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**THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE
TO SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM**

THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE
TO SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM
BY BERNARD SHAW

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TO
MY SISTER-IN-LAW

MARY STEWART CHOLMONDELY

THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN TO WHOSE QUESTION
THIS BOOK IS THE BEST ANSWER I CAN MAKE

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A CLOSED QUESTION OPENS

Socialism is an opinion as to how the income of the country should be distributed. Its distribution is not a natural phenomenon: it is a matter for arrangement, subject to change like any other arrangement. It has been changed within living memory to an extent that would have seemed incredible and scandalous to Queen Victoria, and is still being changed from year to year. Therefore what we have to consider is not whether our distribution shall be altered or not, but what further changes are desirable to attain a prosperous stability. This is the closed question which re-opened in the nineteenth century under the banner of Socialism; but it is one on which everyone should try to form an original personal opinion without prompting from Socialists PAGE I

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DIVIDING-UP

Dividing-up is neither a revolutionary novelty nor a Mosaic jubilee: it is a necessary and unpostponable daily and hourly event of civilized life. As wealth consists of food that becomes uneatable unless immediately consumed, and of articles that wear out in use and perish if kept unused, it must be divided-up and consumed at once. Saving is impossible: the things will not keep. What is called saving is a bargain whereby a person in possession of spare food allows another to consume it in return for an undertaking to reverse the transaction at some future time. Between the two nothing is saved, as one consumes what the other saves. A proposal that everybody should save is pure nonsense. A nation which stopped working would perish within a fortnight even if every member of it had "saved" a million . . . 6

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HOW MUCH FOR EACH?

This question does not settle itself. It has to be settled by law and enforced by the police. If the shares are to be altered the law must be altered. Examples of existing distribution. This has today become so repugnant to the general moral conception of fairness and so incompatible with the public health that there is a general revulsion of feeling against it. But the revulsion can have no political effect until it becomes arithmetically precise. It cannot be dealt with in terms of more or less, the question of how much more or less must be exactly determined. And as wealth is measured in money, distribution must be dealt with in terms of income. 7

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NO WEALTH WITHOUT WORK

As a nation lives from hand to mouth there must be continuous productive labor or there will be no food to distribute. But though everyone must eat, everyone need

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not work, because under modern conditions each of us can produce much more than enough to support one person. If everyone worked everyone would have a good deal of leisure. But it is possible to arrange that some people shall do all the work and have no leisure in order that others should have all leisure and no work. These two extremes are represented by complete Socialism and complete Slavery. Serfdom and Feudalism and Capitalism are intermediate stages. The continual struggle of persons and classes to alter the allotment of the labor task and the distribution of wealth and leisure in their own favor is the key to the history of revolutions. Enormous increase of the stakes in this game through modern discoveries and inventions

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COMMUNISM

Communism must be considered without personal, political, or religious prejudice as a plan of distribution like any other. It was the plan of the apostles, and is universally practised in the family. It is indispensable in modern cities. All services and commodities which are paid for by a common fund and are at the disposal of everyone indiscriminately are examples of communism in practice. Roads and bridges, armies and navies, street lighting and paving, policemen, dustmen, and sanitary inspectors are familiar and obvious instances 11

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Apparent fairness of this plan. Two fatal objections to it: (a) it is impossible to ascertain how much each person produces even when the product is a material object; and (b) most people's work consists, not in the production of material objects, but in services. The clearest case of individual production is that of a baby by its mother; but a baby is an expense, not a source of income. In practice production and service are made commensurate by paying the workers according to the time taken in producing the commodity or rendering the service; but this does not carry out the plan, as, when the time spent in qualifying the worker is taken into account, the calculation becomes impossible. Illustrative cases. Case of the married woman keeping a house and bringing up a family. The plan is impossible, and, at bottom, nonsensical 21

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This happens to some extent at present. We are accustomed to think that monarchs, as a class, should receive more than manual laborers; and as a rule they do. But monarchs receive much less than Steel Kings and Pork Barons; and unskilled laborers receive more than great mathematicians, who, as such, receive nothing, and have to live by poorly paid professorships. Clergymen get very little; and racing bookmakers get a good deal. Nobody can determine what they ought to get; yet nobody can defend what they do get on any rational ground. Those who think it a matter of course that scavengers should receive less than bank managers cannot say how much less, without which determination their opinion can have no effect in a political settlement of distribution. The main argument for enriching a class is that it enabled them to produce an idolatrous illusion of superiority which gives them authority, which is necessary in organizing society. But in modern society the persons in authority are often much poorer in money than those whom they command. Illustrative cases. Real authority has nothing to do with money 35

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Equal division has been tested by long experience. Practically all the work of the world has been done and is being done by bodies of persons receiving equal incomes. The inequality that exists is between classes and not between individuals. This arrangement is quite stable: there is no tendency for the equality to be upset by differences of individual character. Here and there abnormal individuals make their way into a better paid class or are thrown out into an unpaid vagrancy; but the rule is that each class either keeps its economic level or rises and falls as a class, its internal equality being maintained at every level. As people are put so they will stay. Equality of income, far from being a novelty, is an established practice, and the only possible one as between working individuals in organized industry. The problem is therefore not one of its introduction, but of its extension from the classes to the whole community. 68

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INCENTIVE

It is urged against equality that unless a person can earn more than another by working harder she will not work harder or longer. The reply is that it is neither fair nor desirable that she should work harder or longer. In factory and machine industry extra exertion is not possible: collective work goes on at the engine's speed and stops when the engine stops. The incentive of extra pay does not appeal to the slacker, whose object is to avoid work at any cost. The cure for that is direct compulsion. What is needed is an incentive to the community as a whole to choose a high standard of living rather than a lazy and degraded one, all standards being

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To every proposal for a general increase of incomes it is objected that its benefits will be swallowed up by married people having too many children. It is also alleged that existing poverty is due to the world being too small to produce food enough for all the people in it. The real cause is that there are too many people living as parasites on their fellows instead of by production. Illustrations from domestic service. Increase of population, leading to division of labor, enriches the community instead of impoverishing it. Limits to this law of increasing return. Possibilities of human multiplication. The question is not one of food alone but of space. The speed at which population increases has to be considered as well as the ultimate desirability of the increase. Too many unproductive children may starve a family though the country as a whole may have unlimited employment for adults, therefore the cost of bearing and bringing up children should be borne by the State. Checks to population. War, pestilence, and poverty. Contraception, or artificial birth control. Exposure of female infants. Mahomet's view of it. Capitalism, by producing parasitism on an enormous scale has produced premature overpopulation, kept under by excessive infant mortality and the diseases of poverty and luxury. Equality of income can get rid of this, and place population on its natural basis. University teaching on the subject, which alleges that a natural law of diminishing return is now in operation, is merely one of the corruptions of political science by Capitalism. Possibility of local overpopulation in an underpopulated world. Examples 83

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Men's wages are family wages, women's wages individual wages. The effect is to make the proletarian married woman the slave of a slave, and to establish conventions that the man is the breadwinner; that the woman's work in the home being apparently gratuitous, is not work at all; and that women, when they are directly paid for their work, should be paid less than men. Protection of women in the propertied class by marriage settlements, and in the middle class by the Married Women's Property Acts. The sweating of daughters living partly on their father's wages enables one trade to sweat another, and produces a class of women who work for less than subsistence wages without starving. Their competition brings down the wages of all women of their class below subsistence level, with the result that women who have neither husband nor father to make up the shortage must make it up by prostitution or suffer the extremity of excessive toil and insufficient food. The wages of sin often much higher than the wages of virtue. The affiliation laws

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tendency is not to Socialism but to Capitalism controlled by Labor, with the middle and propertied classes reduced to subjection in the interest of the proletariat. As the proletariat has the advantage of numbers this arrangement would profit the majority; but it would be so unpalatable to the propertied and learned classes that they may conceivably be driven to clamor for Socialism to save them from it PAGE 213

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NATIONALIZATION OF BANKING

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pensation do not know their business and should not be voted for. Alternative of Government entering competitively into industries and beating private enterprises out of them. Objections. Wastefulness of competition. A competing State enterprise would have to allow competition with itself, which is often inadmissible in the case of ubiquitous services. The private competitor is indifferent to the ruin of a defeated rival; but the State must avoid this PAGE 268

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WHY CONFISCATION HAS SUCCEEDED HITHERTO

Direct confiscation of income without compensation is already in vigorous operation. Income tax, super tax, and estate duties. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and his budget. Gladstone's attitude towards income tax. General agreement of Capitalist parties that all other means of raising money shall be exhausted before levying taxes on income. Contrary assumption of the proletarian Labor Party that the Capitalists should pay first, not last. This issue underlies all the Budget debates. Estate duties ("death duties"), though unsound economically, and often cruel and unfair in operation, succeed in carrying Socialistic confiscation further in England under Conservative Governments than some avowedly Socialistic ones have been able to carry it abroad. The success of the operation is due to the fact that the sums confiscated, though charged as percentages on capital values, can be paid out of income directly or indirectly (by insuring or borrowing), and are immediately thrown back into circulation by Government expenditure. Thus income can be safely confiscated if immediately redistributed; but the basic rule remains that the Government must not confiscate more than it can spend productively. This is the Socialist canon of taxation PAGE 284

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HOW THE WAR WAS PAID FOR

War must be paid for on the nail: armies cannot be fed nor slaughtered by promissory notes. Men are obtained by conscription, and money partly by direct taxation and inflation, but mainly by borrowing from the capitalists in spite of the protests of the Labor Party against the exemption of capital from conscription. The quaint result is that in order to pay the capitalists the interest on their loans, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to tax them so heavily that, as a class, they are losing by the transaction. Robbing Peter, who did not lend, to pay Paul, who did. As the property owners who hold War Loan Stock gain at the expense of those who do not, a unanimous Capitalist protest is impossible. An illustration. But the Labor contention that it would pay the propertied class as a whole to cancel the National Debt is none the less sound. Financing war by "funded" loans. As capital invested in war is utterly and destructively consumed it does not, like industrial capital, leave the nation better equipped for subsequent production. The War Loan, though registered in the books of the Bank of England as existing capital, is nothing but debt. The country is therefore impoverished to meet interest charges on 7000 millions of non-existent capital. There are reasons for not repudiating this debt directly; but as the war produced an enormous consumption of capital and yet left the world with less income to distribute than before, a veiled repudiation of at least part of the debt is inevitable. Our method of repudiation is to redistribute income as between the holders of War Loan and the other capitalists. But as the huge borrowing and confiscation of capital that was feasible when the Government had war employment ready for an unlimited number of proletarians leaves them destitute now that the Government has demobilized them without providing peace

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employment, the capitalists have now to pay doles in addition to finding the money to pay themselves their own interest. PAGE 289

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NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION LEVIES

Though taxation of capital is nonsensical, all proposals in that form are not necessarily impracticable. A Capitalist Government could, without requiring ready money or disturbing the Stock Exchange or the Bank Rate, cancel the domestic part of the National Debt to relieve private industry from taxation by veiling the repudiation as a levy on capital values and accepting loan and share scrip at face value in payment. Illustration. The objection to such a procedure is that levies, as distinguished from established annual taxes, are raids on private property. As such, they upset the sense of security which is essential to social stability, and are extremely demoralizing to Governments when once they are accepted as legitimate precedents. A raiding Chancellor of the Exchequer would be a very undesirable one. The regular routine of taxation of income and compensated nationalizations is available and preferable 294

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THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROBLEM SOLVED

Recapitulation. The difficulty of applying the constructive program of Socialism lies not in the practical but in the metaphysical part of the business: the will to equality. When the Government finally acquires a virtually complete control of the national income it will have the power to distribute it unequally; and this possibility may enlist, and has to a certain extent already enlisted, the most determined opponents of Socialism on the side of its constructive political machinery. Thus Socialism ignorantly pursued may lead to State Capitalism instead of to State Socialism, the same road leading to both until the final distributive stage is reached. The solution of the constructive problem of Socialism does not allay the terrors of the alarmists who understand neither problem nor solution, and connect nothing with the word Socialism except red ruin and the breaking up of laws. Some examination of the effect of Socialism on institutions other than economic must therefore be appended 297

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SHAM SOCIALISM

The War, by shewing how a Government can confiscate the incomes of one set of citizens and hand them over to another set with or without the intention of equalizing distribution or nationalizing industries or services, shewed also how any predominant class, trade, or clique which can nobble our Cabinet Ministers can use the power of the State for selfish ends by measures disguised as reforms or political necessities. All retrogressions and blunders, like all genuine reforms, are lucrative to somebody, and so never lack plausible advocates. Illustrative cases of exploitation of the rates and taxes and of private benevolence by Capitalism and Trade Unionism. Public parks, endowed schools, garden cities, and subsidies. The Government subsidy to the coal owners in 1925 not Socialistic nor even Capitalistic
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istic, but simply unbusinesslike. Poplarism Mischief done by subsidies and doles. Subsidies plus Poplarism burn the candle at both ends. The danger of conscious and deliberate exploitation of the coercive and confiscatory powers of the Government by private or sectional interests is greatly increased by the modern American practice of employing first-rate brains as such in industrial enterprise. The American Trade Unions are following this example. Surprising results. What its adoption by English Trade Unions will mean. Socialists will still have to insist on equalization of income to prevent Capitalist big business and the aristocracy of Trade Unionism controlling Collectivist Governments for their private ends PAGE 299

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CAPITALISM IN PERPETUAL MOTION

Nothing stays put. Literal Conservatism impossible. Human society is like a glacier, apparently stationary, always in motion, always changing. To understand the changes that are happening, and the others that are coming, it is necessary to understand the changes that have gone before. Examples of every phase in economic evolution still survive and can be studied from life. Without such study we are liable to be misguided and corrupted or exasperated. Those adventures of Capitalism in pursuit of profits which took the form of thrilling exploits by extraordinary individuals with no sordid aims are narrated as the splendid history of our race. On the other hand, the more shameful episodes in that pursuit may be imputed to the greed of capitalists instead of to the ferocity and bigotry of their agents. Both views may be discounted as special pleadings. A capitalist may accidentally be a genius just as she may be a fool or a criminal. But a capitalist as such is only a person with spare money and a legal right to withhold it from the hungry. No special ability or quality of any sort beyond ordinary prudence and selfishness is involved in the capitalist's function: the solicitor and stockbroker, the banker and employer, will carry the capital to the proletarians and see that when consuming it they replace it with interest. The most intelligent woman can do no better than invest her money, which does far more good when invested than when spent in charity. But the employers and financiers who exploit her capital are pressed by the exhaustion of home markets and old industries to finance adventurous and experimental geniuses who explore and invent and conquer. They cannot concern themselves with the effect of these enterprises on the world or even on the nation provided they bring back money to the shareholders. Capital, to save itself from rotting, has to be ruthless in its ceaseless search for investment; and mere Conservatism is of no avail against this iron necessity. Its chartered companies. It adds India, Borneo, Rhodesia to the white Englishman's burden of its naval and military defence. It may yet shift our capital from Middlesex to Asia or West Africa. Our helplessness in such an event. No need to pack up yet; but we must get rid of static conceptions of civilization and geography 308

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THE-RUNAWAY CAR OF CAPITALISM

Controlled motion is a good thing; but the motion of Capital is uncontrollable and dangerous. As the future of civilization depends on Governments gaining control

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of the forces that are running away with Capitalism an understanding of them is necessary. Very few people do understand them. The Government does not, neither do the voters. The difference between Governments and governed. The Governments know the need for government and want to govern. The governed have no such knowledge: they resent government and desire freedom. This resentment, which is the central weakness of Democracy, was not of great importance when the people had no votes, as under Queen Elizabeth and Cromwell. But when great extensions of government and taxation came to be required to control and supplant Capitalism, bourgeois Democracy produced an increase of electoral resistance to government; and proletarian Democracy has continued the bourgeois tradition. The resultant paralysis of Parliament has produced a demand for dictatorships; and Europe has begun to clamor for political disciplinarians. Between our inability to govern well and our unwillingness to be governed at all, we furnish examples of the abuses of power and the horrors of liberty without ascertaining the limits of either PAGE 314

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THE NATURAL LIMIT TO LIBERTY

We are not born free: Nature is the supreme tyrant, and in our latitudes a hard taskmaster. Commercial progress has been at root nothing more than inventing ways of doing Nature's tasks with less labor: in short, saving labor and winning leisure. Some examples. Actually Liberty is Leisure. Political liberations cannot add to liberty unless they add to leisure. For example: woman's daily routine. Sleep, feeding, resting, and locomotion are not leisure: they are compulsory. A seven hour working day gives at most six hours leisure out of the seventeen non-working hours. The woman of property. Leisure is the incentive to attain her position. All wage workers value leisure more than money. Property coveted because it confers the maximum of leisure. Nevertheless, as leisure brings freedom, and freedom brings responsibility and self-determination, it is dreaded by those accustomed to tutelage: for instance, soldiers and domestic servants. The national fund of leisure. Its present misdistribution. Description of a hypothetical four hours working day. Exceptions to intermittent labor at regular hours. Pregnancy and nursing. Artistic, scientific, and political work. Fixed daily hours only a basis for calculation. A four hours day may mean in practice six days a month, two months a year, or an earlier retirement. Difference between routine work and creative work. Complete freedom impossible even during leisure. Legislative restraints on religion, sport, and marriage. The Inhibition Complex and the Punch baby. The contrary or Anarchic Complex. The instinctive resistance to Socialism as slavery obscures its aspect as a guarantee of the maximum possible of leisure and therefore of liberty 319

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RENT OF ABILITY

The proper social use of brains. Methods of making exceptional personal talents lucrative. When the talents are popular, as in the case of artists, surgeons, sports
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champions and the like, they involve hard work and confer no political or industrial power. As their lucrateness is a function of their scarcity their power to enrich their possessors is not formidable and is controllable by taxation. Occasional freak incomes would not matter if equality of income were general. Impossibility of living more expensively than the richest class. Millionaires give away money for this reason. Special case of the talent for exploitation, which is a real social danger. Its forms. Administrative ability. The ability to exercise authority and enforce discipline. Both are indispensable in industry and in all organized activities. When tactfully exercised they are not unpopular, as most of us like to be saved the trouble of thinking for ourselves and so are not averse from being directed. Authority and subordination in themselves are never unpopular; but Capitalism, by creating class differences and associating authority with insolence, destroys the social equality which is indispensable to voluntary subordination. Scolding, slave driving, cursing, kicking, and slacking. Reluctance to obey commanders who are trusted and liked is less likely to give trouble than reluctance to command. Fortunately, persons of exceptional ability do not need any special inducement to exercise it. Instances of their failure in subordinate employment. In our socialized services they do not demand excessive incomes. The demand of the real lady or gentleman. Both are compelled to act as cads in capitalist commerce, in which organizers and financiers, by reason of their special cunning, are able to extort prodigious shares of the country's output as "rent of ability." The meaning of rent. It cannot be abolished but it can be nationalized. Futility of recriminations as to indispensability between employers and employed. The talent of the exploiter is as indispensable to the landlord and capitalist as to the proletarian. Directed labor is indispensable to all three. Nationalization and equalization socializes rent of ability as well as rent of land and capital by defeating its private appropriation. PAGE 331

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PARTY POLITICS

The steps to Socialism will not necessarily be taken by Socialist Governments. Many of them may be taken, as some already have, by anti-Socialist Cabinets. The growth of the Labor Party and the enormous electoral preponderance of the proletarian electorate promises a complete Labor conquest of the House of Commons. In that case the victorious Labor Party would split into several irreconcilable groups and make parliamentary government impossible unless it contained a unanimous Socialist majority of members really clear in their minds as to what Socialism exactly means. Precedent in the Long Parliament. The danger is not peculiar to Labor. Any political party obtaining complete possession of Parliament may go to pieces and end in a dictatorship. The Conservative triumph produced by the anti-Russian scare of 1924 made it almost impossible to hold the party together. Large majorities in Parliament, far from enabling Cabinets to do what they like, destroy their cohesion and enfeeble their party. Demoralization of Parliament during the period of large majorities brought in by the South African war. Concealment of preparations for the war of 1914-18. Parliamentary value of the fact that Socialism cannot be shaken by political storms and changes 343

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THE PARTY SYSTEM

Popular ignorance of what the term Party System really means. Enslavement of voters by the system, in and out of Parliament. Its advantage is that if the House of Commons has good leaders the quality of the rank and file does not matter. How it was introduced as a war measure by William III. Under it the upshot of the General Elections is determined not by the staunch party voters but by the floating body of independent electors who follow their impulses without regard to the Party System. The system is essentially a two-party system of solid majority Government party *versus* solid minority Opposition party. When independence prevails, groups form, each in a minority in the House; and only by combining enough groups to form a majority can any leader form a Cabinet and carry on. Such combinations are called Blocks They have little cohesion, and do not last. The French Chamber exhibits this phenomenon Possibility of its occurring in the House of Commons. Alternative systems. Government by committees without a Cabinet as practised by our municipalities. This is a local survival of the old system of separate King's cabinets upon which the Party System was imposed. The non-party methods of local government are quite efficient. Increasing tendency to lessen the rigidity of the Party System in Parliament by declaring more and more questions non-party. Tendency of Governments to resign on defeated votes of confidence only. Inadequacy of our two Houses of Parliament for the work put upon them by modern conditions. Need for changes involving the creation of new chambers. The Webb proposals PAGE 348

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DIVISIONS WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY

Questions on which the present apparent unanimity in the parliamentary Labor Party is delusive: for instance, the Right to Strike. Socialism and Compulsory Social Service *versus* Trade Unionism and Freedom of Contract. A Bill to enforce social service and penalize strikes would split the party. Magnitude of modern strikes through the extension of Trade Unionism from crafts to industries Modern strikes tend to become devastating civil wars. Arguments for Compulsory Labor. Military and civil service When the issue is joined the non-Socialist Trade Unionists will combine with the Conservatives against the Socialists 354

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RELIGIOUS DISSENSIONS

The nation's children. Religious teaching in public schools. Impossibility of expressing the multifarious conflict of opinions on this subject by a two-party conflict in the House of Commons. Sectarian private schools. Roman Catholic and Non-conformist scruples. Passive resistance. Impracticable solutions. Cowper-Templeism. The Bible and Copernican astronomy Modern physics and evolutionary biology. Men professing science are as bigoted as ecclesiastics. Secular education impossible because children must be taught conduct, and the ultimate sanctions of conduct are metaphysical. Weakness of the punishment system. Conceptions of God. Personifications of God as the Big Papa and the Roman Catholic Big Mamma

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needed for children. Voltaire and Robespierre anticipated in the nursery. Comte's law of the three stages of belief. Tendency of parents, voters, elected persons, and governments to impose their religions, customs, names, institutions, and even their languages on everyone by force. Such substitutions may be progressive. Toleration is incompatible with complete sectarian conviction. The historic tolerations were only armistices or exhaustions after drawn battles. Examples of modern bigotry. Toleration is impossible as between Capitalism and Socialism. It is therefore necessary to demonstrate that a Labor Party can neither establish Socialism by exterminating its opponents, nor its opponents avert it by exterminating the Socialists PAGE 359

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REVOLUTIONS

Difference between revolutions and elections or ordinary reforms. Revolutions transfer political power from one faction or leader to another by violence or the threat of violence. Examples from English history. The transfer of political power from our capitalists to our proletarians has already taken place in form but not in substance, because, as our proletariat is half parasitic on Capitalism, and only half productive and self-supporting, half the proletarians are on the side of Capitalism. "Ye are many, they are few" is a dangerously misleading slogan. Consciousness of their formidable proletarian backing may embolden the capitalists to refuse to accept a parliamentary decision on any issue which involves a serious encroachment of Socialism on Private Property. The case of Ireland, and the simultaneous post-war repudiations of parliamentary supremacy in several continental countries forbid us to dismiss this possibility as unlikely. But whether our political decisions are made by votes or by blood and iron the mere decisions to make changes and the overruling of their opponents cannot effect any changes except nominal ones. The Russian Revolution effected a complete change from absolute monarchy to proletarian republicanism and proclaimed the substitution of Communism for Capitalism; but the victorious Communists found themselves obliged to fall back on Capitalism and do their best to control it. Their difficulties were greatly increased by the destruction involved by violent revolution. Communism can spread only as a development of existing economic civilization and must be thrown back by any sudden overthrow of it. "The inevitability of gradualness" does not imply any inevitability of peaceful change; but Socialists will be strongly opposed to civil war if their opponents do not force it on them by repudiating peaceful methods, because though civil war may clear the way it can bring the goal no nearer. The lesson of history on this point. The French Revolution and the *mot* of Fouquier Tinville. Socialism must therefore be discussed on its own merits as an order of society apart from the methods by which the necessary political power to establish it may be attained 370

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CHANGE MUST BE PARLIAMENTARY

As peaceful settlement of the struggle for political supremacy between the Capitalists and the Socialists cannot be guaranteed we must resign ourselves to the un-

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pleasant possibilities of our sedulously glorified pugnacity. But as destructive quarreling must be followed by constructive co-operation if civilization is to be maintained the consummation of Socialism can proceed when the fighting is over. A civil war can therefore be only an interruption and need not be further considered. Socialism in Parliament. How a series of properly prepared and compensated nationalizations may be voted for by intelligent politicians who are not Socialists, and carried out without disturbing the routine to which the unthinking masses are accustomed. Importance of the preparations: every nationalization will require extensions of the civil and municipal services. Socialism at one stroke is impossible. How far it must stop short of its logical completion PAGE 380

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SUBSIDIZED PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Private commercial enterprise will not be completely superseded by nationalization; but it may become bankrupt; and in that case it may demand and receive subsidies from the Government. A simple instance. This process, long familiar in cultural institutions, has now begun in big business: for example the Government subsidy to coal owners in 1925, the Capitalists thus themselves establishing the practice, and providing precedents for the subsidizing of private experimental ventures by Socialist Governments. Direct industrial nationalizations must be confined to well-established routine services. When State-financed private ventures succeed, and thereby cease to be experimental, they can be nationalized, throwing back private enterprise on its proper business of novelty, invention, and experiment. The objections of doctrinaire nationalizers. The Socialist objective is not nationalization but equalization of income, nationalization being only a means to that end. The abuse of subsidies. Looting the taxpayer. Subsidies as mortgages. The national war factories. Their sale to private bidders after the war as an illustration of the impossibility of nationalizing or retaining anything for which the Government cannot find immediate use 386

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HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

If it takes too long a revolutionary explosion may wreck civilization. Equality of income can be attained and maintained only in a settled and highly civilized society under a Government with a highly trained civil service and an elaborate code of laws, fortified by general moral approval. The process of its establishment will necessarily be dangerously slow rather than dangerously quick; for we are not educated to be Socialists: we teach children that Socialism is wicked. The material advantages of the steps towards Socialism are, however, biasing proletarian parents, who are in a huge majority, more and more in favor of the movement towards Socialism. This tendency is helped by the moral revolt against the cruelty of Capitalism in its operation and the sordidness of its principle. In a Socialist State economic selfishness would probably stand on the moral level now occupied by cardsharpping instead of being held up as the key to social eminence 391

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SOCIALISM AND MARRIAGE

Socialists apt to forget that people object to new liberties more than to new laws. Marriage varies from frontier to frontier. Civil marriage. Religious and communist celibacy, or the negation of marriage. Socialism has nothing to do with these varieties, as equality of income applies impartially to them all. Why there is nevertheless a rooted belief that Socialism will alter marriage. The legend of Russian "nationalization of women". Where women and children are economically dependent on husbands and fathers marriage is slavery for wives and home a prison for children. Socialism, by making them economically independent, would break the chain and open the prison door. Probable results. Improvement in domestic manners. The State should intervene to divorce separated couples, thus abolishing the present power of the parties to enforce a broken tie vindictively or religiously. Clash of Church and State on marriage. The State must intervene to control population. As Socialism would clear away the confusion into which Capitalism, with its inevitable result of parasitic labor and premature overpopulation, has plunged the subject, a Socialist state is more likely to interfere than a Capitalist one. Expenditures. Limitation of families. Encouragement of families. Polygamy. Experience of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) on this point. Bounties for large families plus persecution of birth control. State endowment of parentage. Compulsory parentage. Monogamy practicable only when the numbers of the sexes are equal. Case of a male-destroying war. Conflicting domestic ideals affecting population. The Bass Rock ideal. The Boer ideal. The bungalow ideal. The monster hotel ideal 406

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SOCIALISM AND CHILDREN

The State school child. Need for the protection of children against parents. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The new Adoption Act. Need

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for the organization of child life as such. Schools essential; prisons. General ignorance after nine years of enforced elementary schooling. Limits of child liberty. The real nature and purpose of education. Our stupidities about it. Injury done by forcing children to learn things beyond their capacity or foreign to their aptitudes. Girls and compulsory Beethoven. Boys and compulsory classics and mathematics. Eton began by forbidding play and now makes it compulsory. Children as animals to be tamed by beating and sacks to be filled with learning. Opportunities for the Sadist and child fancier. Children in school are outlawed. Typical case of assault. Unendurable strain of the relations between teachers and children. Schools, though educationally disastrous, have the incidental advantage of encouraging promiscuous social intercourse. University manners. Middle class manners. Garden City and Summer School manners. Need for personal privacy and free choice of company not supplied by the snobbery and class segregations of Capitalism. Socialism preferable on this score. Technical education for citizenship. As knowledge must not be withheld on the ground that it is as efficient for evil as for good, it must be accompanied by moral instruction and ethical inculcation. Doctrines a Socialist state could not tolerate. Variety and incompatibility of British religions. Original sin. Brimstone damnation. Children's souls need protection more than their bodies. The Bible. A common creed necessary to citizenship. Certain prejudices must be inculcated. Need for an official second nature. Limits to State proselytizing. Beyond the irreducible minimum of education the hand should be left to find its own employment and the mind its own food . . . PAGE 412

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SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES

Will a Socialist State tolerate a Church? This question must be discussed objectively. Survey of the age-long struggle between Church and State for the control of political and social institutions. The Inquisition and the Star Chamber. Theocracy has not lost its power. Mormon Theocracy. Christian Science. Both have come into conflict with the secular government. New Churches capture secular Governments by denying that they are Churches. The persecutions and fanaticisms of to-day rage in the name of Science. The avowed Church of Christ Scientist *versus* the masked Church of Jenner and Pasteur, Scientists. Tests for public office, governing bodies, and professions. Church of England tests broken by the English people refusing to remain in one Church. The Quakers. Admission to Parliament of Dissenters, then of Jews, finally of Atheists, leading to civil marriage and burial and the substitution of civil registration of birth for baptism, leaves the State in the grip of pseudo-scientific orthodoxy. Extravagances of this new faith in America and the new European republics. The assets of religion are also the assets of science. The masses, indifferent to both, are ungovernable without an inculcated faith (the official second nature). Modern conflicts between secular authority and Church doctrine. Cremation. Rights of animals. Use of cathedrals. The Russian situation the State tolerating the Church whilst denouncing its teaching as dope. Such contemptuously tolerant anti-clericalism is necessarily transient; positive teaching being indispensable. Subjective religion. Courage. Redskin ideals. Man as hunter-warrior with Woman as everything else. Political uselessness of ferocity and sportsman-

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ship. Fighting men cowardly and lazy as thinkers. Women anxious lest Socialism should attack their religion. It need not do so unless inequality of income is part of their religion. But they must beware of attempts to constitute Socialism as a Catholic Church with an infallible prophet and Savior. The Moscow Third International is essentially such a Church, with Karl Marx as its prophet. It must come into conflict with the Soviet and be mastered by it. We need not, however, repudiate its doctrine and vituperate its prophet on that account any more than we need repudiate the teaching of Christ and vilify his character when we insist that the State and not the Church shall govern England. The merits of Marx PAGE 429

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CURRENT CONFUSIONS

The Intelligent Woman must resist the impulse to intervene in conversational bickerings and letters to the Press about Socialism and Capitalism by people who understand neither. Meaningless vituperation and general misuse of nomenclature. Politicians misname themselves as well as one another. Self-contradictory names such as Communist-Anarchist. Real distinctions. Direct Action *versus* Fabianism. Poor Man's Capitalism: its forms. It often masquerades as Socialism. The assumption of the name Communist by the cruder sort of Direct-Actionists produces the anomaly of a Labor Party expelling Communists whilst advocating Communist legislation. Fascism, produced by impatient disgust with Parliament as an institution, is common to the extreme Right and the extreme Left. Methods of Direct Action. The General Strike. Its absurdity. Its futility as a preventive of war. Pacifism. Supernational social organization. Empires and Commonwealths. Confusions as to Democracy. Proletarian jealousy of official power. Resultant autocracy in the Trade Unions. Labor leaders more arbitrary than Peers, and much more cynical as to working class political capacity than middle class and aristocratic idealists. Democracy in practice has never been democratic; and the millennial hopes based on every extension of the franchise, from the Reform Bill of 1832 to Votes for Women, have been disappointed. The reaction. Discipline for everybody and votes for nobody. Why women should stick resolutely to their votes. Proportional Representation opposed by the Labor Party. Need for a scientific test of political capacity. Those who use democracy as a stepping stone to political power oppose it as a dangerous nuisance when they get there. Its real object is to establish a genuine aristocracy. To do this we must first ascertain which are the aristocrats; and it is here that popular voting fails. Mrs. Everybody votes for Mrs. Somebody only to discover that she has elected Mrs. Noisy Nobody . . . 443

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PERORATION

A last word. Danger of discouragement through excessive sympathy. Public evils are fortunately not millionfold evils. Suffering is not cumulative; but waste is; and the Socialist revolt is against waste. Honor, health, and joy of heart are impossible under Capitalism: rich and poor are alike detestable: both must cease to exist. Our need for neighbors whose interests do not compete with ours is against the principle

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of Capitalism. Waiting for dead men's shoes. The professions. Husband hunting. The social friction is intense: Capitalism puts sand instead of oil in all the bearings of our machinery. The remonstrance of the optimist. Natural kindness. Capitalism itself was better-intentioned in its inception than early Christianity. Goodwill is not enough: it is dangerous until it finds the right way. Unreasoning sentiment an unsafe guide. We believe what we want to believe: if a pecuniary bias is given to our activities it will corrupt them in institution, teaching, and practice until the best intentioned citizens will know no honest methods and doctrines. In our search for disinterested service we come up against profiteering and Trade Unionism at every turn. Resultant cynicism and pessimism. Gulliver's Travels and Candide. Equality of income would make these terrible books mere clinical lectures on an extinct disease. The simple and noble meaning of gentility PAGE 455

APPENDIX

Instead of a bibliography. The technical literature of Capitalism and Socialism mostly abstract, inhuman, and written in an academic jargon which only specialists find readable. Failure to define either capital or Socialism. The early Capitalist economists: their candor. Ricardo, De Quincey, and Austin. The Socialist reaction: Proudhon and Marx. The academic reaction: John Stuart Mill, Cairnes, and Maynard Keynes. The artistic reaction: Ruskin, Carlyle, and Morris. The reaction of the novelists: Dickens and Wells, Galsworthy and Bennett. The reaction in the theatre: Ibsen and Strindberg. Henry George and Land Nationalization. Literature of the conversion of Socialism from an insurrectionary movement in the Liberal tradition to a constitutional one. Fabian Essays. Sidney and Beatrice Webb. The author's contributions 465

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APPENDIX

INSTEAD OF A BIBLIOGRAPHY

THIS book is so long that I can hardly think that any woman will want to read much more about Socialism and Capitalism for some time. Besides, a bibliography is supposed to be an acknowledgment by the author of the books from which his own book was compiled. Now this book is not a compilation: it is all out of my own head. It was started by a lady asking me to write her a letter explaining Socialism. I thought of referring her to the hundreds of books which have been written on the subject; but the difficulty was that they were nearly all written in an academic jargon which, though easy and agreeable to students of economics, politics, philosophy, and sociology generally, is unbearably dry, meaning unreadable, to women not so specialized. And then, all these books are addressed to men. You might read a score of them without ever discovering that such a creature as a woman had ever existed. In fairness let me add that you might read a good many of them without discovering that such a thing as a man ever existed. So I had to do it all over again in my own way and yours. And though there were piles of books about Socialism, and an enormous book about Capitalism by Karl Marx, not one of them answered the simple question "What is Socialism?" The other simple question, "What is Capital?" was smothered in a mass of hopelessly wrong answers, the right one having been hit on (as far as my reading goes) only once, and that was by the British economist Stanley Jevons when he remarked casually that capital is spare money. I made a note of that.

However, as I know that women who frequent University Extension lectures will not be satisfied until they have choked their brains by reading a multitude of books on the subject; and as the history of Socialist thought is instructive, I will say just a word or two in the customary pedantic manner about the literary milestones on the road from Capitalism to Socialism.⁴

The theory of Capitalism was not finally worked out until early in the nineteenth century by Ricardo, a Jewish stockbroker. As he had a curious trick of saying the opposite of what he meant whilst contriving somehow to make his meaning clear, his demonstration was elegantly and accurately paraphrased by a first rate literary artist and opium eater, Thomas De Quincey, who could write readably and fascinatingly about anything.

The theory was that if private property in land and capital, and sanctity of free contract between individuals, were enforced as fundamental constitutional principles, the proprietors would provide employment for the rest of the community on terms sufficient to furnish them with at least a bare subsistence in return for continuous industry, whilst themselves becoming rich to such excess that the investment of their superfluous income as capital would cost them no privation. No attempt was made to disguise

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the fact that the resultant disparity between the poverty of the proletarian masses and the riches of the proprietors would produce popular discontent, or that as wages fell and rents rose with the increase of population, the contrast between laborious poverty and idle luxury would provide sensational topics for Radical agitators. Austin's Lectures on Jurisprudence and Macaulay's forecasts of the future of America prove that the more clear-headed converts to the theory of Capitalism had no millennial illusions.

But they could see no practicable alternative. The Socialist alternative of State organization of industry was inconceivable, because, as industry had not yet finished the long struggle by which it extricated itself from the obsolete restrictions and oppressions of medieval and feudal society, State interference, outside simple police work, still seemed a tyranny to be broken, not a vital activity to be extended. Thus the new Capitalist economic policy was put forward in opposition, not to Socialism, but to Feudalism or Paternal Oligarchy. It was dogmatically called Political Economy absolute, complete, and inevitable; and the workers were told that they could no more escape or modify its operation than change the orbits of the planets.

In 1840 a French proletarian, Proudhon, published an essay with the startling title "What is Property? Theft". In it he demonstrated that a *rentier*, or person living, as we now put it, by owning instead of by working, inflicts on society precisely the same injury as a thief. Proudhon was a poor Frenchman; but a generation later John Ruskin, a rich Englishman of the most conservative education and culture, declared that whoever was not a worker was either a beggar or a robber, and published accounts of his personal activities and expenditure to prove that he had given good value for his rents and dividends. A generation later again Cecil Rhodes, an ultra-imperialist, made a famous will bequeathing his large fortune for public purposes, and attaching the condition that no idler should ever benefit by it. It may be said that from the moment when Capitalism established itself as a reasoned-out system to be taught at the universities as standard political economy, it began to lose its moral plausibility, and, in spite of its dazzling mechanical triumphs and financial miracles, steadily progressed from inspiring the sanguine optimism of Macaulay and his contemporaries to provoking a sentiment which became more and more like abhorrence among the more thoughtful even of the capitalists themselves.

All such moral revolutions have their literary prophets and theorists; and among them the first place was taken by Karl Marx, in the second half of the nineteenth century, with his history of Capital, an overwhelming exposure of the horrors of the industrial revolution and the condition to which it had reduced the proletariat. Marx's contribution to the abstract economic theory of value, by which he set much store, was a blunder which was presently corrected and superseded by the theory of Jevons; but as Marx's category of "surplus value" (*Mehrwerth*), meaning rent, interest, and profits, represented solid facts, his blunder in no way invalidated his indictment

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of the capitalist system, nor his historical generalization as to the evolution of society on economic lines. His so-called Historic Materialism is easily vulnerable to criticism as a law of nature; but his postulate that human society does in fact evolve on its belly, as an army marches, and that its belly biases its brains, is a safe working one. Buckle's much less read History of Civilization, also a work of the mind changing sort, has the same thesis but a different moral: to wit, that progress depends on the critical people who do not believe everything they are told: that is, on scepticism.

Even before Karl Marx the Capitalist economists had lost their confidence, and its ordinary exponents become disingenuously evasive. Not so the bigger men. John Stuart Mill began as a Ricardian and ended as an avowed Socialist. Cairnes still saw no practicable alternative to Capitalism; but his contempt for the "drones in the hive" who live by owning was as thorough and outspoken as Ruskin's. Their latest academic successor, Mr Maynard Keynes, dismisses Laissez-faire contemptuously as an exploded fallacy.

After Cairnes a school of British Socialist economists arose, notably Sidney and Beatrice Webb of the Fabian Society, who substituted the term Political Science for Political Economy. They gave historical consciousness to the proletarian movement by writing its history with the intimate knowledge and biographical vivacity needed to give substance to the abstract proletariat described by Marx. The evolution of Trade Unionism, Co-operation, and proletarian politics (Industrial Democracy) was reasoned out and documented by them. Their histories of English local government and of the Poor Law cover a huge part of the general field of British constitutional and administrative activity, past and present. They cured Fabianism of the romantic amateurishness which had made the older Socialist agitations negligible and ridiculous, and contributed most of the Fabian Society's practical proposals for the solution of pressing problems. They shattered the old Capitalist theory of the impotence of the State for anything but mischief in industry, and demonstrated not only that communal and collective enterprise has already attained a development undreamt of by Ricardo and his contemporaries, but that Capitalism itself is dependent for its existence on State guidance, and has evolved collective forms of its own which have taken it far beyond the control of the individual private investor, and left it ripe for transfer to national or municipal ownership. Their volume on the decay of Capitalism has completed Marx's work of driving Capitalism from its old pretension to be normal, inevitable, and in the long run always beneficial in modern society, to a position comparable to that of an army digging itself into its last ditch after a long series of surrenders and retreats. They estimate roughly that in its hundred years of supremacy Capitalism justified its existence, *faute de mieux*, for the first fifty years, and for the last fifty has been collapsing more and more on its crazy foundation.

Beatrice Webb's curious mixture of spiritual and technical autobiography, entitled My Apprenticeship, describes how an intelligent girl-capitalist, with

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a sensitive social conscience and a will of her own, critically impervious to mere persuasion, and impressible by first hand evidence and personal experience only, was led to Socialism by stubbornly investigating the facts of Capitalist civilization for herself. The Intelligent Woman with a turn for investigation or an interest in character study, or both, should read it.

Between Karl Marx and the Webbs came Henry George with his *Progress and Poverty*, which converted many to Land Nationalization. It was the work of a man who had seen that the conversion of an American village to a city of millionaires was also the conversion of a place where people could live and let live in tolerable comfort to an inferno of seething poverty and misery. Tolstoy was one of his notable converts. George's omission to consider what the State should do with the national rent after it had taken it into the public treasury stopped him on the threshold of Socialism; but most of the young men whom he had led up to it went through (like myself) into the Fabian Society and other Socialist bodies. *Progress and Poverty* is still Ricardian in theory: indeed it is on its abstract side a repetition of De Quincey's *Logic of Political Economy*; but whereas De Quincey, as a true-blue British Tory of a century ago, accepted the Capitalist unequal distribution of income, and the consequent division of society into rich gentry and poor proletarians, as a most natural and desirable arrangement, George, as an equally true-blue American republican, was revolted by it.

After *Progress and Poverty* the next milestone is *Fabian Essays*, edited by myself, in which Sidney Webb first entered the field as a definitely Socialist writer with Graham Wallas, whose later treatises on constitutional problems are important, and Sydney Olivier (Lord Olivier) whose studies of the phenomenon of the "poor white" in Africa and America, facing the competition of the black proletariats created by negro slavery, should be read by Colonial Ministers. In *Fabian Essays* Socialism is presented for the first time as a completely constitutional political movement, which the most respectable and least revolutionary citizen can join as irreproachably as he might join the nearest Conservative club. Marx is not mentioned; and his peculiar theory of value is entirely ignored, the economic theories relied on being Jevons's theory of value and Ricardo's theory of the rent of land, the latter being developed so as to apply to industrial capital and interest as well. In short, Socialism appears in *Fabian Essays* purged of all its unorthodox views and insurrectionary Liberal associations. This is what distinguished the volume at that time from such works as the *England For All* of Henry Mayers Hyndman, the founder of the Social-Democratic Federation, who, until 1918, when the Russian Marxists outraged his British patriotism by the treaty of Brest Litovsk, clung to Marx's value theory, and to the Marxian traditions of the barricade Liberalism of 1848, with a strong dash of the freethinking gentlemanly cosmopolitanism of the advanced republican *littérateurs* of the middle of the nineteenth century.

After *Fabian Essays* treatises on Socialism followed, first singly, then in

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dozens, then in scores, and now in such profusion that I never read them unless I know the writers personally, nor always, I confess, even then.

If you read Sociology, not for information but for entertainment (small blame to you!), you will find that the nineteenth-century poets and prophets who denounced the wickedness of our Capitalism exactly as the Hebrew prophets denounced the Capitalism of their time, are much more exciting to read than the economists and writers on political science who worked out the economic theory and political requirements of Socialism. Carlyle's *Past and Present* and *Shooting Niagara*, Ruskin's *Ethics of the Dust* and *Fors Clavigera*, William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (the best of all the Utopias), Dickens's *Hard Times* and *Little Dorrit*, are notable examples: Ruskin in particular leaving all the professed Socialists, even Karl Marx, miles behind in force of invective. Lenin's criticisms of modern society seem like the platitudes of a rural dean in comparison. Lenin wisely reserved his most blighting invectives for his own mistakes.

But I doubt whether nineteenth-century writers can be as entertaining to you as they are to me, who spent the first forty-four years of my life in that benighted period. If you would appreciate the enormous change from nineteenth-century self-satisfaction to twentieth-century self-criticism you can read *The Pickwick Papers* (jolly early Dickens) and then read *Our Mutual Friend* (disillusioned mature Dickens), after which you can try Dickens's successor H. G. Wells, who, never having had any illusions about the nineteenth century, is utterly impatient of its blunderings, and full of the possibilities of social reconstruction. When you have studied nineteenth-century county gentility in the novels of Anthony Trollope and Thackeray for the sake of understanding your more behindhand friends, you must study it up-to-date in the novels of John Galsworthy. To realise how ignorant even so great an observer as Dickens could be of English life outside London and the main coaching routes you can compare his attempt to describe the Potteries in *Hard Times* with Arnold Bennett's native pictures of the Five Towns; but to appreciate his much more serious and complete ignorance of working-class history and organization in his own day you would have to turn from fiction to the Webbs' *History of Trade Unionism*.

The earlier nineteenth-century literature, for all its invective, satire, derision and caricature, made amiable by its generous indignation, was not a literature of revolt. It was pre-Marxian. Post-Marxian literature, even in its most goodhumored pages by men who never read Marx, is revolutionary: it does not contemplate the survival of the present order, which Thackeray, for instance, in his bitterest moods seems never to have doubted.

For women the division is made by Marx's Norwegian contemporary Ibsen rather than by Marx. Ibsen's women are all in revolt against Capitalist morality; and the clever ladies who have since filled our bookshelves with more or less autobiographical descriptions of female frustration and slavery are all post-Ibsen. The modern literature of male frustration, much

less copious, is post-Strindberg. In neither branch are there any happy endings. They have the Capitalist horror without the Socialist hope.

The post-Marxian, post-Ibsen psychology gave way in 1914-18 to the post-war psychology. It is very curious; but it is too young, and I too old, for more than this bare mention of its existence and its literature.

Finally I may mention some writings of my own, mostly in the form of prefaces to my published plays. One of the oddities of English literary tradition is that plays should be printed with prefaces which have nothing to do with them, and are really essays, or manifestoes, or pamphlets, with the plays as a bait to catch readers. I have exploited this tradition very freely, puzzling many good people who thought the prefaces must be part of the plays. In this guise I contended that poverty should be neither pitied as an inevitable misfortune, nor tolerated as a just retribution for misconduct, but resolutely stamped out and prevented from recurring as a disease fatal to human society. I also made it quite clear that Socialism means equality of income or nothing, and that under Socialism you would not be allowed to be poor. You would be forcibly fed, clothed, lodged, taught, and employed whether you liked it or not. If it were discovered that you had not character and industry enough to be worth all this trouble, you might possibly be executed in a kindly manner; but whilst you were permitted to live you would have to live well. Also you would not be allowed to have half a crown an hour when other women had only two shillings, or to be content with two shillings when they had half a crown. As far as I know I was the first Socialist writer to whom it occurred to state this explicitly as a necessary postulate of permanent civilization; but as nothing that is true is ever new I daresay it had been said again and again before I was born.

Two Fabian booklets of mine entitled *Socialism and Superior Brains* and *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading* are still probably worth reading, as they are written from personal experience of both.

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