

omic conditions absolutely determine social, moral and political ones; that profits are always and inevitably iniquitous; and that therefore all productive property and occupations without exception ought to be in state hands, Fabianism denies. What is unfortunate in Fabianism is that it seems to look upon state economic activity as rather the normal order, to be departed from or not insisted on only when personal initiative is clearly better. I should urge just the reverse—that individualism ought to be the standing presumption, to be resolutely entrenched on when it fails, provided public functioning is certain to do better, but always to be preserved and acted upon as the normal. I deem this difference in points of view rather important; but public ownership has not yet gone so far that a Fabianist policy and a rational individualism need at present clash.

Here, at least, I fear, for one must part company with socialism, that mode of thought in its orthodox form seeming to me to proceed upon pre-suppositions wholly unscientific.

One of these is the assumption that the estate of the human species on this earth can be radically bettered—made over, perfected—so that sin and misery shall in effect disappear. This I judge to be faith only and not reasoned conviction. In common with all healthy men I share such faith, but I cannot exalt it to the level of dogma or of scientific prediction. Its basis is primarily religious though it derives more or less support also from the progress which humanity seems to have made in the past. Each of these grounds is worthy recognition. The belief in question is therefore not to be ranked as mere credulity. It cannot, however, on the other hand, be accepted as a scientific premise. We hope for a city of God, to be established right here in this actual earth; but if you ask for a demonstration that it will come I can give you nothing of the kind, and no one can.

On the contrary, alas, the scientific data all seem to point the other way. There is a sadly convincing induction, familiar to students of social history, that whenever material betterment comes to the ignorant poor, as through a rise of wages or the cheapening of bread, it is speedily checked by increase in population. The principal consideration that forbade me to find in socialism a panacea was the insight that, granting to socialism as a purely economic resort all that is claimed for it, which was further than I could go; supposing socialism to bring to pass economically all that Rodbertus, Marx, or any apostle ever claimed, the community would soon be again suffering from its old-fashioned ills through the irrational multiplication of the species. However great economic prosperity may come through socialism or otherwise the sort of humanity we have had to deal with thus far, the only kind of men we know, will use such prosperity to multiply perniciously, to develop a submerged tenth, an ignorant and vicious proletariat, whose woes will be so great as again and very soon to lower the average weal well toward zero.

I am not forgetting what socialists say against this. Marx would have us believe that economic welfare inevitably begets intellectual and moral sanity. I could never see any proof of this. It is another bland and thoughtless assumption. Innumerable cases of physical plenty could be cited, taken from all the historic centuries and from the most diverse conditions of race, climate and society, which are not followed by mental or moral uplift. I instance the good-for-naught Anglo-Saxon men in the most prosperous parts of this country—without large families, rarely sick, able to command good wages if willing to work, yet forever in rags, without a cent's worth of property or credit, e. g., oJe Beall, in Sam Walter Foss' poem, "He'd Had No Show."

HE'D HAD NO SHOW.

"Joe Beall 'ud sit upon a keg
Down to the grocery store, an' throw
One leg right over t'other leg
An' swear he'd never had no show.
'Oh, no,' said Joe,
'Hain't hed no show.'
Then shift his quid to t'other jaw,
An' chaw, an' chaw, an' chaw, an'
chaw.

"He said he got no start in life,
Didn't get no money from his dad,
The washin' took in by his wife
Earned all the funds he ever had.
'O, no,' said Joe,
'Hain't hed no show.'
An' then he'd look up at the clock
An' talk, an' talk, an' talk, an' talk.

"I've waited twenty years—let's see—
Yes, twenty-four, an' never struck,
Altho' I've sot roun' patiently,
The fust rarnation streak er luck,
'O, no,' said Joe,
'Hain't hed no show.'

Then stuck like mucilage to the spot,
An' sot, an' sot, an' sot, an' sot.

"I've come down regerler every day,
For twenty years to Piper's store.
I've sot here in a patient way.
Say, hain't I Piper?" Piper swore.
'I tell ye, Joe,
Yer hain't no show;
Yer too dern patient'—ther hull raft,
Jest laffed, an' laffed, an' laffed, an'
laffed."

If therefore, we wish to go upon a basis of fact and not upon dreams we ought not to expect from socialism, however triumphant, any permanent deliverance from the principal woes that are upon us.

Permit me now to distinguish between two types of socialism, scientific and popular, for, to some extent, what I have still to say can be made more relevant by treating them apart.

Socialism of the reasoned sort, as worked out by Rodbertus and in part by Marx, is at first sight very attractive. It meets many objections on which the more popular doctrine has no word. Thus, it is anti-communist not proposing that all men's services shall be rewarded alike irrespective of ability and fidelity, but aiming to mete out rewards in an equitable manner. By the device of labor—time—money, essaying to make costs and prices exactly agree, it proposes that any person shall command for a day's toil products costing the community precisely the amount of time, toil, units to which he has been subjected in the day's work. Not "to all men alike;" but, "to every man according as his work shall be." This system patiently elaborated by Rodbertus, is so perfect and workable at many points that it tempts one to hail it as a real herald of the bliss for which we sigh. I have elsewhere analyzed this scheme, finding, to my regret, that in practice it must after all either utterly break down or else produce its little benefit at the cost of greater ills than it removes.

Much more interesting is every day socialism, the type now disturbing modern politics by ominously gaining converts daily. I may dub it "loose socialism," "state socialism" or "the socialism of the man in the street." Increasing hosts of intelligent men and women who never heard of Rodbertus, impressed by the working of trusts, of the postoffice and of public ownership in this country and elsewhere, jump to the conclusion that the complete generalization of such ownership would usher in a millennium. Their cry is "Only substitute Uncle Sam for Uncle John Rockefeller, Uncle Pierpont Morgan and all such, and the thing is done." Rodbertus careful planning for equity they ignore as superfluous labor.

I cannot help regarding such people as under a complete hallucination. There is much history to prove how enticing and ideal a plan may look when viewed in the block yet fail hopelessly under the searching test of experience. Compare the expected with the actually realized, (a) in the freeing of the Spanish-American republics from Spain; (b) in the introduction of free trade in Great Britain, and (c) in the abolition of slavery in our south!

The best substitute for trial by fire is an analysis of fire and of the bodies which are consumed or purified thereby. Can we not, by a parallel process, analyzing the system and also the nature of the human subjects on whom it is proposed to try it, ascertain what the results would be were the state made employer of all and popular socialism actually put to the test? Let us attempt this.

Frankly, socialism as popularly advocated would be likely to promote reform in a few not unimportant particulars. It would perhaps at points act more happily than any less drastic change.

The abolition of business corporations would of course end gambling in domestic stocks; but there would still be Canadian, Mexican and European stocks and bonds, and also for a long time, our own government bonds which last would be likely to fluctuate under the proposed regime as never before. Produce gambling would also be left to flourish. In a word, the gambling which connects itself with speculation would be little affected by socialism of the rough and ready sort.

Under such socialism the evils of scarcity and glut might be mollified by the careful gathering of statistics telling supply and demand. It is to be remarked, however, that, owing to diversity of seasons and weather and to people's changing tastes and wants, the evils referred to can at best be only a little diminished, while what can be done in this way trusts are now rapidly bringing about.

The proposed socialism would not prevent crises. Crops may fail or immense conflagrations or epidemics oc-

cur as now. Ups and downs in the value of money may also take place. Any improvement in these respects is as likely without socialism as with. Strikes and lockouts will also still be possible. Friction between capital and labor is in no wise certain to be abolished by making the public sole employer. The form of the boss-system must continue under socialism. At present wage scales are rarely drawn up by the actual owners of properties. Agents, managers, superintendents do this. Such functionaries would still be required, prevailing socialism, and one of them and the workers under him might disagree upon wages as now. The general public, owning all things, would likely enough insist on high wages, but, then as now, a special group of laborers may demand remuneration which cannot be conceded, giving rise to a strike on the one hand or a lockout on the other. The strife may then spread from establishment to establishment, enforced idleness, underproduction and want ensuing, as is so unfortunately the case at present. I cannot see how socialism is to assure any appreciable improvement in matters of this sort.

State socialists assume that their establishment of society would annul profits, interest and rent. It would not, unless private property of every kind and degree were done away, and it is not proposed to go so far as that. The fee of consumable property, pleasure grounds, personal libraries, kits of tools, clothing and so on—the fee, in a word, of all property which is no longer capital but has been passed over to consumers for consumption purposes—the fee of all such property is to remain in private hands.

But as surely as this is so loaning and economic rent will to some extent continue. Savings banks will of course be owned by government, but is there to be no inducement for people to deposit in them, no rate per cent? And if, residence land or even houses being privately owned, the fashion shows favor for certain wards, streets, or corners, I would like to know what power on earth could keep the phenomenon of rent from arising?

Profits, too, would stay. Suppose that by some art or device you or I can sell given products cheaper than the state mills, farms or fisheries can, are we to be put in jail for doing so? If not, we shall make profits. There would be many cases of this kind.

In the main no doubt profit-taking under that name will cease, but if industry is to go on strongly, the same or similar winnings must be permitted in the form of salaries. Supervising, organizing inventive talent must be paid for and the remuneration must come from the people's industry. Your new system will perhaps prevent a few cases of extortionate profits, but supervisory agency will on the whole cost the people as much under it as under the present order.

I also pause when apostles of socialism urge that their system would secure work at fair wages for all at all times, putting an end to necessity for charity. A socialist government might of course artificially provide employment through woodyards, stone-breaking plants, etc., where men having no other jobs could earn small sums—a system of disguised charity. But present governments can do this as well as socialism could. Socialists do not mean this. They affirm that normal and lucrative employment will be always ready. How will socialism guarantee this unless it can, as we have seen it cannot, prevent scarcity, glut, strikes, lockouts, crop failures, floods, fires and epidemics?

Frequently the occasion of a man's being out of work is not that there isn't work, but that there is none of his exact sort, or none of this without search and travel, or that the wages of other conditions do not suit. I am wholly unable to see how general public ownership could much if any limit these possibilities of hitch.

As for charity, the occasions for it originate partly in misfortunes which are inevitable, utterly unpreventable by government or otherwise, and partly in men's laziness and unthrift. That these bad qualities are ineradicable in human nature I will not allege, but I cannot for the life of me see what socialism could do to abate them. I believe that it would insufferably increase them.

To minify these criticisms, to make a system that shall actually improve on our present one, socialists should go back to Rodbertus and try to amend his proposals into workableness. His plan, if it could be executed, would, at many of the points touched on, bring real remedy. Of up-to-date socialism this cannot be said.

While socialism would thus have little if any power for good it would

have vast power to inflict injury.

In my judgment the lax socialism of which I have been speaking would beget four appalling evils, any one of which would be a fate heading out more hydra-like with woes than the existing system itself.

1. It would inevitably degenerate into communism. The system, if set up, would of course be administered by its advocates, and these, you notice, when not avowed communists, are people to lay greater stress on equality than on justice, minimizing distinctions in men's productive ability and making light of Rodbertus' painstaking effort to secure justice between individual producers.

This trend of every day socialism toward communism is not wanton, but natural. Study of Rodbertus convinces many socialists as it has me that socialism not involving communism would be to say the least very hard to administer. Not a few already say what, upon trial, every one would echo: "A curse upon all this machinery and perspiration for differentiating the individual shares of product! Go to, we will divide equally." That is easier and, for the majority, the dividends so gotten at, larger.

2. It would file off and at length entirely annul the invaluable spur of individual initiative.

That this result would come is obvious from the preceding point. The miraculous richness of initiative, enterprise and daring hitherto witnessed in men's activities, mastering nature and bringing forth ever new devices for men's comfort and progress, would fall away along with the prompting of individual opportunity. Philanthropy might be incentive enough if you could get it in necessary measure, but philanthropy is a quality not to be called into existence by mere notification. The loss at this point would be fatal. With all their rapacity and crimes captains of industry are a colossal net good. Social weal requires that they be curbed, not that they be crushed.

3. It would annihilate the power of this nation to compete industrially or otherwise with leading nations. Benjamin Kidd rightly depicts how quickly a people which conducts its life non-competitively must drop behind such as continue under that cruel but effective god. On the nature and amount of such loss people would differ. If it meant merely lessened wealth or prestige among the nations not a few would contemplate it with some composure; but few certainly would confront composedly the likelihood of our becoming a vassal nation or of our absorption by Great Britain or the German empire.

4. It would subject society to a species of mob rule at home. In what sense do we believe in democracy? Not in the Athenian sense that every man is fit for any office or that men are equally capable to give advice on all questions; but in this sense: (1) that natural differences of ability are at any time sure to be found in any society; (2) that society naturally selects for its various duties and functions those somehow specially fitted for these, and then follows such leaders; and (3) that the result thus attained, though usually far from perfect, is on the whole better than if leaders were made such in any other way.

Socialism does not ignore this principle, and Rodbertus' socialism makes reasonable provision for its successful application, but popular socialism does not. It plans for a leaderless nation. Its program would kill off able leaders and make the political boss God over all cursed forevermore. Great men will not work in harness nor submit to political call or political dismissal, which always involve more or less caprice.

This statement is not refuted by the fact that many political offices requiring high business and administrative ability are now well-filled. All political official work is now carried on in an atmosphere of competition, with examples of competitive service visible all about. It therefore offers no hint of what would occur were competition clean gone forever.

I for one believe it democratic for the people's work to be well and economically done, which never occurs under multiple-headship such as popular socialism must involve.

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