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**IS ECONOMIC EQUALITY AT ALL POSSIBLE ?**

**IS COMMUNISM NATURAL TO THE SOIL OF INDIA ?**

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two essays which secured the first and second prizes  
in the competition conducted by the Prize Essay Competition  
Committee of Delhi in 1934.

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## PREFACE

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In August 1934 a few gentlemen formed themselves into a Committee with a view to encouraging the art of writing and development of expression among the youngmen of India and after considering various suggestions they decided that the best way of achieving this object was to select every year a number of subjects and to invite essays on them, awarding cash prizes for the best efforts. The Committee consisted of:—

1. The Deputy Commissioner Delhi. (Chairman).
  2. Mr. I. M. Stephens, C.I.E., Director, Public Information, Government of India.
  3. Mr. U. N. Sen, C.B.E., Associated Press.
  4. Mr. J. C. Chatterji, Superintendent of Education, New Delhi.
  5. Sardar Bahadur Sardar Sobha Singh, New Delhi.
  6. Rai Bahadur Dr. Hari Ram, Hony. Magistrate Delhi.
  7. Khan Bahadur Haji Mohd. Yusuf, Hony. Magistrate, Delhi.
  8. Rai Bahadur N. R. Sen, Registrar, Delhi University, Delhi.
  9. Mr. M. W. Yeatts, I. C. S., Deputy Secretary Education, Health & Lands Deptt. Government of India
- and 10 Mr. S. N. A. Jafri, who is also to act as Secretary of the Committee.

A number of subjects were chosen and essays in English, Urdu and Hindi were invited from all parts of India without any restriction to race, creed, domicile, or occupation. It was proposed to award a prize of Rs. 200 for the best essay in English and Rs. 100 each for best essays in Urdu and Hindi. Messrs. Yeatts, Byrt, Lacey and Roome were appointed judges for English essays and Professor Ashfaq Husain Qureshi and Mahomahopadhaya Pandit Harnarayan Sastri for Urdu and Hindi essays. In all 106 essays in English, 13 in Urdu and 8

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in Hindi were received. The writers of English Essays represented all provinces of India. Madras topping the list with 33 competitors followed by Bengal with 23 and Delhi and U. P. with 16 each. Other provinces represented were C. P. (including C. I. and Rajputana) 14, Bombay 9, Punjab 8, Burma 5 and B. & O, 2.

The response in Urdu and Hindi both in the number of people making the attempt and the general standard of the results of their efforts was very disappointing. It was therefore decided to award only Rs. 50 each to the best essays in Urdu and Hindi and to utilise the consequent saving of Rs. 100 to award a second prize in English as the number of really well written English essays was very encouraging.

The prizes awarded were :—

ENGLISH.

*1st Prize.*— Mr. Kandala Krishnamurthy, B.A., LL.B., Coconada, East Godawari District, South-India.

*2nd Prize.*— Mr. G. D. Karkare, Nagpur City, C. P.

URDU.

Mr. Irshad Hussain Baqai.

HINDI.

Mr. Govind Chandra Pandey.

This brochure contains the two prize winning essays in English.

With the very limited funds at our disposal it was not possible for us to award more prizes although a large number of English essays called for recognition. It is however proposed to continue these competitions and our experience of the last one justifies the hope that our youngmen will respond increasingly to the opportunities thus offered to them to display their literary ability.

S. N. A. JAFRI,

*Secretary, Prize Essay Competition  
Committee.*

# IS ECONOMIC EQUALITY AT ALL POSSIBLE ?

*By Kandala Krishna Murthy*

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One of the most obvious as also the most fundamental traits of the social life prevailing at the present day is the existence of inequality on the scale of a national institution, and the influence on the life of the individual and the character of society of the whole system of interests and arrangements which are associated with it. Discoursing some fifty years ago on the text, "choose equality and flee greed," Mathew Arnold observed that in England inequality is almost a religion, and remarked on the incompatibility of that attitude with the spirit of humanity, and sense of the dignity of man as man, which are the marks of a truly civilised society. "On the one side, in fact, inequality harms by pampering; on the other, by vulgarizing and depressing. A system founded on it is against nature, and, in the long run, breaks down."

Much has changed since Arnold wrote, and not least what he called the religion of inequality. The temper which evoked his criticism, the temper which regarded violent contrasts between the circumstances and opportunities of different classes with respectful enthusiasm, as a phenomenon, not merely inevitable, but admirable and exhilarating, if not wholly unknown, is no longer general. Few politicians to-day would dwell, with Mr. Lowe, on the English tradition of inequality as a pearl beyond price, to be jealously guarded against the profane. Few educationists would seek, with Thring, the founder of the Head Masters' Conference and one of the most influential figures in the educational world of his day, to assuage the apprehension felt by the rich at the extension of education by arguing that "the law of labour" compels the majority of children to work for wages at the age of ten, and that "it is not possible that a class which is compelled to leave off training at ten years of age can oust, by superior intelligence, a class which is able to spend four years more in acquiring skill." Few political thinkers would find, with Bagehot, the secret of

English political institutions in the fact that they have been created by a deferential people ; or write as Erskine May wrote in his " Democracy in Europe ", of the demoralisation of French society, and the paralysis of the French intellect by the attachment of France to the bloodstained chimera of social equality ; or declare with the melancholy assurance of Lecky, that liberty and equality are irreconcilable enemies, of which the latter can triumph only at the expense of the former. When Taine published his " Notes Sur l' Angleterre " in 1872, he could describe England, by contrast with France, as still haunted by the ghost of the feudal spirit, a country governed by 100,000 to 120,000 families, with an income of £1,000 a year and upwards, in which " the lord provides for the needs of dependent, and the dependent is proud of his lord." It is improbable that if he analysed the English scene to-day, even the relentless exigencies of historical antithesis would lead him to regard it as gilded with quite the same halo of haughty benevolence and submissive gratitude.

Institutions which have died as creeds sometimes continue, nevertheless, to survive as habits. If the cult of inequality as a principle and an ideal has declined with the decline of the aristocratic society of which it was the accompaniment, it is less certain, perhaps, that the loss of its sentimental credentials has so far impaired its practical influence as to empty Arnold's words of all their significance. It is true, no doubt, that, were he writing to-day, his emphasis and illustrations would be different. No doubt, he would be less impressed by inequality as a source of torpor and stagnation, and more by inequality as a cause of active irritation and confusion. No doubt he would say less of great landed estates, and more of finance ; less of the territorial aristocracy and the social system represented by it, and more of fortunes which, however, interesting their origin, are not associated with historic names ; less of the effects of entail and settlement in preventing the wider distribution of property in land, and more of the economic forces, in his day unforeseen, which have led to a progressive concentration of the control of capital ; less of the English reverence for birth and more of the English worship of money and economic power.

But, if he could be induced to study the statistical evidence accumulated since he wrote, it is possible that he would hail it, with one of his ironical smiles, as an unanticipated confirmation of conclusions to which, unaided, by the apparatus of science, he had found his way, and while noting with interest the inequalities which had fallen, would feel even greater astonishment at those which had survived. Observing the heightened tension between political democracy and a social system marked by sharp disparities of circumstance and education, and of the opportunities which circumstance and education offer, he would find, it may be suspected, in the history of the two generations since his essay appeared, and in particular, in that of the last decade, a more impressive proof of the justice of his diagnosis than it falls to the lot of most prophets to receive. "A system founded on inequality is against nature, and, in the long run, breaks down."

One of the regrettable, if diverting, effects of extreme inequality, as those who examine their own consciences will agree, is its tendency to weaken the capacity for impartial judgment. It pads the lives of its beneficiaries with a soft down of consideration, while relieving them of the vulgar necessity of justifying their pretensions and secures that, if they fall, they fall on cushions. It disposes us, on the one hand, to take for granted ourselves and our own advantages, as though there were nothing in them which could possibly need explanation, and, on the other hand, to be critical of claims to similar advantages advanced by our neighbours who do not yet possess them. It causes us unconsciously to apply different standards to different sections of the community,—as if, it were uncertain whether all of them are human in the same sense as ourselves—as if Sir Thomas Browne says of Jews, that "is a vice in them that were a virtue in us."

Mr. H. G. Wells remarks, in his vivid, incisive manner, that what is called the class war is an old habit of governing classes. The temper which he describes, though no longer so suggestive and self-confident as in the past, still sometimes finds expression in an attitude which deplores in one breath the recurrence of class struggles, and the danger to prosperity caused by class agitation and the intrusion of class interests

into politics, and defends in the next, in all innocence and good faith, arrangements, such as those involving, for example, educational inequality, which, whatever their merits, are certainly themselves a cause of class divisions. It seems natural to those who slip into that mood of tranquil inhumanity—and few of us can be sure of always escaping it—that working-class children should go to the mill at an age when the children of the well-to-do are just beginning the serious business of education; and that employers, as the sad history of coal reveals, should be the sole judges of the manner in which an industry is to be carried on, even though the happiness of several hundred thousand families is dependent on it; and that while property-owners are paid compensation for disturbance, workmen should be dismissed without appeal on the word of a foreman; and that different sections of the Community should be distinguished, not merely by difference of income, but by different standards of security, of culture, and even of health. When they are considering the provision to be made for unemployed wage-earners, they are apt to think it shocking that some men should be able to live without work, even though they have worked all their lives and are anxious to continue working; but, when they are repelling attacks on property, they sometimes seem to think it monstrous that other men should not, even though they may never have worked seriously at all; and without any consciousness of inconsistency will write to “The Times,” deploring in the first sentence the wickedness of some sections, of the community in pressing for increased expenditure upon the social services which benefit them and their children, and urging in the next the importance of so reducing taxation that other sections may have more to spend on themselves. As long as they are sure that they are masters of the situation and will hold what they have, they are all kindness and condescension. Only question their credentials, however, and the lamp becomes a lion, which bares its teeth, and lashes its tail, and roars in every accent of grief and indignation, and will gobble up a whole bench of bishops with the Archbishop of Canterbury at their head, if it imagines, as it imagined during the crisis (of 1926, that the bishops are a party to laying) hands upon its bone.

Swift remarks that mankind may judge what Heaven thinks of riches by observing those upon whom it has been pleased to bestow them. Those who apply the maxim will be disposed, perhaps, to agree with Arnold's contention that great inequalities, what ever other advantages they may possess, are likely, at all events, to be injurious to the rich. But the temper which regards such inequalities with indulgence is not at all confined to the rich, and the belief that it is confined to them, as though all that is needed for a different spirit to prevail, were some external change in the machinery of society, is the politician's illusion.

Clearly, such a change is required, and clearly, it is coming. Every one who is not blind, realises, indeed, that if the issue between individualism and socialism, is merely a matter of the structure and mechanism of industry, then, it has, in a large measure, already been decided. Every one sees that the characteristic of the phase on which the economic system is now entering, will, as far as the larger and more essential undertakings are concerned is some form of unified direction under state control. But then; if that is all that the issue means, though technically interesting, it is not of any great moment, except to specialists. Organisation is important, but it is important as a means, not as an end in itself; and while the means are debated with much zeal and ingenuity, if, so far, with somewhat less practicable result, the end unfortunately, sometimes seems to be forgotten. So the question which is fundamental, the question whether the new organisation, whatever its form and title, will be more favourable than the old, to a spirit of humanity and freedom in social relations, and deserves, therefore, that efforts should be made to establish it, is the object, it is perhaps, true to say, of less general concern and less serious consideration than the secondary, though nevertheless important, problem, which relates to the procedure of its establishment and the technique of its administration.

What a community requires, as the word itself suggests is a common culture, because, without it, it is not a community at all. And evidently it requires it in a special degree at a moment of transition like the present, when circumstances confront it with the necessity of giving a new orientation to



its economic life, because it is in such circumstances that the need for co-operation and for mutual confidence and tolerance upon which co-operation depends, is particularly pressing. But a common culture cannot be created merely by desiring it. It rests upon economic foundations. It is incompatible with too violent a contrast between the economic standards and educational opportunities of different classes, for such a contrast has as its result, not a common culture, but servility or resentment, on the one hand, and patronage or arrogance, on the other. It involves, in short, a large measure of economic equality—not necessarily, indeed, in respect of the pecuniary incomes of individuals, but of environment of habits of life of access to education and the means of civilisation, of security and independence, and of the social consideration which equality in these matters usually carries with it.

And who does not know that to approach the question of economic equality is to enter a reign haunted, not, indeed, "by hobgoblins, satyrs, and dragons of the pit," yet by a host of hardly less formidable terrors—"doleful voices and rushings to and fro" and the giant with a grim and surly voice, who shows pilgrims the skulls of those whom he has already despatched, and threatens to tear them also into pieces, and who, unlike Bunyan's giant, does not even fall into fits on sunshiny days, since, in his territory the Sun does not shine, and, even if it did, he would be protected against the weaknesses that beset mere theological ogres by the inflexible iron of his economic principles? Who does not recognise when the words are mentioned, that there is an immediate stiffening against them in the minds of the great mass of his fellow-countrymen; and that, while in France and Scandinavia and even imparts of the United States, there is, at least an initial sympathy for the conception, and disposition to be proud of such economic equality as exists, in England the instinctive feeling is one, not of sympathy, but of apprehension and repulsion, as though economic equality were a matter upon which it were not in good taste to touch? And who does not feel that, as a consequence of this attitude, though their practice is, as always, better than their principles, Englishmen approach the subject with minds that are rarely more than half open? They do not welcome the idea, and then consider,

whether, and by what means, the difficulties in the way of its realisation, which are serious enough, can be overcome. They recite the difficulties with melancholy, and sometimes with exultant satisfaction, because on quite other grounds—grounds of history, and social nervousness, and a traditional belief that advantages which are shared cease to be advantages at all, as though, when everybody is somebody, nobody will be anybody—they are determined to reject the idea.

So, when the question is raised whether some attempt to establish greater economic equality may not be desirable, there is a sound of what Bunyan called "doleful voices and rushings to and fro." They roar, and snort, and paw the air and affirm with an accord that the suggestion is at once wicked and impracticable. Lord Birkenhead, for example, declared that the idea that all men are equal is "a poisonous doctrine," and wrung his hands at the thought of the "glittering prizes" of life being diminished in value; and Mr. Garvin, with his eye for the dangers of the moment and the temptations to which his fellow-countrymen are most prone to succumb, warns us against the spirit that seeks the dead level and ignores the inequality of human endowments; and Sir Earnest Benn writes that economic equality is "a scientific impossibility," because professor Pareto has shown, he says, that "if the logarithms of income-sizes be charted on a horizontal scale, and the logarithms of the number of persons having an income of a particular size or over be charted on a vertical scale, then the resulting observational points will lie approximately along a straight line," and that, if only this were more generally known, the poor, like the wicked, would cease from troubling; and Sir Herbert Austin implores us to "cease teaching that all men are equal and entitled to an equal share of the common wealth," and "enrich the men who make sacrifices justifying enrichment," and "leave the others in their contentment, rather than try to mould material that was never intended to withstand the fires of refinement;" and Dean Inge complains, in an address at Oxford, with a view, perhaps, to mitigating the class feeling which he rightly deplores, that "the Government is taking the pick of the working classes and educating them at the expense of the rate-payers to enable them to take the bread out of the mouths of the sons of professional men,"

and that this process, since it injures "the upper middle classes" who are "the cream of the community," must ultimately be injurious to the nation as a whole.

When he hears this comminatory chorus directed against the idea of equality by men of such eminence, the first impulse of the layman is to exclaim with Moses, "would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" He wishes that he himself, and all his fellow-countrymen were capable of charting logarithms on horizontal and vertical scales in the manner of Sir Earnest Benn, and of escaping with confidence the dead-level of mediocrity so justly deprecated by Mr. Garvin, and of being moved by the righteous indignation—the *sæva indignatio*—which fills Dean Inge when he contemplates those vessels of wrath, the working classes. It is the natural disposition of clever and learned people to attack the difficult and recondite aspects of topics which are under discussion, because to such people the other aspects seem to obvious and elementary to deserve attention. The more difficult aspects of human relations, however, though doubtless the most interesting to nimble minds, are not always the most important. There are other ways than that of the eagle in the air and the serpent on the rock, which baffled the author of the Book of Proverbs. There are other sides of the truth about mankind and its behaviour than those which are revealed by biological investigation, or expressed in the logarithms which delight the leisure of Sir Earnest Benn.

It is probable that it is these simpler and more elementary considerations that have been in the minds of those who have thought that a society was most likely to enjoy happiness and good-will, and to turn both its human and material resources to the best account, if it cultivated as far as possible the equalitarian temper, and sought by its institutions to promote equality. It is obvious, indeed, that, as things are to-day, no redistribution of wealth would bring general affluence, and that Statisticians are within their rights in making merry with the idea that the equalization of incomes would make everyone rich. But, though riches are a good, it is not certain, nevertheless, that they are the only good; and because greater production, which is concerned with the commodities to be consumed,

is clearly important, it does not follow that greater equality, which is concerned with the relations between the human beings who consume them, is not important also. An improvement in these relations, such as would be fostered, it is generally agreed, by a diminution of sharp contrasts of economic condition, is not to be desired primarily as a means of putting more money into the pockets of those who have too little, though the result is, doubtless, to be welcomed; on the contrary, if it is desirable to put more money into their pockets, the reason is primarily that such a course may be one means among others, to a much-needed improvement in human relations. If riches are not an economic good, and are the proper object of economic effort, equality may, nevertheless, be a social good, and be made no less properly the object of social effort. And there is nothing illogical or fantastic in desiring two good objects rather than one, unless, as in this case is sometimes asserted, but has hardly yet been conclusively proved, the objects in question are incompatible with each other.

It is obvious, again, that the word "Equality" possesses more than one meaning, and that the controversies surrounding it arise partly, at least, because the same term is employed with different connotations. Thus it may either purport to state a fact, or convey the expression of an ethical judgment. On the one hand, it may affirm that men are, on the whole, very similar in their natural endowments of character and intelligence. On the other hand, it may assert that, while they differ profoundly as individuals in capacity and character, they are equally entitled as human beings to consideration and respect, and that the well-being of a society is likely to be increased if it so plans its organisation that whether their powers are great or small, all its members may be equally enabled to make the best of such powers as they possess.

If made in the first sense, the assertion of human equality is clearly untenable. It is a piece of mythology against which irresistible evidence has been accumulated by biologists and psychologists. In the light of the data presented—to mention only two recent examples—in such works as Dr. Burt's admirable studies of the distribution of educational abilities among school-children, or the Report of the Mental Deficiency Com-

mittee, the fact, that, quite apart from differences of environment and opportunity, individuals differ widely in their natural endowments, and in their capacity to develop them by education, is not open to question.

The acceptance of that conclusion, nevertheless, makes a somewhat smaller breach in equalitarian doctrines than is sometimes supposed, for such doctrines have rarely been based on a denial of it. It is true, of course, that the psychological and political theory of the age between 1750 and 1850—the theory, for example, of thinkers so different as Helvetius and Adam Smith at the beginning of the period, and Mill and Proudhon at the end of it—greatly under-estimated the significance of inherited qualities, and greatly over-estimated the plasticity of human nature. It may be doubted, however, whether it was quite that order of ideas which inspired the historical affirmations of human equality, even in the age when such ideas were still in fashion.

Few men have been more acutely sensitive than Mill to the importance of encouraging the widest possible diversities of mind and taste. In arguing that “the best state for human nature is that in which, while no one is poor, no one desires to be richer,” and urging that social policy should be directed to increasing equality, he did not intend to convey that it should suppress varieties of individual genius and character, but that it was only in a society marked by a large measure of economic equality that such varieties were likely to find their full expression and due need of appreciation.

The equality which such thinkers emphasise as desirable is not equality of capacity and attainment but of circumstance, and institutions and manner of life. The inequality which they deplore is not inequality of personal gifts, but of the social and economic environment. They are concerned, not with a biological phenomenon, but with a spiritual relation and the conduct to be based on it. Their view, in short, is that, because men are men, social institutions—property rights, and the organisation of industry and the system of public Health and Education—should be planned as far as is possible, to emphasise and strengthen, not the class differences which divide, but the common humanity which unites, them.

It is true, again, that human beings have, except as regards certain elementary, though still sadly neglected, matters of health and development, different requirements, and that these different requirements can be met satisfactorily only by varying forms of provision. But equality of provision is not identity of provision. It is to be achieved, not by treating different needs in the same way, but by devoting equal care to ensuring that they are met in the different ways most appropriate to them, as is done by a doctor who prescribes different regimens for different constitutions, or a teacher who develops different types of intelligence by different curricula. The more anxiously, indeed, a society endeavours to secure equality of consideration for all its members, the greater will be the differentiation of treatment which, when once their common human needs have been met, it accords to the special needs of different groups and individuals among them.

It is true finally, that some men are inferior to others in respect of their intellectual endowments, and it is possible—though the truth of possibility has not yet, perhaps, been satisfactorily established—that the same is true of certain classes. It does not, however, follow from this fact that such individuals or classes should receive less consideration than others, or should be treated as inferior in respect of such matters as legal status, or health, or economic arrangements, which are within the control of the community.

Everyone realises that, in order to justify inequalities of circumstance or opportunity by reference to differences of personal quality, it is necessary, as professor Ginsberg observes, to show that the differences in question are relevant to the inequalities. Everyone sees, for example, that it is not a valid argument against women's suffrage to urge, as used to be urged not so long ago that women are physically weaker than men, since physical strength is not relevant to the question of the ability to exercise the franchise, or a valid argument in favour of slavery that some men are less intelligent than others, since it is not certain that slavery is the most suitable penalty for lack of intelligence.

Our modern statesmen have not yet inherited a tradition of economic equality, for that tradition has still to be created. So.

they do not see that the existence of differences of personal capacity and attainment is as irrelevant to the question whether it is desirable that the social environment and economic organisation should be made more conducive to equality as it is to the question of equality before the law, which itself seemed just as monstrous a doctrine to conservative thinkers in the past as the suggestion of greater economic equality seems to them to-day.

And Sir Ernest Benn, who says that economic equality is a scientific impossibility, is quite unconscious, apparently, that in some economic matters of first importance—protection by the police against violence and theft and the use of the roads, and the supply of water, and the provision of sewers and open spaces, and access to a minimum of education and medical attention, all of which were once dependent on the ability of individuals to pay for them—all members of civilised communities are now secured equality irrespective of their personal attainments and individual economic resources, and that the only question is whether that movement shall be carried forward, or rather, since in fact it is carried forward, year by year, how quickly society will decide to establish complete environmental equality in respect of the external conditions of health, and education, and economic security for all its members. So he behaves like the countryman who, on being for the first time introduced to a giraffe at a circus, exclaimed indignantly, "Their ain't no such animal." He says that equality is a scientific impossibility, and draws a sharp line between the natural and, as he thinks, the healthy states of things, under which each individual provides all his requirements for himself, and the unnatural and morbid condition, under which the community, consisting of him and his fellows, provides some of them for him.

Such a line, however, is quite arbitrary, quite fanciful and artificial. Many services are supplied by collective effort to-day which in the recent past were supplied by individual effort or not supplied at all, and many more it may be suspected, will be so supplied in the future. At any moment there are some needs which almost everyone is agreed should be supplied on equitarian principal, and others which they are

agreed should be met by individuals who purchase what their incomes enable them to pay for, and others, again, about the most suitable provision for which opinions differ. Society has not been prevented from seeking to establish equality in respect of the first by the fear that in so doing it may be perpetrating a scientific impossibility; nor will it be prevented from moving towards equality in respect of the second and third, if experience suggests that greater equality in these matters also would contribute to greater efficiency and to more general happiness.

Individual differences will always survive, and they are to be welcomed, not regretted. But their existence is no reason for not seeking to establish the largest possible measure of equality of environment, and circumstance and opportunity. On the contrary, it is a reason for redoubling our efforts to establish it in order to ensure that these diversities of gifts may come to fruition.

It is true, indeed, that even such equality, though the conditions on which it depends are largely within human control, will continue to elude us. The important thing, however, is not that it should be completely attained, but that it should be sincerely sought for. What matters to the health of society is the objective towards which its face is set, and to suggest that it is immaterial in what direction it moves, because, whatever the direction, the goal must always elude it, is not scientific, but irrational. It is like using the impossibility of absolute cleanliness as a pretext for rolling in a manure-heap, or denying the importance of honesty because no one can be wholly honest. It may well be the case that capricious inequalities are in some measure inevitable, in the sense that, like crime and disease, they are a malady which the most rigorous precautions cannot wholly overcome. But when crime is known as crime, and disease as disease, the ravages of both are circumscribed by the mere fact that they are recognised for what they are, and described by their proper names, not by flattering euphemisms. And a society which is convinced that inequality is an evil need not be alarmed because the evil is one which cannot wholly be subdued. In recognising the poison it will have armed itself with an antidote. It will have deprived inequality of its sting by stripping it of its esteem.



So to criticise inequality and to desire equality is not, as is sometimes suggested to cherish the romantic illusion that men are equal in character and intelligence. It is to hold that, while their natural endowments differ profoundly, it is the mark of a civilised society to aim at eliminating such inequalities as have their source, not in individual differences, but in its own organisation, and that individual differences, which are a source of social energy, are more likely to ripen and find expression if social inequalities are, as far as practicable, diminished. And the obstacle to the progress of equality is something simpler and more potent than finds expression in the familiar truism that men vary in their mental, and moral as well as in their physical characteristics, important and valuable though that truism is as a reminder that different individuals require different types of provision. It is the habit of mind to think it not regrettable, but natural and desirable, that different sections of a community should be distinguished from each other by sharp differences of economic status, of environment, of education and culture and habits of life and to regard with approval the social institutions and economic arrangements by which such differences are emphasised and enhanced, and to feel distrust and apprehension for attempts to diminish them.

The institutions and policies in which that temper has found expression are infinite in number. At one time, it has coloured the relations between the sexes; at another, those between religions; at a third, those between members of different races. But in communities no longer divided by religion or race, and in which men and women are treated as political and economic equals, the divisions which remain are, nevertheless, not insignificant. The practical form which they most commonly assume—the most conspicuous external symptom of difference of economic status and social position—is, of course, a graduated system of social classes, and it is by softening or obliterating, not individual differences, but class gradations, that the historical movements directed towards diminishing inequality have attempted to attain their objective.

A society which values equality will attach a high degree of significance to differences of character and intelligence between different individuals, and a low degree of significance to

economic and social differences between different groups. It will endeavour, in shaping its policy and organisation, to encourage the former and to neutralise and suppress the latter, and will regard it as vulgar and childish to emphasise them when, unfortunately, they still exist. A society which is in love with inequality will take such differences seriously, and will allow them to overflow from their regions, such as economic life, where they have their origin, and from which it is difficult wholly to expel them, till they become a kind of morbid obsession, colouring the whole world of social relations.

A right to the pursuit of happiness is not identical with the right to attain it, and to state a fact is not to pronounce judgment upon it. Since a community inherits its class structure, and only in part creates it—since the concentration of economic authority and a hierarchial social system are normally the result, not of design, but of the absence of it—such phenomena are obviously as inappropriate for denunciation as they are conducive to it. But an inheritance may be prized as a wind-fall or deplored as an encumbrance. It may be accepted with thoughtless satisfaction, or neglected and squandered, or improved by a wise discrimination between those elements in it which, since they are a source of strength, are to be cultivated and developed, and these which are to be discarded as a cause of weakness and confusion.

To see in economic concentration and social stratification the mystery of iniquity and the mark of the beast, to regard as the result of a sinister conspiracy qualities which are the result partly of a failure to control impersonal forces, partly, not of a subtle and unscrupulous intelligence, but of its opposite—of a crude appetite for money and power among the few and a naive reverence for success in obtaining them among the many—how pedantic and irrational! Yes, but how irrational also to suppose, that such characteristics are anything but a misfortune which an intelligent community will do all in its power to remove! How absurd to regard them as inevitable, nay, even as admirable, to invest them with a halo of respectful admiration, and to deplore, whenever their economic foundations are threatened, the crumbling of civilisation and the Goth at the gate! A nation is not civilised because a

handful of its members are successful in acquiring large sums of money and in persuading their fellows that a catastrophe will occur if they do not acquire it, any more than Dahomey was civilised because its king had a golden stool and an army of slaves, or Judea because Solomon possessed a thousand wives and imported apes and peacocks, and surrounded the worship of Moloch and Ashtaroath with an impressive ritual.

What matters to a society is less what it owns than what it is and how it uses its possessions. It is civilised in so far as its conduct is guided by a just appreciation of spiritual ends, in so far as it uses its material resources to promote the dignity and refinement of the individual human beings who compose it. Violent contrasts of wealth and power, and an indiscriminating devotion to institutions by which such contrasts are maintained and heightened, do not promote the attainment of such ends, but thwart it. They are, therefore, a mark, not of civilisation, but of its imperfection. And, since it is obviously such contrasts which determine the ground upon which social struggles take place, and marshal the combatants who engage in them, they present, not indeed, as is sometimes suggested, a conspiracy to be exposed, but a malady to be cured and a problem which demands solution.

Sharp contrasts of opportunity and circumstance, which deprive some classes of the means of development deemed essential for others, are sometimes defended on the ground that the result of abolishing them must be to produce, in the conventional phrase, a dead-level of mediocrity. Mediocrity, whether found in the valleys of society, or, as not infrequently happens, among the peaks and eminences, is always to be deprecated, though it is hardly curable, perhaps, as sometimes seems to be supposed, by so simple a process as the application to conspicuous portions of the social system of sporadic dabs of varnish and gilt. But not all the ghosts which clothe themselves in metaphors are equally substantial, and whether a level is regrettable or not depends, after all, upon what is levelled.

Those who dread a dead-level of income and wealth, which is not at the moment, perhaps, a very pressing danger in England, do not dread, it seems, a dead-level of law and order,

and of security for life and property, or complain that persons endowed by nature with unusual qualities of strength, or audacity, or cunning, or artificially prevented from breaking into houses, or terrorizing their neighbours, or forging cheques. On the contrary, they maintain a system of police in order to ensure that powers of this kind are, as far as may be, reduce to impotence. They insist on establishing a dead-level in these matters, because they know that, by preventing the strong from using their strength to oppress the weak, and the unscrupulous from profiting by their cleverness to cheat the simple, they are not crippling the development of personality, but assisting it. They do not ignore the importance of maintaining a high standard of effort and achievement. On the contrary, they deprive certain kind of achievement of their fruits, in order to encourage the pursuit of others more compatible with the improvement of individual character, and more conducive to the good of society.

Violence and cunning are not the only forces, however, which hamper the individual in the exercise of his powers, or which cause false standards of achievement to be substituted for true. There are also, in most societies, the special advantages conferred by wealth and property, and by the social institutions which favour them. At one time there has been the aristocratic spirit, with its emphasis on subordination and the respect which is due from the lower orders to the higher, irrespective of whether the higher deserve or not to be respected. At another time, there has been the plutocratic or commercial spirits, which is very much alive to-day, with its insistence on the right of every individual to acquire wealth, and to hold what he acquires, and by means of it to obtain consideration for himself and power over his fellows, without regard to the services by which he acquires it or the use which he makes of it. Both have their virtues, which in certain periods are more important than their vices. But the tendency of both, when unchecked by other influences, is the same. It is to pervert—what Mr. Bell calls the sense of values. It is to cause men, in the strong language of the Old Testament, “to go a-whoring after strange gods,” which means, in the circumstances of to-day, staring upwards, eyes goggling and mouths agape, at the antics of a third-rate elysium, and tormenting their

unhappy souls, or what, in such conditions, is left of them, with the hope of wriggling into it. It is to hold up to public admiration sham criteria of eminence, the result of accepting which is, in the one case, snobbery, or a mean respect for shabby and unreal distinction, and, in the other case, materialism, or a belief that the only real forms of distinction are money and the advantages which money will buy.

Progress depends, indeed, on a willingness on the part of the mass of mankind — and we all, in nine-tenths of our nature, belong to the mass—to recognise genuine superiority and to submit themselves to its influence. But the condition of recognising genuine superiority is a contempt for unfounded pretensions to it. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also, and if, men are to respect each other for what they are, they must cease to respect each other for what they own. They must abolish, in short, the reverence for riches. And, human nature being what it is, in order to abolish the reverence for riches, they must make impossible of a class which is important merely because it is rich.

A class system which is marked by sharp horizontal divisions between different social strata is neither, as is sometimes suggested, an indispensable condition of civilisation nor an edifying feature of it. It may, as some hold, be inevitable, like other misfortunes to which mankind is heir, but it is not lovable or admirable. It is the raw material out of which civilisation has to be made, by bringing blind economic forces under rational control and sifting the gold of past history from its sand and sediment. The task of the spirit, whatever be the name most appropriate to describe it, which seeks to permeate, not merely this fragment of society or that, but the whole community, with reason and mutual understanding, is not to flatter the natural impulses which have their origin in the fact of class, but to purify and educate them. It is to speak frankly of the perversions to which it gives rise and of the dangers which accompany them.

The forms which such perversions assume are, of course, enumerable, but the most fundamental of them are two. They are privilege and tyranny, the insistence by certain groups on the enjoyment of special advantages, which are

convenient to themselves, but injurious to their neighbours, and the exercise of power, not for the common benefit, but in order that these special advantages may be strengthened and consolidated.

It is the nature of privilege and tyranny to be unconscious of themselves, and to protest, when challenged, that their horns and hooves are not dangerous, as in the past, but useful and handsome decorations, (which no self-respecting society would dream of dispensing with). They create a spirit of domination and servility, which produces callousness in those who profit by them, and resentment in those who do not, and suspicion and contention in both. A civilised community will endeavour to exercise that spirit by removing its causes. It will insist that one condition, at least, of its deserving the name is that its members shall treat each other, not as means, but as ends, and that institutions which stunt the faculties of some among them for the advantage of others shall be generally recognised to be barbarous and odious. It will aim at making power, not arbitrary, but responsible, and when it finds an element of privilege in social institutions, it will seek to purge it.

The flank of criticism of economic inequality was turned by the argument that it was the necessary result of legal equality and economic liberty. Rightly interpreted, equality meant, not the absence of violent contrasts of income and condition, but equal opportunities of becoming unequal. It was true that few could take part in the competition, but no one was forbidden to enter for it, and no handicaps were imposed on those who did. To ensure that it was fair, it was sufficient, it was thought, to insist that the law should neither confer advantages nor impose disabilities.

Most social systems need a lightning-conductor. The formula which supplies it to our own is equality of opportunity. The conception is one to which homage is paid to-day by all, including those who resist most strenuously attempts to apply it. But the rhetorical tribute which it receives appears sometimes to be paid on the understanding that it shall be content merely with ceremonial honours. It retains its throne, on

condition that it refrains from meddling with the profitable business of the factory and market-place. Its credit is good, so long as it does not venture to cash its cheques. Like other respectable principles, it is encouraged to reign, provided that it does not attempt to rule.

The content of the idea has been determined by its history. It was formulated as a lever to over-throw legal inequality and juristic privilege, and from its infancy it has been presented in negative, rather than positive, terms. It has been interpreted rather as freedom from restraints than as the possession of powers. Thus conceived, it has at once the grandeur and the unreality of a majestic phantom. The language in which it is applauded by the powers of this world sometimes leaves it uncertain which would horrify them most, the denial of the principle or the attempt to apply it.

“The law is just. It punishes equally the rich and the poor for stealing bread.” It is even generous, for it offers opportunities both to those whom the social system permits to seize them and to those whom it does not. In reality, of course, except in a sense which is purely formal, equality of opportunity is not simply a matter of legal equality; its existence depends, not merely on the absence of disabilities, but on the presence of abilities. It obtains in so far as, and only in so far as, each member of a community, whatever his birth, or occupation or social position, possesses in fact, and not merely in form, equal chances of using to the full his natural endowments of physique, of character, and of intelligence. The much be-lauded principle of equality of opportunity proves innocuous, unless it presupposes as a basis for its availability to every member of a community equality of equipment. In proportion as the capacities of some are sterilised or stunted by their social environment, while those of others are favoured or pampered by it, equality of opportunity becomes a graceful, but attenuated, figment. It recedes from the world of reality to that of perorations.

If a high degree of practical equality is necessary to social well-being, because without it ability cannot find its way to its true vocation, it is necessary also for another and more funda-

mental reason. It is necessary because a community requires unity as well as diversity, and because, important as it is to discriminate between different powers, it is even more important to provide for common needs. Clever people, who possess exceptional gifts themselves, are naturally impressed by exceptional gifts in others, and desire, when they consider the matter at all, that society should be organised to offer a career to exceptional talent, though they rarely understand the full scope and implications of the revolution they are preaching. But, in the conditions characteristic of large-scale economic organisation, in which ninety per cent. of the population are wage-earners, and not more than ten per cent. employers, farmers, independent workers or engaged in professions, it is obviously, whatever the level of individual intelligence and the degree of social fluidity, a statistical impossibility for more than a small fraction of the former to enter the ranks of the latter; and a community cannot be built upon exceptional talent alone, though it would be a poor thing without it. Social well-being does not only depend upon intelligent leadership; it also depends upon cohesion and solidarity. It implies the existence, not merely of opportunities to ascend, but of a high level of general culture, and a strong sense of common interests, and the diffusion throughout society of a conviction that civilisation is not the business of an elite alone, but a common enterprise which is the concern of all. And individual happiness does not only require that men should be free to rise to new positions of comfort and distinction; it also requires that they should be able to lead a life of dignity and culture, whether they rise or not, and that, whatever their position on the economic scale may be, it shall be such as is fit to be occupied by men. Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. And how much better than he who cannot convince himself that his situation is good unless it is evident that it is better than that of his neighbours!

Human nature demands, no doubt, space and elbow-room. But there is an excellence of repose and contentment, as well as of effort; and, happily, the mass of mankind are not all elbows. If they possess powers which call for the opportunity to assert themselves in the contests of the market-place, and to reap the reward of successful rivalry, they have also qualities which,



though no less admirable, do not find perfection in a competitive struggle and the development of which is not less indispensable to social health. Equality of opportunity implies the establishment of conditions which favour the expansion, not, as societies with a strong economic bent are disposed to believe, of the former alone, but of both. Rightly interpreted, it means, not only that what are commonly regarded as the prizes of life should be open to all, but that none should be subjected to arbitrary penalties; not only that exceptional men should be free to exercise their exceptional powers, but that common men should be free to make the most of their common humanity. If a community which is indifferent to the need of facilitating the upward movement of ability becomes torpid and inert, a community which is indifferent to all else but that movement becomes hardened and materialised, and is in the end dis-illusioned with the idol that it has itself created. It confuses change with progress. It sacrifices the cultivation of spiritual excellences, which is possible, for all, to the acquisition of riches, which is possible, happily, only for the few. It lives in an interminable series of glittering to-morrows, which it discovers to be tinsel when they become to-day.

So the doctrine which throws all its emphasis on the importance of opening avenues to individual advancements, though admirable in itself, is partial and one sided. It is right in insisting on the necessity of opening a free career to aspiring talent; it is wrong in suggesting that opportunities to rise, which can, of their very nature, be seized only by the few, are a substitute for a general diffusion of the means of civilisation, which are needed by all men, whether they rise or not, and which those who cannot climb the economic ladder, and who sometimes, indeed, do not desire to climb it, may turn to as good an account as those who can. It is right in attaching a high significance to social mobility; it is wrong in implying that effective mobility can be secured merely through the absence of legal restraints, or that, if it could, economic liberty would be a sufficient prophylactic against the evils produced by social stratification. In the absence of measures which prevent the exploitation of groups in a weak economic position by those in a strong, and make the external conditions of health and civilisation a common possession, the phrase, "equality of opportunity,"

is obviously a jest, to be described as amusing or heartless according to taste. It is the impertinent courtsey of an invitation offered to un-welcome guests, in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting it.

The technique by which economic inequality has been, to a considerable extent, diminished in most of the European countries in general and in England in particular is no mystery, and the measures embodying it are the most familiar of common-places. They belong, as every one knows, to one or other of two principal types. There are those, in the first place, such as the extension of social services and progressive taxation, which mitigate disparities of opportunity and circumstance, by securing that wealth which would otherwise have been spent by a minority is applied to purposes of common advantage. There are those, in the second place, such as trade unionism and industrial legislation, which set limits to the ability of one group to impose its will, by economic duress, upon another, and thus soften inequalities of economic power. The co-operative movement and the extension of undertakings carried on as public services, with their practice of returning profits to the consumer, and their recognition of responsibility, not to investors, but to the community, combine, in some measure the benefits of both. Thus, the strategy of equality in the industrial environment of the twentieth century is the opposite of that followed in the agricultural environment of the eighteenth. In the latter, it proceeded by dispersing economic resources; in the former, it will advance, if it advances at all, by concentrating and communalising them.

Proposals designed to alter the distribution of wealth are commonly confronted by an initial objection. They are necessarily, it is often alleged, condemned to futility, since the surplus available for redistribution is insignificant in amount. The pyramid creates an optical illusion, which causes the height of its apex to be exaggerated and the breadth of its base to be ignored. If the Himalayas were levelled, the surface of the globe would not be raised by more than a few inches, and the equal division of all incomes in excess of £ 2,500 a year would not add 5s. a week to each family with less. The urgent necessity, so the familiar argument runs,

is to increase the dividend, not to alter the proportions in which it is divided.

Those who have the impertinence to walk up to the ghosts can usually walk through them. This venerable spectre has little to cause alarm, save the habit of iteration which is the spectre's privilege. With a confidence unshaken by the lessons of experience, it contrasts the greater production of wealth with its wider distribution, as though production and distribution were irreconcilable alternatives which the laws of the universe had for ever put asunder. It implores its hearers to concentrate their undivided attention on the average income per head of population, as though the only conceivable departure from existing arrangements were to redivide the national income into equal fractions, and to set everyone rubbing up his arithmetic to make sure of his quota.

Such a treatment of the subject has only one defect; it is quite remote from reality, quite arbitrary and fanciful. Its demonstrations are not, as its less cautious practitioners are in the habit of proclaiming, the vice of science, but arhetorical device, masquerading under a guise of scientific precision. Its dialectical victories are won with ease, for they are won over shadows.

Everyone is the debtor of the statisticians whose labours, like the brilliant work of professor Bowley, have supplied us with a quantitative picture of the nation's income. But irreproachable premises sometimes lead, in less experienced hands, to somewhat dubious conclusions, and it is not primarily, of course, the statistical basis of this line of argument which is its vulnerable point. The criticism to be made on it is not merely that, as Mr. Wedgwood points out, it combines earned and unearned income in a single total, though the latter, being relatively secure, is obviously worth more than the former; that it makes no allowance for the fact that the effect of a transference of wealth is to be judged, not only by the nominal value of the amounts transferred, but also by the nature of the uses from which they are diverted and to which they are applied; that it ignores the

truism that, since standards of well-being are relative, a lower average income, with greater equality, may make a happier society than a higher average income, with less; and that, in defending inequality on the ground that the aggregate output of wealth is low, it argues in a circle, since the hostility and suspicion resulting from inequality are themselves one cause of a low output of wealth. Nor is the main criticism even that the fact of there being but little to divide is not in itself, perhaps, a convincing reason for dividing what little there is with the maximum inequality.

The weakness of the whole line of argument is simpler and more fundamental. It is bombarding a position which no one occupies. For the method of redistributing wealth, whose futility such calculations expose, so far from being the only method, or the most obvious method, or the method which advocates of redistribution are disposed to favour, is one which has been rarely proposed and more rarely followed, and which the unhappy socialists in question have normally been at some pains to disclaim. What the popularizers of these exercises assert is that an increase in equality is not worth seeking, because, even were it attained, it would make but an insignificant addition to the income per head of the wage earner and his family. What—if statistical uncertainties are ignored—they succeed in proving is that the equal division of income per head is not a satisfactory expedient for increasing equality.

Their conclusion is correct. The expedient would, undoubtedly, be anything but satisfactory. But, then, it is an expedient which few have proposed. Is it rash to suggest that, if it is desired to obtain light upon the possibility of further diminishing inequality, the course of wisdom is not to spend energy in belabouring a phantom, in which only its critics are so ingenuous as to believe, but to examine the methods by which some inequalities, at least, have already been diminished? The form which such methods have most commonly assumed is a matter of experience. It is not the division of the nation's income, or any part of it, into eight million fragments, to be distributed, without further ado, like a cake at a school-treat, among its eight million families. It is, on the contrary, the

pooling of its surplus resources by means of taxation, and the use of the funds thus obtained to make accessible to all irrespective of their income, occupation, or social position, the condition of civilisation which, in the absence of such measures, would be enjoyed only by the rich. It is possible for a society, experience suggests, by thus making the fullest possible provision for common needs to abolish, if it pleases, the most crushing of the disabilities, and the most odious of the privileges, which drive a chasm across it. It can generalise, by collective action, advantages associated in the past with the ownership of property, for it has begun, in some measure, already to generalise them. It can secure that, in addition to the payments made to them for their labour, its citizens enjoy a social income, which is provided from the surplus remaining after the necessary costs of production and expansion have been met, and is available on equal terms for all its members.

Such a policy is open to more than one criticism, but it is obvious that its effects are not to be ascertained by the most assiduous working of sums in long division. As everyone is aware from his personal experience, or can ascertain by reflecting upon such venerable forms of public enterprise as the army and navy, collective expenditure makes possible results which would be unattainable, were an indetical sum distributed, without further adjustments, in fractional additions to individual incomes.

So, while the calculations which show the small output of wealth per head are true, they are neither the whole truth, nor that aspect of the truth which, for practical purposes, it is most important to bear in mind. It may be a fallacy, as their authors insist, to imagine that the division of large incomes into equal fractions—were any one so innocent as to attempt it—would produce a substantial addition to incomes which are small. But it is equally fallacious to ignore the truism that a small sum spent collectively on needs which are urgent yields more significant results than a larger sum spent in dribblets on needs which are not. Inequalities of opportunity and circumstance are to be overcome, not by abandoning the economies of collective effort and massed expenditure, which

are the grand achievement of industrial civilisation, but by exploiting them for the advantage of the whole community. Equality is to be sought, not by breaking into fragments the large incomes which are injurious both to those who receive them and to those who do not, but by securing that an increasing proportion of the wealth which at present they absorb will be devoted to purposes of common advantage.

It is sometimes assumed that a clear principle of demarcation divides needs which may properly be supplied by collective action from those which individuals should be required to meet by their individual exertions. In reality, however, as a glance at the development of social services in different countries is sufficient to show, if such a principle exists, it either has not been discovered, or else is not observed. The line which is supposed to correspond with it, so far from being stationary, is in constant motion. The boundaries between the spheres of communal provision and private initiative differ widely both from decade to decade and from one community to another.

Of the forms of such provision existing to-day, not only were the majority unknown half a century ago, but their establishment was stubbornly resisted, as a menace alike to individual morality and to economic prosperity. At the present time, there is no nation which does not treat as a public obligation some services which its neighbours continue to leave to the unaided efforts of the individuals requiring them, and resign to private charity others which elsewhere are regarded as a social function. England, with its modest system of pensions and insurance, seems a pauper's paradise to uninstructed Americans. A state hospital service, such as exists in New Zealand, has hitherto been regarded in England, in spite of its thousand-odd hospitals maintained by Public Health Authorities, as an undesirable encroachment upon the sphere of philanthropy. Vienna, with its heavily subsidised housing and large schemes of municipal building, its "Einheitskassen", children's hospitals, and public canteens—not to mention its luxury and increment value taxes, and its municipal investments in industrial undertakings—causes heads to be shaken in less venturesome cities. Not only in their practical details, but in the whole conception of

social responsibilities implied in them, the schemes of family allowances adopted by certain British Dominions and continental states are apt elsewhere to arouse some suspicion. The United States is commonly considered to be the country in which the faith in the adequacy of individual effort and its pecuniary rewards is most sanguine and unquestioned. But free secondary education, which in England is still resisted as a daring innovation, and of which India is blissfully ignorant, has long existed in most states of the American Union, while the expenditure on free social services of forty-eight states and cities with a population of over thirty thousand increased more than three-fold between 1915 and 1926.

For, in spite of variations in the practice of different communities, it is obvious that the range of requirements which are met by some form of collective action is everywhere being widened. The causes of the movement are not obscure. It is the natural consequence of the simultaneous development of an industrial civilisation and of political democracy. The former both increases the surplus which passes, in default of measures to intercept it, to the propertied minority, and creates an environment in which, in the absence of such measures, a satisfactory existence is impossible to the majority. The latter enables them to insist, if they choose, that the proportion of such surplus diverted from private luxury to the common good shall be steadily increased.

The principal lines along which this advance has taken place in England are four. The first is expenditure on the improvement of the environment; the second, the development of free services; the third, the creation of supplementary sources of income; the fourth, progressive taxation. It is sometimes suggested that the increased social expenditure of the last thirty years is to be interpreted as a symptom of wholesale pauperisation. It may be noted in passing, therefore, that the statistics of the movement lend little confirmation to the view that the growth in the outlay on the social services is due primarily to lavish and indiscriminate assistance to persons in distress. In reality, the relative importance of different services has completely changed in precisely the opposite direction from that which gives rise to the lamentations of the press. While public expenditure on Poor Relief has increased less than five-fold since 1891, that on educa-

tion has grown nearly twelve-fold, and that on public Health (including Health Insurance) and housing about fifty-fold. The first accounted for 52.7 per cent. of the total social expenditure from Public Funds in 1890-91; in 1927-28 it accounted for only 20.5 % or, if state expenditure on unemployment insurance is included, 26.2 %. Far the largest single item is expenditure on education, which accounted in the same year for 40.3%. The picturesque theory that the greater part of existing social expenditure consists of "doles" may continue to be believed by readers of the "Daily Mail", but it is a delusion which has ceased to be plausible for a quarter of a century. Nor, it may be added, is there any better foundation for the suggestion that the extension of public provision has discouraged private thrift. On the contrary, the accumulated savings of small investors are estimated by Professor Carr-Saunders and Mr. Caradog James to have grown from £498,000,000 in 1913 to £ 1,375,000,000 in 1925". "There is no evidence", they conclude, "that the advent of state schemes has led to a slackening of individual effort to provide against the changes and chances of life."

This inchoate fabric of social provisions has several different aspects. From one point of view, it is analogous to a scheme of priorities, such as that with which the country was familiarised during the war; within the narrow, though widening, area of life covered by it, it ensures that necessities shall be provided before trivivialities. From another, it involves the direction of productive effort into new channels: doctors are set to work instead of gardeners, and the game-keeper or chauffeur of the last generation becomes the teacher or the civil servant of the next. From a third, it results in the creation of new social capital: England put its surplus resources into cotton-mills and railways before it invested in sewers, not to mention parks, schools, and libraries; to-day the balance is being tardily corrected. From a fourth, it contributes to a stability of demand, and, therefore, of employment: in the words of the Majority Report of the Colwyn Committee, "it supports and steadies the purchasing power over consumption goods, which is unreservedly beneficial to industry;" and which is, it may be added, of special importance when foreign markets are contracting and workers are threatened with displacement by rationalisation. From a fifth, it is an instrument which



supplies the individual with subsidiary resources, partly in money, partly in kind, partly in the increase of his opportunities and in the improvement of his environment. A small, but increasing, proportion of the national output of wealth consists of goods and services which are produced, not by profit-making enterprise, but by collective action and which are distributed in proportion, not to the means, but to the needs of their beneficiaries. In a small, but increasing, degree the standard of life of the great mass of the community depends, not merely on the remuneration which they are paid for their labour, but on the social income which they receive as citizens.

The rise of this rudimentary communism has taken place without design, and almost unconsciously, as a method of coping with grave practical evils. But its pioneers built better than they knew: and it is possible that the famous words which Adam Smith applied to the individual enterprise of the eighteenth century, may one day appear not too in-applicable to the collective enterprise of the twentieth. While aiming primarily at quite other objects, it has begun, though, as yet, not more than begun, to achieve an end which was no part of its design. Its effect is obviously that the final distribution of the national income differs, in greater or less degree, from the initial distribution which takes place as a result of the bargains struck between individuals and groups in the higgling of the market. Those who, as a result of such action, pay less in taxation than the value of the goods and services which they receive from public funds, find their real incomes increased. Those who pay more find them diminished. The effect of the payment of £300,000,000 in interest on the national debt, for example, is, as the majority of the Colwyn Committee remarked, to increase inequality, since it involves the transference of wealth from small incomes to large. The effect of an extension of social services, accompanied by progressive taxation, is to diminish inequality, since it involves, though at present on a modest scale, the transference of wealth from large incomes to small. Thus, the observation, not infrequently advanced with a knowing air of superior sagacity, that it is not possible to make the poor richer by making the rich poorer, is hardly to be regarded, perhaps, as the last word of science.

Professor Clay, in an interesting article, has attempted to offer a statistical measurement of the growth of the movement by estimating the percentage which social expenditure has formed at different dates of the aggregate wagebill. It may have risen, he thinks, from 3.4% in 1880 to 10.4% in 1913, and to between 12 and 13 per cent. in 1924. In reality, however, as Professor Clay would be the first to agree, such figures, though suggestive, tell only half the story. When wealth, which was previously employed to indulge the tastes of a small minority, is used for services of common advantage, what happens is not merely that the sums formerly spent by one group are now spent for the benefit of another and larger group, but that they are spent on different objects. Occupations supplying goods of one kind expand; occupations supplying goods of another kind are stationary or contract. Pleasure for pleasure, push-pin may be as good as poetry, but the technique for reducing motor-cars and babies to a common denominator still remains to be discovered. And, since inequality is a matter, not merely of quantities of income, but of quality of life, it is precisely, of course, these imponderable reactions which are the most significant results of a change in distribution. Certain disabilities, such as those which spring from lack of light, air, space, leisure, education, and economic security, cannot be expressed in terms of pecuniary loss, for there is no calculus to determine the value of health of body and vivacity of mind. Certain advantages, which accrue when these disabilities are removed, cannot be expressed in terms of pecuniary gain, for the difference between life and death eludes the measuring-rod of money.

A juster impression of the effect on inequality of progressive taxation and social expenditure is to be obtained by an examination of the part which they have played in mitigating such disabilities and generalizing such advantages. The improvement in health, reflected in the decline of the infantile death-rate from 156 per 1,000 in 1896-1900 to 71 per 1,000 in 1923-27, in the diminution in the mortality from a long list of diseases, and in the increase in the average expectation of life, which led Sir George Newman to write some years ago that it is "not wide of the truth..... to say that, on the average a baby born now will live twelve years longer than his

grandfather," is the result partly, no doubt, of the rise in real wages, especially in the worst-paid occupations—partly of changes in personal habits, such as the decline in the number of children per family. But it can hardly be doubted that he is right in ascribing it partly, at least, to the removal by social actions of the worst horrors of an insanitary environment and to the extension of medical care to those who formerly were without it. The improvement in the quality and range of educational facilities, and in the percentage of the population taking advantage of them, is obviously the result of social intervention. The mitigation of the tragedies of sickness, old age and economic insecurity by the establishment, apart from the poor law, of some measure of provision for the contingencies of life belongs not less clearly to the same category of causes. Nor do even these facts complete the picture. Men are, in great measure, what they feel themselves to be, and they think of themselves as they are thought of by their fellows. The advance in individual self-respect and in social amenity caused by the softening of the more barbarous inequalities of the past is a contribution to civilisation as genuine as the improvement in material conditions.

As a method of correcting the gravest results of economic inequality, this combination of communal provision and progressive taxation has obvious advantages. It secures for the common benefit the surpluses which no advance in the standard rate of a trade or district, based, as it necessarily is, on what the least favourably situated firms can afford to pay, can succeed in touching. Unlike a rise in wages secured by a trade union, it taps, not merely the resources of a particular industry, but wealth of all kinds, whatever its source, including that arising, not only from production, but from finance, speculation, commerce, and the unearned increment of urban ground-rents. It can be continued and extended in periods of depression, when it is difficult to secure an improvement in wages, and can thus be used to prevent a temporary depression producing the permanent catastrophe of a decline in the health and 'morale' of the rising generation. In so far as, like the income-tax, it falls on profits, it does not raise the cost of production or increase prices. By taking money where it can most easily be spared, and spending it where it is most urgently

needed, it produces the maximum of social benefit with the minimum of economic disturbance. By concentrating surplus resources, directing them to the objects of primary importance, and applying them, as in the case of the services of health, housing and education, under expert advice and in accordance with a specialised technique, it makes possible the attainment of results which no body of individuals, even though they spend ten times the sums involved, could achieve for themselves by their isolated and un-co-ordinated action.

The last consideration is of greater importance than is always realised. It means that the extension of communal provision should proceed by way of increased social services, providing by collective action for specific requirements, and supplementing individual resources in definite contingencies, rather than by a general and indiscriminate grant of pecuniary subsidies. The last decade has seen the introduction in certain continental countries and British Dominions of one system or another of family allowances. In the former, where such systems largely owe their inception to the initiative of employers, they have been primarily a device for easing the economic strain of the post-war situation, and now appear to be declining. In the latter, for example, in New Zealand, where, under the Act of 1926, 2s. a week is paid for each child in excess of two where the family income does not exceed £ 4 a week, the motive was different. The measure was intended to be a social reform, diminishing the burden of dependent children on families with small income.

The unnoticed problem of contribution is the distribution of wealth between the old and the young. The most shocking phenomenon of poverty is its effect on the latter. Hence proposals to relate the income of a family directly to its size obvious attractions. While, however, all forms of distribution according to need diminish inequality, not all of them diminish it with the same effectiveness. If the redistribution of income is to produce the maximum benefit, the most urgent needs must be the first to be met, and the available funds must be spent in the manner that is most economical. The important consideration, therefore, is whether the largest result will be produced by spending seventy to a hundred millions on a

limited number of purposes—of a clearly defined character, which are known to be both vital and neglected, or by dividing it into several million sums of 5s. each, to be spent separately by seven million parents in the manner which each deems best.

The answer to the question will vary with circumstances. It depends on the economic conditions of the country concerned and on the point to which its social provision has already been carried. A quarter of a century ago it was not uncertain for an individual or group of individuals, whatever their income, could have organised the complex services of health and education which exist to-day, not to mention insurance and old age pensions. A quarter of a century hence it will be equally plain, for by that time these general and elementary requirements will, it may be hoped, so far be met, as to make allowances to individuals more beneficial than a further extension of collective provision. In the circumstances of the moment, the course of wisdom—and also, it may be added, the course most conducive to a diminution of inequality—is to complete the first storey of the house before beginning the second. It is to abolish the Ancoats and Bermondseys rather than to distribute cash subsidies to those who live in them. When the conditions of health, education, and economic security—not to mention beauty of environment—have been made a common possession, the time may have come to use the surplus that remains to provide a free income which the individual can spend at his own discretion. As things are to-day, the most urgent task is a united attack on specific disabilities, which increased pecuniary resources may, indeed, alleviate, but which can be overcome only by mass organisation and collective expenditure.

The technique of such a policy is a matter for specialists, but its immediate objectives are not difficult to state. Those objectives may be enumerated as, the raising of the general standard of health, the equalisation of educational opportunities and the provision for the contingencies of life, in the order of their importance and urgency. The extension of the last-mentioned provision is the most novel departure in social policy made in the present century. Everywhere, except in

Germany and Denmark, it was assumed even as recently as a generation ago that, apart from the relief of persons in actual destitution, the whole cost of sickness, old age, and unemployment should be met by the individual from his personal savings or the earnings of his relatives.

To-day, while, in England at least, the amount of such savings has grown considerably, some form of collective provision is increasingly the rule. Since 1900 some sixteen European nations, four of the British Dominions and several states of the American Union, have established systems of old age pensions, detracted from public funds, or by means of insurance, or by both. Though state-aided insurances against sickness, invalidity and unemployment is less general, it advances year by year.

If every individual were reared in conditions as favourable to health as science can make them, received an equally thorough and stimulating education upto sixteen, and knew on reaching manhood that, given a reasonable measure of hard work and good fortune, he and his family could face the risks of life without being crushed by them, the most shocking of existing inequalities would be on the way to disappear. Sharp contrasts of pecuniary income might indeed remain, "*propter duritiem cordis*", as long as society were too imperfectly civilised to put an end to them. But the range of life corrupted by their influence would be narrower than to-day. It would cease to be the rule for the rich to be rewarded, not only with riches, but with a preferential share of health and life, and for the penalty of the poor to be not merely poverty, but ignorance, sickness and premature death.

Even inequalities of income, however, would not continue in such conditions to be, either in magnitude or kind, what they are at present. They would be diminished both directly and indirectly as a result of the diminution of large incomes by means of taxation, and through the removal of special advantages and adventitious disabilities arising from the unequal pressure of the social environment. As the privileges conferred by inherited wealth become a thing of the past, and

the surplus elements in incomes are increasingly devoted to public purposes, while the means of health and education are equally diffused throughout the whole community, "la carrière ouverte aux talents", which to-day is a phrase, would become a reality. The element of monopoly, which necessarily exists when certain groups have easier access to highly-paid occupations than others, would be weakened, and the horizontal stratification would be undermined. While diversities of income, corresponding to varieties of function and capacity, would survive; they would neither be heightened by capricious inequalities of circumstance and opportunity, nor perpetuated from generation to generation by the institution of inheritance. Differences of remuneration between different individuals would remain; contrasts between the civilisation of different classes would vanish.

The psychological reactions of such a change, if more gradual than its immediate economic effects, would be even more profound. The most singular phenomenon can be made to pass unchallenged, provided that the minds of observers have been turned to regard it as inevitable and edifying. As, with the extension of the services of health and education, the majority of the population cease to be familiarised with squalor in infancy, and to be broken into the machine while still docile and malleable, and to be taught to know their place before they are given a chance of knowing anything else, the sense of inferiority which has paralysed them in the past will increasingly be dissipated. Having seen inequalities, long-declared unalterable, yield to social intervention, they will be less indulgent in the future to those which remain, and less easily duped, it may reasonably be hoped, by the technique which defends them.

If arbitrary contrasts of circumstance and opportunity are one form of inequality, which can be corrected without provoking the nemesis that chastises presumption, they are not, unhappily, the only form. There is an economic, as well as a social, stratification; a hierarchy of industry and labour, as well as of leisure and enjoyment. When the caprices of the second have been softened or abolished, it still remains to eliminate the crudities of the first.

Their source is familiar, for it is forced on public attention by the continuous friction, and recurrent breakdowns, of the economic mechanism. It is inequality of power. Industrial society is crossed by a horizontal division, and organised forces are massed on each side of it. Sometimes, they meet in open collision; more often they watch each other, in at least nominal peace, across the frontier, relying on treaties negotiated between them, while the State throws its weight, now on this side now on that. The permanent aim of their organisation and policy, as distinct from their tactical movements and immediate objectives, is to diminish this inequality or maintain it in existence, to consolidate its gains or resist encroachments upon it.

In an industrial society, the tendency of economic power is not to be dispersed among numerous small centres of energy but to be massed in blocks. It is gathered at ganglia and nerve-centres, whose impulse gives motion to the organism and whose aberrations or inactivity smite it with paralysis. The number of those who take the decisions upon which the conduct of economic affairs, and, therefore, the lives of their fellow-men, depend is diminished; the number of those affected by each decision is increased. The late Dr. Rathenau once remarked that the economic life of Europe was controlled by three hundred individuals, and his picture, if overdrawn, was not wholly unverified. Lord Melchett smiles, and there is sunshine in ten thousand homes. Mr. Morgan frowns, and the population of two continents is plunged in gloom.

This concentration of initiative is the most familiar commonplace of recent economic history. The increase in the scale of the business unit, which is the simplest illustration of it, can in some countries, be observed from decade to decade with the aid of statistics, grouping firms according to the personnel which they employ. In Germany, for example, which grew in a generation from a nation of industrial dwarfs, to one of industrial giants, the percentage of workers employed in establishments with 1,000 employees or more almost doubled in the generation between 1882 and 1907, while in the industries most typical of the new order, such as chemicals, the metal industries, and electrical engineering, it underwent a



three, fold, thirteen-fold, and in the case of the last, which at the first date hardly existed, a forty-fold increase. The movement has continued since that date, the percentage of workers in establishments with 1,000 employees or more rising, for example, in mining from 52.4 in 1907 to 71.6 in 1925, in machine-making from 21.6 to 32.6, and in the chemical industry from 18.2 to 34.4. In the United States, where industrial concentration has attained the most imposing dimensions, the establishments with a capital of 1,000,000 or over formed in 1914 2.1% of the total, employed 35.9% of the wage-earners, and produced 49.2% of the value of the total output. In 1925 they formed 5.6% of the total, employed 56.8% of the wage-earners and produced annually more than two-thirds—67.6%—of the value of the output.

The extension of liberty from the political sphere, where its battle, in most parts of Western Europe, is now, perhaps, won, to those of economic relations, where it is still to win, is evidently among the most urgent tasks of industrial communities, which are at once irritated and paralysed by the failure to effect it. It is evident also, however, that, in so far as this extension takes place, the traditional antithesis between liberty and equality will no longer be valid. When liberty is construed realistically, as implying, not merely a minimum of civil and political rights, but securities that the economically weak will not be at the mercy of the economically strong and that the control of those aspects of economic life by which all are effected will be amenable, in the last resort, to the will of all, a large measure of equality, so far from being inimical to liberty is, in fact, essential to it. In conditions which impose co-operative, rather than merely individual, effort, liberty is, in fact, equality in action, in the sense, not that all men perform identical functions or wield the same degree of power, but that all men are equally protected against the abuse of power, and equally entitled to insist that power shall be used not for personal ends, but for the general advantage. Civil and political liberty obviously imply, not that all men shall be members of Parliament, Cabinet ministers or civil servants, but the absence of such civil and political inequalities as enable one class to impose its will on another by legal coercion. It should be, not less obvious that economic liberty implies, not that all

men shall initiate, plan, direct, manage, or administer, but the absence of such economic inequalities as can be used as a means of economic constraint. The truth of the matter is put by Professor Pollard in his admirable study, "The Evolution of Parliament":—"There is only one solution," he writes, "of the problem of liberty, and it lies in equality.....Men vary in physical strength; but so far as their social relations go that inequality has been abolished.....Yet there must have been a period in social evolution when this refusal to permit the strong man to do what he liked with his own physical strength seemed, at least to the strong, an outrageous interference with personal liberty.....There is, in fact, no more reason why a man should be allowed to use his wealth or his brain than his physical strength as he likes.....The liberty of the weak depends upon the restraint of the strong, that of the poor upon the restraint of the rich, and that of the simpler-minded upon the restraint of the sharper. Everyman should have this liberty and no more, to do unto others as he would that they should do unto him; upon that common foundation rest liberty equality and morality."

A complex organisation cannot function effectively without unity of direction. It is easy to prove that a hierarchy of authority, with gradations of responsibility, is indispensable to modern industry as to a modern army. It is easy, but it is superfluous, for it is to labour a truism. It is obvious, indeed, that so far from resisting the concentration of economic control, the whole tendency of democracy is to accelerate and systematise it. What is deprecated is not the existence of economic authority but is irresponsibility. Freedom is conceived as consisting, not in its abolition, but in the establishment of guarantees that it will be used in the public interest, and that its relations with those affected by it will be based, not on superiority of force, but on mutual consent. Thus interpreted—not as "the desolate liberty of the wild ass", but as a community of service—economic freedom implies both diversity of function and equality of status. It is incompatible with the claim either that everyman should exercise the same degree of influence on the conduct of the common enterprise, or that any man should exercise it merely for his personal gain. The

principles on which its extension depends are three. The first implies that an ever-widening area of economic relations shall be governed by settled rules, based on deliberate decisions as to social expediency, not by pecuniary self-interest. The second involves the recognition that a large range of economic interests which have normally hitherto been regarded as the province of direction or management, must in future be the subject of common determination. The third has, as its corollary, the development of machinery to secure that the larger questions of economic strategy and industrial organisation are treated as, what in fact they are, a public concern, and that those who decide them must accordingly be accountable to the public for the tenor of their decisions. A policy sufficiently realistic to include the psychology of human beings among the facts of which it takes account will proceed simultaneously, therefore, along three principal lines. It will aim at establishing, by social action, conditions of life and work compatible with the standards of a civilised society, at extending the area of industrial relations subject to collective control and joint deliberation, and at ensuring that, on economic issues affecting the public welfare, the community can regularly and easily make its will prevail.

The most striking feature of the industrial politics of the last quarter of a century has been the rise into prominence, side by side with the familiar question of wages and working conditions, of issues relating to the organisation, government and policy of industry. It is significant to note, in this connection, the provision of a clause in the German Works Councils Act of 1920, declaring that "wage-earning and salaried employees are called upon to co-operate, with equal rights in common with employers", not only in the regulation of wages and working conditions, but "in the whole economic development of production". The long-accepted policy of fixing a minimum standard for the individual employee was supplemented by the principle that the workers in all undertakings beyond a certain size shall be treated as an entity possessing definite rights and responsibilities conferred by law, and entitled, in the case of their infringement, to have recourse to a special tribunal, the labour court. The endorsement given by

the World Economic Conference of 1927 to the advantages to be derived from "a rational system of production and distribution" was accompanied by a not less emphatic declaration that, in order "not to injure the legitimate interests of the workers" the measures required should be taken with "the co-operation of employees and the assistance of trade and industrial organisations". The time will come when, in all industries that have passed beyond the primitive stage of a scramble for gain between competing profit-makers, the final authority as to organisation and policy will rest in the hands, not of directors representing the financial interests of investors, but of nominees of the state, of organisations, of consumers, and of the professional associations embracing the different grades of workers engaged in them. What is required in the meantime, it may be suggested in view of the changes that are imminent or taking place, is the establishment of a permanent authority, in the shape of a standing industrial commission with the appropriate sub-committees for particular industries to ensure that the principles laid down by the World Economic Conference are carried out in practice. Such a body may reasonably be expected to maintain a steady pressure on the side of the removal of inefficiency and of the improvement of methods, and to act as a stimulus to industrialists, who would know that, in the event of their policy creating general dissatisfaction, they would be compelled to justify it to an independent authority. It would give the wage-earners a guarantee that their interests would be protected when reorganisation is carried out.

It is not only the wage-earner who requires protection. The doctrine that the rivalry of competing profit-makers supplied at once a sufficient spur to economic progress and an automatic guarantee that its benefits would accrue to the public must once have been convincing, for in fact, it convinced. But its plausibility vanishes when the results of that regime are discovered to be so disastrous that a policy of deliberate reconstruction must be invoked to end them, and when the commonest form which reconstruction assumes is an agreement among the rivals that, if throats are to be cut, they shall no longer be theirs. In such circumstances

the relations between the state and industry undergo a two-fold change. The state must intervene at one stage to end the wastes of competition, and at the next to avert the dangers of combination. In the new industrial system which is rising to-day, like the walls of Thebes to the flutes of Fleet Street, the choice is no longer between monopoly and a continuance of the competitive scramble. It is between monopoly as the servant of the public and monopoly as its master. The important question is not whether an undertaking is described as private or public; it is whether, if it is private, adequate guarantees can be established that it performs a public function, and whether, if it is public, it performs it effectively. Since the rights composing property can be attenuated piecemeal, as well as transferred in block, the achievement of the ends for which public ownership is desired need not always involve a change of owners. Since methods of organisation are as various in public as in private undertakings, the question of the administrative technique most conducive to efficiency still remains to be settled, when the change has taken place.

Expropriation by purchase, to which the word "nationalisation" is most commonly applied, is a convenient method of securing that an undertaking is conducted as a public service. It puts the business through at a single stroke, avoids the conflict of interests and duplication of effort which is liable to be produced by a policy of regulation, makes possible reorganisation on a comprehensive plan, and, though its immediate advantages,—since interest must be paid—are sometimes small, secures to the public the economies of unification and the increment arising from future expansion. But, though a convenient method, it is not the only method. It is one species of a genus, not a genus by itself.

In England, quite apart from the short-lived crop of war-time experiments and the ever increasing inroads on the domain of profit-making enterprise made by the impressive advance of the co-operative movement, a variety of expedients have already been adopted from—the control of local monopolies by fixing charges and regulating profits on a sliding scale, to legislation prescribing, like the Railways Act of 1921 and the tentative Electricity (Supply) Act of 1926, the organisation

of an industry and its relations to the public—for tempering the operation of economic interests by mild inoculations of social responsibility. In view of the existence of some two thousands statutory companies with a capital of approximately £1,370,000,000—more than a quarter of that invested in registered companies—in which both profits and the discretion of directors are limited by public intervention, the doctrine that industry cannot be carried on unless the claim of the ordinary share-holder to the whole of the residuary net profits is maintained inviolate has long been obsolete. On the continent, and in the British Dominions, the devices by which public authorities have at once controlled and aided economic development—including, as they do, the acquisition of shares in companies, the nomination of their presidents and directors, the grant of concessions for a limited period of years, the use of public credit, and pecuniary subventions, direct and indirect—are still more various.

Nor, when ownership, rather than regulation, has been the method favoured, has administration conformed to any uniform pattern. The general tendency of the period since 1918 has been both for public ownership to be extended and for "Etatisation" to be replaced by some form of autonomous management.

An intelligent policy will start from the centre, not nibble at the outworks. The first requirement is, clearly, to master the key positions of the economic world, whence the tune is piped to which the nation dances. Banking, evidently, is one, for it determines the economic weather more directly than any other: transport a second, and power a third, and land and agriculture, a fourth.

The truism that these services possess a special character, which should remove them from the sphere of profit making enterprise, does not imply that they should be treated on any uniform plan. Ownership and control may both achieve the desired result, and the choice between them is matter of expediency, to be decided with reference to each individual case. What is to be expected is the application, not of any rigid, inflexible and unvarying technique, but of a diversity of ex-

pedients, including in addition to the administration of certain services by state commissioners, the extension of public utility companies working under statutory constitutions, the acquisition by public authorities of a controlling interest in private undertakings and the appointment of directors, the assistance with capital and credit of approved concerns which comply with the conditions as to operation prescribed by the state, the control of raw materials and primary products by import boards, and the introduction of the public costing system which worked such wonders during the war, and for which Lord Passfield and Mrs. Webb have so often pleaded.

"A king", wrote a famous English lawyer, in the days when kings could still cause trouble, "is a thing men have made for their own sake, for quietness' sake, just as in a family one man is appointed to buy meat". The institutions and technique of the economic democracy of the future are as unlikely as those of political democracy to be cut to any pattern of standardised symmetry. But, while its forms will be complex, the principle that the provision of society with its meat, which is the function of industry, shall be conducted, not for the profit of investors, but as a social function, by bodies whose constitution has been deliberately planned to give their due weight, and no more than their due weight, to all the interests concerned, will come, it may be prophesied, to be increasingly accepted. If power divorced from responsibility is the poison of states, it is improbable that it is the tonic of economic effort, and it is possible that the struggle with nature which gives that effort its meaning, would be waged more effectively were Seldon's maxim applied to the relations of producers as well as of citizens. For efficiency rests ultimately on psychological foundations. It depends, not merely on mechanical adjustments, but on the intelligent collaboration of contentious human beings, whose hunger may make them work, but mutual confidence alone can enable to co-operate. If such confidence is to be commanded by those vested with the direction of economic affairs, their authority must rest, not on the ownership of property, but on a social title, and be employed for ends that are not personal, but public. It must become, in effect, whatever its precise style and form, a public servant, whom its masters can call to account for the discharge of its office.

Methods may be learned by experience, but where is the dynamic? Why elaborate the specifications, when interest, and apprehension, and a strong preference for the majestic irregularities of nature as against the trim triumphs of engineering forbid the bridge to be built? Dissertations on the truism that a society attracted by the goal need not miss the path—what are they but plaintive vegetarian bleats amid the uninterested growls of a carnivorous jungle?

The democratic formula, which is change by consent, implies difference as to means, but agreement as to ends. It is not easily applied—so the argument runs—to cure the evils of inequality, since inequality enfeebles, if it does not destroy, the common philosophy required for its application. If sharp class divisions are inimical to democracy, it is not certain that the former as not tougher than the latter. The lever which lifted political and religious boulders will snap when used to move economic mountains, and government by persuasion finds its charms begin to fade, when the fate of the persuaded is, not temporary eclipse, but permanent abdication. As the strain of the conflict increases, the mask will slip to reveal, behind the decorous manoeuvres of parliamentary duellists, unreconciled classes locked in naked opposition. Either democracy will drop punctilis and show its teeth; or it will avoid defeat by declining battle; or its claws will be clipped by constitutional changes.

In order to be effective, they need not be conspicuous. When social facts are at variance with political forms, to cut the knot by adopting the forms to the facts is an enticing solution, and the jeers of dictators at the sacred principles of 1789 are not easily answered while the principles are unapplied. Only inexperience, however, will break the instrument, if it can be induced by judicious manipulation to play the tune required; and though, political devices, from the mere frowsy inertia of an obsolete procedure to second chambers organised for the protection of property, may be used to put a brake on the wheels, it is improbable that in England the machinery of the democratic state will be openly discarded. What is to be expected—it is argued—should capricious inequalities be too powerful to be overcome, is neither the



the-atrical coups d'etat of continental reaction, nor the insurgent proletariat of communist mythology. It is an economic stalemate. It is an equipoise of forces, of which each neutralises the other, while neither can disengage itself from decisive action. Confusion will be avoided at the cost of stagnation. Stagnation will accumulate the materials for confusion.

To measure social strains and gauge political resistances is the province of the specialist in the architecture of states. It requires no peculiar gifts of discernment, indeed, to detect the points of tension in an industrial society, for they are revealed by the lives of its economic fissures and political divisions. But the force of the thrust and the elasticity of the structure vary from state to state and from decade to decade. One who has no pretensions to be an expert or a prophet is clearly unqualified for these abstruse calculations. He will listen to the dialectical battle which rages on the heights, where the paladins of a just and inevitable equality meet the protagonists of a class struggle which is inevitable and just, with the same awed, if anxious, admiration for the dash and brilliance of the war of economic creeds, and for the skill with which the combatants extract contradictory conclusions from identical premises, as a humble layman may have felt when, four centuries ago, theorists equally merciless, and not less adroit, were loading their artillery for religious conflict.

Conscious of his incapacity to meet the rival champions on their own lofty plane, conscious that intellectual limitations prevent him from demonstrating that equality is a scientific impossibility, and emotional deficiencies from extermination, with a holy zeal, the hosts of Midian to whom that exhilarating doctrine is as a well in the desert and the shadow of a great rock, what can he do but plunge deeper into the contempt of both, by confessing his doubts whether the economic predestinarianism whose tenets they expound with such force and conviction, is quite so inexorable and remorseless as, for incompatible reasons, they are determined that it shall be? He will wonder whether the phenomenon which exercises their ingenuity is not, after all, if it is not presumptuous to hint it, the conduct of his insignificant self and a few millions like himself. He will ask whether conduct is not influenced by

opinion, and whether it is not conceivable that opinion may change. Reflecting that the principal characteristic of the social mechanism is that it is not a machine, he will inquire, in his common-place, poor-spirited way, whether the future of human society may not depend somewhat less than these stern apostles of necessity would have us believe on the majestic, ineluctable operations of impersonal forces, and some what more on the heads and hearts of human beings.

Naturally, if he has lived long enough in the world to see much of either, he will not be under illusions as to intractability of the materials of which these organs are composed. Naturally, being conscious of his deficiencies in both, he will be humble in his demands and modest in his expectations. But he will reflect that the impossibilities of one generation are the platitudes of the next. He will note that some venerable inequalities, long declared to be unalterable, have undergone the one defeat which can never be repaired, the defeat from within, so that even those who championed them with great fervour, while they stood, would be shocked at a proposal to re-establish them, now that they have fallen. He will observe that others still defended as inevitable, are defended with blushes and that the demeanour of their apologists, once, strident and assured, is now diffident and embarrassed. He will remark that the logic which connects ill-health with small means does not always to-day carry the conviction that it did; that the doctrine that children so improvident as to choose parents in an inferior economic position are properly punished for their recklessness with an inferior education is, if still powerful in practice, no longer axiomatic; that, if taxpayers have hardly learned, as yet, to feel enthusiasm for the taxation by which ill-health is diminished and education improved, their fortitude in enduring it is greater than in the past; and that our modern Burkes, for all their confidence, in capitalism, are more often disposed to apologise for its defects and suggest methods of correcting them, than to hail bankers and mine-owners as the great oaks that shade a country and perpetuate their benefits from generation to generation. So, while recognising—as who, after the last twenty years, does not?—that man walks between precipices, and that breakdowns of intelligence and will, with the violence and paralysis

that such break-downs produce, are only too common, he will endeavour, without being a simpleton, to avoid being a fatalist.

In world where revolutions, carried out with varying degrees of violence, treachery, and heroism, are the source whence the most respectable of states derive their title, to greet with cries of scandalised propriety a diagnosis which refers to them is obviously, he will say, either naiv or insincere. It is like ignoring war, because war is atrocious while condoning its causes and hugging its spoils. The reality of a class struggle in modern society, whatever may be thought of the theory, is, unhappily, too insistent and the indignation aroused by the phrase itself is evidence of the fact. But to suppose that such phenomena are preordained and unavoidable—to find their source in exorable historical tendencies, and the laws of social evolution, and the force of things, instead of in the obvious commonplace operations of folly and greed, which can either be indulged till they bring their nemesis, or chastened and repressed—is not science, but superstition. It is a piece of solemn, monocled mystification, which is analogous to the confidence of the eighteenth century in the invisible hand of economic self-interest, or to the belief of the nineteenth in the saving virtues of the struggle for existence, or to any other of the fetishes that from time to time has masqueraded as oracles.

Democracy is neither white magic nor black, neither a formula of easy salvation nor a sanctimonious fraud. It is a tool which, like any other tool, is to be judged by its results, which like any other tool, can be blunted or mishandled till it is flung aside in disgust, but which can be used to correct inequalities, if there is a will to correct them, since, in fact, on a humble scale, it has been already so used. Differences of individual endowment are a biological phenomenon. Contrasts of environment, and inherited wealth and educational opportunities, and economic security, with the whole sad business of snobbery and servility which such economic contrasts produced, are the creation, not of nature, but of social convention. They are the work of the lovable, but exasperating, animal, man, whose follies are redeemed by his capacity for criticising them. It is more contemptible to be intimidated by

distrust of human nature than to be duped by believing in it. Men have given one stamp to their institutions; they can give another. They have idealised money and power; they can "choose" equality.

The choice, needless to say, involves irksome obligations. It is not fraught, indeed, with the imaginary perils with which fear and credulity have been wont to surround it. It does not imply that varying powers shall be treated as uniform, or differing needs offered identical treatment, or distinctions of function and office, with the gradations of authority they involve, submerged and obliterated. By cultivating energies now depressed and neglected, and drawing leadership, not from a minority, but from talent wherever found, and removing some, at least, of the psychological impediments to co-operative effort, it is likely, in spite of conventional terrors, to stimulate, not hamper, the production of wealth. By securing that human needs are met, closely than to-day in the order of their relative urgency and true social importance, it would secure a more effective, because a more discriminating, utilization of the wealth produced.

It is true, however, that, while inequality is easy, since it demands no more than to float with the current, equality is difficult, for it involves swimming against it. It is true that, like all other goods, whether economic or spiritual, it has its price and its burdens. It involves material sacrifices by some, and not less painful surrender of sentimental claims by others, and, on the part of all, sufficient self-control and public spirit, sufficient respect for themselves and appreciation of their neighbours, to prefer what Wordsworth called "joy in widest commonalty spread"—a high standard of general well-being and a wide diffusion of the means of culture and civilisation—to the temper that is on the watch to snatch opportunities for personal, advancement, or stands stiffly on established rights, even when rights are wrong. It implies the disinterestedness needed to expose dear, old, respectable absurdities to the light of reason, and the patience to endure the toil of thought which alone can supersede them. The last great equalitarian movement, in its nobler, which was also its more successful, version, sought to create a society

free from meaningless privilege and capricious class divisions by emancipating the individual from legal fetters. In the industrial civilisation, which has been that movements' heir, such a society is to be attained by deliberate organisation and collective effort. It must so plan the lines of its industrial structure that authority is associated, not with property, but with function, and rests on conscious consent, not on the power of wealth. It must so distribute its resources that an ever larger proportion of the surplus, which, thanks to science and invention, modern industry yields, is employed not for private gratification, but for the common advantage.

If the means are complex, the end is simple. When the false gods are dethroned, there is some hope, at least, of the arrival of the true. The reason for equalising, as means and opportunity allow, the externals of life is not that the scaffolding is more important than the shrine, or that economic interests for all their clamour and insistence, possess the unique and portentous significance which the fashionable philosophy of the age is accustomed to ascribe to them. It is not, as austere critics assert, to pamper the gross bodily appetites of an envious multitude, but to free the spirit of all. In the currency of the soul, as in that of states, spurious coin drives out good. Its stamp is different in different generations, but in our own it is familiar. The chief enemy of the life of the spirit, whether in art, culture, and religion, or in the simple human associations which are the common vehicle of its revelation to ordinary men, is itself a religion. It is, as every one knows, the idolatry of wealth with its worship of pecuniary success, and its reverence for the arts, however trivial or unamiable in themselves, by which success is achieved, and its strong sense of the sanctity of possessions and weak sense of the dignity of human beings, and its consequent emphasis, not on the common interests which unite men, but on the accidents of property, and circumstance, and economic condition, which separate and divide them. The cult has strange antics of devotion, and singular observances, and a ritual sometimes comic, sometimes cruel, sometimes both. It causes its devotees to admire what is not admirable, while despising what is, and to seek happiness where it cannot be found, not where it can. It is not favourable

to simplicity of life, for it makes much of display, or to sincerity of mind, for it burns incense to shams ; or to a just and sensitive taste, for its criteria are those of quantity and mass ; or to harmonious relations between human beings, for it labours hard, and with success, to multiply discords. But, with all its, crudities and extravagances, the creed rests on a reality. It draws its strength from the truth that, as the world is to-day, wealth opens the gates of opportunity, and poverty, save for fortunate exceptions, still commonly closes them.

So it is not sufficient to exercise the demon with pious conjurations. It is necessary to destroy the hard pediment of fact, on which his power reposes. Though the ideal of an equal distribution of material wealth may continue to elude us, it is necessary, nevertheless, to make haste towards it, not because such wealth is the most important of man's treasures, put to prove that it is not "*Sint temporalia in usu, aeterma in desiderio*". It is possible that the ultimate goods of human life, which belong to the realm where to divide is not to take away, may more easily be attained, when its instruments and means are less greedily grasped and more freely shared.

K. KRISHNAMURTHY.

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## IS COMMUNISM NATURAL TO THE SOIL OF INDIA ?

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The second revolution in Russia in November 1917 followed by the establishment of a soviet republic in that country, the frantic efforts of the Soviet authorities to dazzle the world by a series of five year plans, the spectacle of Trotsky, the torch-bearer of the Russian revolution knocking at the doors of all European countries for a shelter after his sensational expulsion from the Comintern, the prolonged trial of the Meerut Conspiracy Case accused coupled with the Public Safety Ordinance and the phenomenal recrudescence of Communist activities in U. S. A. and Asiatic countries these and other events of recent occurrence have attracted the attention of the world towards "Communism" or "Marxism." Communism is a challenge to the modern civilisation emanating from Moscow and the same has to be accepted by all who have the welfare of the humanity at their heart.

Youth in every country of the world being impressionable is easily lured by clap-trap phrases of the Communist ideology. In a country like India, where the student class has more often than not been an easy prey to the ambitions of political agitators, it is becoming the fashion amongst youths, especially amongst College students to pose as Communists and address each other as "Comrades". It is also their hobby to grab Communist literature smuggled in India by Soviet agents and form opinions on conditions in Soviet Russia on the basis of such literature. Anything published in the Indian or English press condemning or criticising the Soviet system is summarily rejected as "yellow press propaganda" and one is asked to believe that if paradise does at all exist on this earth, it exists nowhere but in Soviet Russia.

The first systematic attempt to define the principles of Communism was made by Karl Marx in his famous Paris Commune of 1848. It was not, however, until the second

Revolution in Russia that for the first time, the possibility of the realisation of that ideal presented itself to the followers of Marx. It is too much to say that Marx could foresee the revolution in 1917. Anyone watching the part played by Russia in the Great War during the early part of that year could have hardly imagined that within the next few months she would become the epi-centre of a political earthquake, the tremors of which would be felt throughout the world.

That the Soviet rule was established in Russia by brutal methods,—methods unparalleled in the history of mankind is not denied by Communists themselves. Everything that came in their way was ruthlessly suppressed. Nobles and Landlords were deported, their estates confiscated, the Church was abolished, the press was compelled to play second fiddle to the Government and people as a whole were terrorised with a view to create awe in their minds for the new Government. The example of Russia filled the hearts of anarchists all over the world with glee. In Communism they found a new weapon to preach chaos and disorder; a weapon which could be used against anyone who had two square meals a day; a theory which seemed to be more revolutionary than any one till then known; a movement which appeared to be more extremist than all national movements; a creed which promised power and wealth to the most hardened of criminals; and finally an international rising with the ultimate object of overthrowing Governments all over the world. The newly christened Communists now started fishing in troubled waters and where waters were calm busied themselves in fomenting trouble. Post-war Europe furnished them with ample scope for activities and they were not slow to exploit all opportunities that they got.

The history of Communism in India is of recent origin. We are not primarily concerned with the various activities of the Indian Communists but these will *en passant* be reviewed later. The immediate problem before us is "Is Communism natural to the soil of India?" Anyone who has moved through the workmen's chawls in Bombay or the huts of peasants in Bengal and United Provinces might say "Here is a nice



opportunity for sowing Communist doctrines. The men are starving. Thousands of them are unemployed. Their children are dying for want of nourishment; the cultivator is groaning under the burden of debts and heavy interest. Communism will easily germinate under such conditions". Let me make it at once clear that none but a superficial observer can entertain such ideas and that it is these and other similar ideas that have made Indian youths an easy tool in the hands of agents of Moscow and brought about untold misery to the youths themselves.

Let us now examine what Communism is. According to the universally accepted definition "Communism is the more violent form of Socialism (the difference between the two being ultimate rather than immediate)"\* and "Socialism means the organisation of the workers for the conquest of political power for the purpose of transforming capitalist property and social property". It also means the nationalisation of the whole of the means of production, distribution and exchange. It implies nationalisation of Railways, mines, factories, banks, and last but not the least agriculture. In India, it also means the complete annihilation of over 650 Indian States, and doing away with the Zemindars of Bengal and U. P. Communism will have all things common, including women and children, leaving nothing to the individual, which he can call his own. "Communism denies altogether the right of private property, saying bluntly, all property is theft. Under a fully Communist state, there would neither wages, money nor barter. Each citizen would give of his best to the State and would receive his needs from the state. 'From each according to his strength; to all according to their necessity.'"<sup>†</sup>

Communism we are told, stands for the dictatorship of the proletariat. As a matter of fact it stands for the usurpation of power by a few determined anarchists, whose aim is not so much to raise the standard of life of the proletariat as to humiliate

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\* The difference at the present moment between Communism and what still calls itself Socialism is almost wholly one of method and space. (Hearnshaw, F.J.C. Survey of Socialism" P. 91. E. Mille, Vanderville Belgium Leader:

† Gordon, A. Common sense of Socialism. P. 91.

the higher and richer classes in society by making an appeal to cupidity envy and hatred. The economic theory of Marx was abandoned by Engels after his death as impracticable. Lenin's applied Communism was a step further in the direction of abandoning principle for profit and Stalin's Communism bears to semblance to that envisaged by Marx. The Marxian system is based on the theory of class war and presupposes that the working classes are being robbed of their legal dues, that the Landlord, the Industrialist, the Banker, the Merchant and the State constitute in themselves a big conspiracy out to suck the blood of the proletariat. It tells the working classes and the peasants that their only hope of liberation from the bondage of capitalism and Imperialism lies in a violent social and political revolution culminating in the seizure of power by the former in the name of the latter. By a deliberate twisting of facts, by damning everyone who questions the soundness of the theory of class war as a reactionary and therefore an ally of Imperialism, and by working upon the credulity of the illiterate masses, the Communist paints an exaggerated picture of the existing "hell" and the the promised "paradise" and using every small defect in the existing social order, charges his subject with hatred for authority of every type. It is this spirit of defiance which he at first creates and then developes. His idea is "to foster misery, increase strike, foment disorder, ruin industry, disturb commerce, prevent reform; lest peace and prosperity postpone the catastrophe" of social revolution.\*

It will thus be seen that the Communist has no chance of realising his cherished dream of a social revolution unless he drives the people into desparation by doing everything in his power to ruin them. His outlook is completely destructive and opposed to reforms. For the purpose of catching the imagination of the workers and peasants, he might formulate certain demands and make them the basis of his onslaught on the State and Society knowing only too well that no industry can exist if they were conceded. His central idea is not to secure the amelioration of the conditions of the working class but to foment discontent by representing the industrialists as greedy tyrants. He will engineer a strike ostensibly for the redress of certain grievances, genuine or otherwise, but in his

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\* Hearnshaw (Survey of Socialism ) P. 278.

inner circle will freely admit that the strike and the resultant loss and misery to the workmen is only preparing ground for "social revolution". He will not hesitate to instigate the workers to defy the authority of the police and make martyrs of those who lose their lives in clashes with the police. Once the discontent in the masses has reached boiling point, the road is clear for him.

It is necessary at this stage to say a few words relating to the academic side of "Communism". The materialistic conception of history as propounded by Marx is unsound; his economic theories have on scientific analysis been found to be false and his dogma of the class war derived from his false view of history and his erroneous economic theories are radically untrue and immeasurably pernicious. (Hearnshaw, Survey of Socialism P. 283.) The system cannot stand the test of science, is irrational, ambiguous and self-contradictory.

The question that now arises is as to whether a system of Government based on the aforesaid communist doctrines is natural to the soil of India. With a view to arrive at a correct decision on this most important and all absorbing question of the day, it will be our concern here to make an exhaustive survey of the political, social, religious and economic background of Indian life.

Broadly speaking, India's political life is dominated by two schools of thought. The evolutionaries or the liberals and the revolutionaries or the extremists. The Moslems, the Liberals, the Moderates, The Responsivists, The Justicites, the Hindu Sabhawallahs, the advocates of the Second International belong to the former school. None of them has any faith in the efficacy of the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements thrust on the country by the extremist element. The Moslems though divided amongst themselves are remarkably agreed on the pressing need for safeguarding the interests of their community and except in so far as these come into conflict with the attitude of the Liberals, generally range themselves on the side of the "moderate" school. The Liberals are usually branded by the extremists as "reactionaries" as there is little in their programme which has a direct appeal to the masses. Hence we find that strenuous efforts are being made by the elder statesmen of that Party to recruit young blood, lest Liberalism may die a premature death. One

thing must however be said in favour of their programme and policy. They have no use for catch-words and rhetorics and are outspoken in their condemnation of the leftist activities. The apparent dullness of their programme is due to the fact that the realities of conditions in India stare them in the face and the task of tackling the difficult problems presented by such conditions does not permit of any play in the imagination of the mass-mind. They are none the less staunch patriots, each of their activities being guided by the desire to achieve the goal by legitimate and peaceful means, believing as they do in the partnership of India in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The line of demarkation between the various sections in the extremist or revolutionary school of thought is however not very clear. The word "extremist" is in itself ambiguous and does not denote anything beyond the revolutionary outlook of the person concerned. It does not indicate for instance, whether that person is an anarchist, a terrorist, a socialist, a fascist, a social democrat, a believer in the establishment of the Hindu Raj, an opportunist, a fanatic a mental revolutionary, or an average person insisting on the immediate establishment of Democracy, pure and simple, with the use of force, if necessary. Each one of these is actuated by a spirit of hatred for the British race and Government and any two groups can combine whenever such a course is thought desirable. All Communists are terrorists in the sense that they believe in mass terrorism. Looked at from this point of view, the recent appeal issued by the Bombay Communists to the Bengal terrorists for a unison of the two is easily explained. It is however not clear as to how many of the terrorists are communists but it can be stated without fear of contradiction that the majority of them believe in the communist doctrines. It has also to be recognised that of late, the extremist element in this country has been increasingly sympathetic in its attitude towards Russia, as in the words of Sir Harcourt Butler, "the extremist now turns his face in prayer not to Ireland but to Moscow, the home and temple of hatred and revolution and from Moscow he derives not only moral countenance but financial support".\*

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\* India Insistent. P. 108.

Though none can be blind to the growing political consciousness in India, it is doubtful whether the country as a whole knows what it wants. The average cultivator attaches more importance to timely monsoon and a good price for his produce than any scheme of constitutional reforms.\* The Indian political classes are themselves a handful in an immense population (W. Churchill, Speeches on India P. 33 and 35; Thornton Butterworth Ltd.) and do not necessarily present a faithful picture of the aspirations and habits of the masses. The peasant is usually a docile and willing worker who wants peace in his village and freedom to observe his religious beliefs, as "Religion is still the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega of Indian life". † On the social side he believes in maintaining the superiority of his caste and refuses to recognise the Communist principle that all men are equal. Anything that seeks to shake his belief in religion, and age-old practices is an anathema, as he is conservative to the extreme. His greatest pride lies in cultivating his own fields and he will at once reject any scheme of collective farming, as contemplated in the Soviet system. Tradition has taught him that the King is the protector of his religion and a representative of God. ‡ (Na Vishnuh Prithivipathih.) "In Oriental phrase, the Sirkar or Government, is expected to be the *ma bap* or mother and father of the people". He derives the greatest pleasure of his village life in spending the evenings at the hearthside, playing with his children and cracking jokes with the members of his family. A system of Government which recognises no God, religion, or right to private property or in other words a system which leaves no freedom of action to the individual, has no appeal to him. A word from his religious head is more important to him than all the modern conceptions of the Governmental system.

No better description of Indian life can be given than the one by the Marquess of Linlithgow in his famous paper the Indian Peasant. (Faber and Faber Ltd. London). The

\* "The Indian Congress and other elements in the agitation (in India) represent neither the numbers, the strength, nor the vesture of the Indian People." "Churchill India, P. 36. Also see J. P. O. Report.

† India Insistent. P. 21.

‡ ना विष्णु पृथिविपतिः

Marquess who was the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture has, after an extensive tour of India, given us a report which is now the standard reference on the question of daily occupation of the great mass of the Indian people. He came into actual contact with the peasant of every province in India and this is what he writes concerning life in Indian villages.

"Life in the villages flows happily enough; at some seasons of the year, work on the holdings is extremely arduous, at other times between the gathering of one crop and the preparation of the soil for the next, there is leisure and to spare. Marriages and other ceremonies make a welcome break in the routine of existence, and in India the male onlookers appear to get as much interest and amusement out of a wedding as do the ladies nearer home. There are Mowglis in every village and the days spent in herding the cattle or in scaring marauding creatures from their fathers' fields are for them as happy and as full of exciting and informing incidents, as were those spent in the jungle by their famous prototype. Wild nature is close about them. The grey brothers of the wolf pack lurk in the jungle shadows, quick to squeeze any calf that becomes separated from the herd, while Sheer Khan, the stripped one, the killer, claims nightly his victims. Nor does a moon pass but the Nag, the cobra bites the dust, with Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, the mongoose, holding fast to the back of his neck. As it was, so it is. The hot sun burns in a cloudless sky and drives his scorching rays through man and beast while the note of the Copper-smith bird floats through the shimmering air. The day wanes, the women make their shy way to the village well-head, pausing for a moment to discuss the latest news before carrying home their water vessels. A dust-cloud marks the approach to their secure nightquarters of the village herds of the cattle and goats. The grey-beards of the community close their long parliament beneath the village tree and disperse to their evening meal. Night sudden and twilightless falls upon the village. Here and there lamps glimmer through the scented darkness. A jackal howls and is answered by his kind from all quarters of the compass.

A string of carts that have carried the produce of the fields to the distant market town comes creaking along the rut-furrowed road, the bullock bells jangling, the drivers crooning some age-old love song. That is India."

Nine out of ten Indians are peasants. They are the real India—the India of the villages.

This then is the soil of India so far as the villages are concerned. When we turn to the towns we find that in spite of the fact that the forces of industrial rejuvenation have converted thousands of agriculturists into factory workers, religion has not lost its grip of their mind. Hence we notice constant strife between the Hindus and the Mussalmans resulting in bloodshed. Though the Trade Unionist may lay special emphasis on the economic side of the workers life, it has to be admitted that the working classes have taken a very prominent and in many cases a leading part in the communal riots in Bombay, Calcutta and other places. The merciless attacks on Pathans in the Sewri Oil Well Workers, Strike which culminated in a very violent Hindu Muslim riot in Bombay in 1929 and the history of the Bombay 1933 riots point out the communal feeling which still runs very high in the minds of the workers. It will be interesting to note that after the recent Bombay riots, over 7000 Hindu workers of a certain Bombay mill refused to resume work unless nearly 2000 Muslims employed in the same mill were dismissed by the management. Such a phenomenon is inexplicable if the working classes are free from the rancour of communalism as the Labour Leaders would have us believe. It has also frankly to be recognised that we have in India no working classes as such, as implied by the term in other countries. The primary object of every agriculturist who migrates to the town is to supplement his income on land by his earnings in the factory and to return to the village at the earliest opportunity after earning to the best of his capacity. He will starve himself in the Town by spending the minimum of his earnings and save to the utmost of his capacity in the hope of leading a peaceful life in his village after retirement. He refuses to be attached to the Town and even when he is working at his machine in the factory his mind is engrossed with ideas about

his distant home, his cattle and his fields. He will thank his labour Union if they declare a strike in his factory at the monsoon time, as this will facilitate his return to the village and thus enable him to devote his attention to the agricultural operations. The fact that in the rainy season thousands of workers rendered idle by strikes can find employment in the fields is largely responsible for the prolongation of the strikes, as an average Indian worker takes more delight in being called "a Kasbtkar" than a slave of the machine.

Anyone whose imagination is fired with the Communist doctrines is apt to underestimate the complex problem presented by the caste system and the hold of religion on the mind of the Indian. The Hindu believes that the four traditional castes (Varnas) were created by God, that his social system is based on the capacity of each caste to supply the needs of the community as a whole and that notwithstanding the apparent tyranny of the Brahmins over other castes, it enunciates in the best form the principle of division of labour. He is not blind to the fact that centuries of its existence coupled with the onslaught of other religions has weakened its very foundations but refuses to reorganise his society on any secular basis. At the most he is prepared to admit the need for a reclassification of the numerous existing castes and sub-castes into the four Varnas with the object of rejuvenating the Hindu culture. In particular, the lower strata of the Hindu society is more conservative in the matter of social and religious reform. The powers invested in the President (Panch) of any caste are so wide as to make the life of any one who dares to violate its rules, completely miserable. Then again, the average Hindu is prone to charity. He believes that all his sins can be washed away if only he allots a portion of his income (ill-gotten or otherwise) towards charity. His first impulse is to build some temple, dig a well, or construct a caravansarai or to go on pilgrimage with a view to please the Gods. He believes in feeding not only men, but cattle, ants, dogs and pigeons and other beings. Every "Dwija" (Twice-born, caste Hindu) is enjoined by his religion to offer (1) oblation to all spirits (2) feed the crows (3) feed the cow, and (4) enquire before taking his meals whether there is anyone waiting his door, who had



none. He also believes that his present difficulties are due to his sins in his past life and that the only way of getting out of the misery is to do good in this life. Islam, a powerful religion in India also emphasises the principle of giving alms and pilgrimage to Mecca. The millions of Fakirs and Sadhus whose only profession is of begging, the open and organised flouting of the Sarda Act, the vehement opposition to the Temple Entry Bill and the *volte face* of the Congress during the last stage of the Bill and on the eve of the Assembly elections, are but a few instances which demonstrate the sway of religious dictates and traditions on the populace of India.

Communism aims at the complete destruction of culture and religion and replacing the existing social order by a reign of terror. Communism is therefore opposed to Nationalism. Communism recognises no boundaries of the state whether natural or artificial. Its ultimate object is to create a corporate state of the world taking its orders from Moscow. No nation or race which has any culture and the aspirations of whose peoples are guided by certain definite principles can therefore have anything to do with it. Whereas a Nationalist will advocate boycott of foreign cloth with the object of bringing the foreign merchant and through him the foreign Government, to its knees, a Red Internationalist will advocate purchase of foreign cloth on the ground that it benefits the worker in that country who is his "comrade". In recent years, the Communist has under instructions from Moscow (Vide Platform of Action issued by the R. I. L. U. in or about October 1930) joined the premier Nationalist organisation in every country with the object of capturing and converting the same to his own view as means to his own activity. The Communist therefore joined the Qui-Min-Tang, or the Chinese Nationalist Congress. He has also raised his head in the Irish Dail, the British Siamese and Australian Parliaments, and the Indian National Congress which gave him protection and opportunity to cast his net. China, where political conditions are similar to those in India soon discovered that notwithstanding the financial help from Russia and the following that the Chinese communists brought with them, there could be no compromise with the Red Army and the Communist leaders. Communism has brought untold hardships and

miseries to the peoples of China and driven the whole country into a civil war. Russia was eventually forced to go out of the picture but the mischief done by the Soviet Agents has not yet been remedied.

Unfortunately for India, the Indian National Congress has adopted a policy of flirting with Communism. Mr. Gandhi's dislike for the Socialists is well-known. It is not unlikely that he has retired from the active Leadership of the Congress as he fears that the Socialists in the Congress will soon come into power. The views of Mr. Patel (Vallabh Bhai) Dr. Ansari and other Congress leaders on the adoption of the Socialist programme were vigorously stated at the Bombay Congress but aided by the open sympathy of men like Pandit J. Nehru, Babu Purshottam Das Tandon and Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya it is clear that the Socialists who form a powerful minority within the Congress will before long capture the organisation and plunge the whole country into a class war, inspired from Moscow. Government have come in for a lot of criticism for promulgating an ordinance in the United Provinces in order to combat the "no-rent" campaign started under the guidance of the Congress leaders but few have cared to go into the reasons that prompted the Government to take the step.

The danger involved in the rise and growth of the Socialists in the Congress is really grave but the Congress as a whole has miserably failed to grasp the point. Unless the Congress leaders take courage in both hands and give a clear lead to the country by expelling from its ranks all Communists and pseudo-communists who go under the name of Socialists, it will soon find itself in the same unenviable position in which the Chinese Congress found itself about 11 years back.

From the foregoing observations, it will be seen that Communism is wholly unnatural to the soil of India. It is the greatest enemy of all progress and cuts at the very root of national solidarity. It also presupposes lack of sufficient intelligence in the peoples of this country to determine what system of Government is best suited to its needs. It deprives the individual of his right to think and act freely, prevents him from following his conscience and widens the already existing

gulf between the various castes and communities. It is diametrically opposed to the glorious past and the bright future that lies before this great sub-continent. One cannot for a moment believe that the 350 millions of Indians would allow nationalisation of women and state control of children and the conversion of mosques, temples and churches into stock-houses for storing grain as has been done in Russia. In fact very few would agree with the view that religion is an opium which is administered to the masses with the help of the State for the purpose of perpetuating the capitalist regime. It is a happy augury for India that her working class, like the British working class, is beginning to see through the game of the Communists and ridding itself of communistic influence, to some extent. What is needed at the present juncture is a determined attempt on the part of those who believe either in the superiority of the Indian Nation or in the ideals of the Second International to fully expose the fallacies of the Communist activities to the workers and peasants and harness public opinion into sound and healthy channels.

G. D. KARKARE,  
*Nagpur.*

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