his individual comfort and luxury. The spendings of a community are capital: they result in public works, in better housing, in good roads, in thorough lighting; they open up the country, they develop its resources, they educate the citizens, they advance all the amenities of existence, in an economical because corporate or co-operative manner.

Good management is required; and that is why you take pains to send good men to the City Council to look after your interests: your interests, not in screwing and economizing, but in spending wisely and honestly and well, getting the most they can for your money, and looking out for improvements and for good schemes worthy of encouragement. And when they do this well, be ready to trust them with more; see that not only the municipal but the national purse also is properly supplied. Our national Government is for all good purposes miserably poor. I fear there is sad waste somewhere, and that before the taxes can be judiciously raised the sources of the waste must be discovered and checked. I trust that already this labour is being put in hand. You have fine public servants who are trying to do their best with an ancient and very cumbrous and over-centralized machine; much revenue has to be spent in various unprofitable ways, wars and other, but in every good and noble direction of expenditure the country is miserably poor. Where it is economical it should be lavish; and where it is lavish it should be economical; that is an exaggeration, but there is a kind of truth underlying it. Our national economy in higher education is having disastrous results, it is a real danger to the nation. While other nations are investing millions of public money on higher education and research we prefer to keep the money in our pockets in order to spend it privately; and the result is that while the State is poor the individual is rich. Individuals are over rich in this country; money breeds money on our present system with very little work, and it is apt to roll itself up into portentous and top-heavy fortunes. The result is, I fear, a state of things that some people say is becoming

a scandal. I do not know. But however that may be, I should like to see this wealth owned by communities; I should like to see it in corporate hands and expended for the general good.

**Unearned incomes.**—Do not think that the original making of a fortune is easy. Most fortunes begin by thrift and enterprise; it is not the making of a fortune that is easy, it is the transferring and the inheriting of it that are so fatally easy and so dangerous. If the maker of the fortune himself had the disbursing of it, there would be but little harm done, and there might be much good. No fortune can be honestly *made* without strenuous industry and character. But a fortune can be inherited, *can* be inherited, I say, though I hope it seldom is, by a personification of laziness and folly and vice.

That, however, is not my point. My point is that self-denial is the beginning of capital and the essence of thrift—present self-denial for future good. This self-denial for future good you of this and kindred societies are already exercising in a small way, but it is possible and indeed likely that it will come to be exercised in a larger way, and so gradually a considerable fraction of the property of the world may ultimately pass into your hands. Wake up to this possibility, and do not abuse capital or capitalists, for some day you will be capitalists yourselves. Then it will strain your energies to know what to do with it, and how to use it for the best and highest good of humanity—the ascertainment of which is a noble aspect of human endeavour.

I do not expect agreement in all that I have to say, nor do I speak with authority; I am anxious to admit that I may be mistaken; I only ask you to consider and weigh my message, the more so if you disagree; as I know many will, especially in what follows:—

**The cheapness of high salaries.**—The tendency of public bodies is to economize in salaries. People look askance at highly-paid public servants, whereas it is just from those that you do get something for your money.

You don't get much service as a rule from dividend shareholders, but you do as a rule from salaried officers. That is the danger of municipalities and other democratic corporations: they will not realize with sufficient clearness that the manager and administrator is worthy of large remuneration, that to get the best man you must pay him well, and that to put up with a second-rate article when you can get the best is but a poor policy, and in the long run bad economy. Cheap men are seldom any good. In a large concern they may waste more than their annual salary in a week. Some people want to pay all men alike. It will not work. It is a subject full of controversy, I know, and I do not wish to dogmatize, but so far as I can see, and I have no personal interest in the matter, I say that the principle of inequality of payment must be recognized—that it is a necessary consequence of inequality of ability.

Some organizations seem to think, too, that the available work of the world is limited, and that you must each be careful not to do too much of it lest work become scarce. The truth is that the work potentially required by mankind is essentially unlimited; and if we could only get better social conditions there would be work and opportunity and scope for all, each according to his grade and power and ability.

Stand shoulder to shoulder and help each other, and form a banded community for mutual help, by all means; let all co-operate together, and let not one human being be idle except the sick and insane; but allow for different kinds of work, and put the false glamour of the idea of artificial equality out of your minds. In any organization, as in any human body, there must be head and there must be hands, there must be trunk and limbs: the good of the whole is secured by each doing his apportioned task and obtaining his appropriate nourishment: not every part alike, though each sufficient for his need: each brought up to his maximum efficiency.

And what is true of property is true of personal service also. That which is spent for the individual is of small value compared with service done for the race. It is on



the pains and sacrifice of individuals that a community is founded. "The pleasures of each generation evaporate in air; it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world" (J. R. Illingworth, in *Lux Mundi*). The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church; it is by heroism and unselfish devotion that a country rises and becomes great.

**The results of public spirit.**—Witness the magnificent spectacle of Japan to-day; the State above the individual; common good above personal good; sacrifice of self and devotion to the community; these great qualities, on which every nation has risen to glory, were never displayed more brightly in the history of the world than now before our eyes. It is a nation which is saturated and infused with public spirit, the spirit of the race, enthusiasm for the community and for the welfare of humanity. This is the spirit which elevates cities; it is this which makes a nationality; it is this which some day will renovate mankind.

A splendid article in *The Times* of last Tuesday calls it "the soul of a nation," a translation of the Japanese term Bushido. It is a sort of chivalry, but the term "chivalry" does not convey it; our nearest approach to it is "public spirit," public spirit in a glorified form, the spirit which animated the early Christian Church, so that prison, suffering, death itself, were gladly endured so that the gospel might be preached and humanity might be saved—a spirit which must be near akin to the divine idea of Sacrifice for the salvation of the world. To lose your life as the highest mode of saving it; to lose the world but retain the honour and dignity of your own soul; that spirit which animated the apostles, prophets, martyrs, is alive in Japan to-day. Is it alive in us as a nation? If not, if we have replaced it to any extent by some selfish opposite, by any such diabolically careless sentiment as "after me the deluge," then we as a nation have lost our soul, sold it for mere individual prosperity, sold it in some poor cases for not even that, for mere liquid refreshment, and we are on the down grade.

I trust it is not so, but sometimes I greatly fear it. It is surely not too late to arrest the process of decay ; the heart of the nation is sound enough : the men, as they said in South Africa, the men are splendid. Give them a fair chance, introduce better conditions, set forth high ideals, and be not ashamed to speak of these ideals and to follow them ; then we shall find that there is plenty of the spirit of unselfishness still, the spirit which calls men to harder tasks than momentary spurts of bravery, calls us all to the long and persistent effort of educating ourselves in the facts of the universe, grasping the real truth of things, and then, with patience and self-control, applying our energies to the material betterment and spiritual elevation of the world.

**THE END**



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Socialism and individualism,



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