

## Individualistic Survivals Under Socialism.

**O**NE of the most striking truths disclosed by the doctrine of evolution, is, that the entire complex mechanism of modern industry and all the diversified economic activities which civilized men engage in, have grown by slow degrees out of the few simple biologic or vital activities carried on by the animal organism. Primitive life is essentially individualistic. The purely physical needs of the brute, can, in almost all instances, be fully satisfied by its own unaided physical powers, but as man, the "tool-using animal," appeared upon the stage, his gradually increasing wants made necessary more elaborate methods of meeting them. Thus arose production, or the conscious and planful transforming of raw material into objects of utility, and thus by a further step arose the system of the division of labor and the separation of the workers into the different trades. With the continuous development of industry and the discovery of the advantages of association and of co-operation, the factory system and later the trust system arose and hundreds and thousands and then hundreds of thousands of men became co-workers in the same establishment or under the same corporation.

In this manner at successive periods successively more advanced and more effective methods of satisfying wants became predominant, but be it noticed that during each of these periods of higher development the characteristic forms of economic activity of the preceding periods did not become entirely extinct but were merely greatly restricted in their range. At the present time, for example, when we have reached the highest of the above mentioned stages of industrial development there still survive in abundance and at the very heart of our civilization types of all the past economic forms.

It must not be supposed, however, that these necessarily represent in every case an instance of arrested development. Various needs of the individual and of society can only be satisfied by methods that do not allow of the use of mechanical devices or large scale production, and just as the physiological functions such as digestion, respiration, etc., which although they represent the most fundamental of these needs have remained and must always remain individualistic because inherently so, so must there also remain economic functions or occupations that are inherently individualistic.

On the other hand, we notice in the case of the animal organism, which is the prototype of the social organism, that the

higher the degree of development the more numerous and important become the functions of the organism as a whole, the functions under the control of the center of consciousness, and that chief among such functions are those corresponding to production as, for example, the obtaining and storing up of food, the building of nests, etc. What is more logical, then, than to suppose that as the social organism develops, production must here also become a function appertaining, in general, to the whole, instead of to the parts? At any rate, whatever our theories may be, the logic of *facts*, the facts unfolding in the industrial world, points indisputably to co-operation, co-operation to the furthest possible degree, as the coming rule in the economic life of society. The existing trusts represent but a passing stage of development the outcome of which must be the establishment of a trust of trusts comprising as equal shareholders every man, woman and child in the land and undertaking in the interest of the whole of society and in so far as is practicable all economic activities.

What, then, is the boundary line between, or the distinguishing feature or features of that class of occupations which we may expect under Socialism to continue to be carried on, and quite properly so, by private individuals, or even groups, for their own private gain and independently of the central and collective industrial administration, and that far wider field of industrial effort which will in the future be wholly controlled and occupied by the community in its corporate and economic capacity?

The answer to this must seem clear when we consider the genesis of industrial activities in general and of any given economic occupation in particular.

Primitive man emerging from the state of animality knew no other form of co-operation than that carried on within the family circle. Before men learned that to labor for each other was the better way to satisfy their own individual needs every man labored for himself and by himself. But the increase of population, making it impossible to subsist by the chase, forced men into a more intensive and economical utilization of the resources of nature and of their own energy by the practice of agriculture and the mechanical arts. Through the gradually increasing division of labor which this involved it became more and more difficult and finally impossible for any man to supply all his needs directly by the labor of his own hands and men were thus impelled with ever greater force towards the system of informal and limited co-operation prevailing to-day. Where in the beginning every one produced by himself all that he required incipient civilization forced men to produce, for the larger part, not directly for their own consumption but for the purpose of

exchange, while at a still later period, as at the present time, most workers do not individually produce even the whole of any one article, whatever it may be, in the exclusive manufacture of which they have now come to be engaged, but only a part of it. This advance from the direct to the indirect method of satisfying wants has been the characteristic feature of industrial progress. A like increasing indirectness may be noted in the application of the mechanical aids to production where hand labor, that is, direct labor, is constantly making way for machinery, that is, indirect labor, and where the machinery itself is becoming ever more and more complicated.

Now no one prefers, and there is no reason why any one should prefer, to do a thing by an indirect and roundabout process when he can accomplish his purpose *as well* in a direct manner. Primitive individualistic production for use is obviously a more direct process of satisfying wants than is the system of associative production for sale or exchange, and it is only as in the course of the progress of society the superior economy of the latter method of production comes to be daily demonstrated over an enlarging area of the field of industry that men are forced to abandon economic independence for economic interdependence.

Collective production, then, is not an end in itself, but is a means to an end, the greater happiness of the individual. Since men seek to satisfy their desires with the least exertion, whatever method of satisfying a given desire requires the least exertion, the least expenditure of energy, is the best method for that particular purpose, whether it may or may not be the best for other purposes.

Now just as labor in all its forms, whether collective or individualistic, is, as we have seen, only a development of those physiological functions automatically or semi-automatically carried on by every animal organism, so are the wants of civilized men which this labor is occupied in satisfying an extension and elaboration of the simple needs of our sub-human ancestors, and as these wants attain different degrees of development so also must the organization of labor required to supply the demand thereby called forth for the particular commodities or services wanted attain different degrees of development.

Between the point in the development of a want where it can be fully satisfied or even where it can only be fully satisfied by one's unaided bodily organs to the point where an elaborate and centralized organization of labor becomes necessary to most economically and satisfactorily supply the particular commodity or service wanted there are many stages. Hence the determination of the question whether any given field of economic effort is fit or can be fit for social and collective administration must in chief

measure depend upon the degree of development that has been reached or that under the conditions of the case and the state of the arts can alone be reached in the methods and the organization of production in the particular industry and upon the position which the industry occupies in relation to other industries.

Bearing in mind the fact, that production, considered as a distinct form of human activity becomes differentiated from human activities in general, including the activities involved in consumption, by a slow process of evolution, and that all the time the appearance of new wants and their development to the point where they can only be satisfied by distinctly economic action, gives rise in this manner to new occupations and industries that only in given instances and usually by slow stages attain that degree of importance and integration or capacity for integration which makes necessary and desirable their social control, it must seem to the thoughtful student of human affairs and it will so seem under the Collectivist State to be quite as unwarrantable and illogical to arbitrarily prohibit *all* private economic transactions, all services performed by one individual for another for an economic consideration, as it would to prohibit the individual from performing for himself such operations, as, for example, the repairing of clothes, shaving, hair dressing, shoe polishing, etc., which the individual now sometimes performs for himself when he requires it done and sometimes for a stipulated compensation delegates to another.

The primary object of Socialism is the abolition of exploitation, the exploitation of the laborer by the capitalist and of the consumer by the producer or those controlling production. In order to eliminate the former of these two methods of exploitation, society must assume the function of the capitalist, the function of ownership and accumulation of the capital required to productively employ the labor of the people, the function of ownership of the land and the machinery of production. By thus rendering the laborer independent of the capitalist, by thus guaranteeing to the laborer employment and the means of employment, capitalistic exploitation of labor becomes impossible and the capitalist class ceases to exist.

But a state of things is conceivable and might under certain conditions of industry be desirable in which collective ownership of capital might be accompanied with the private use thereof. Where the methods of production and communication are but little developed, and where all industrial undertakings are in consequence necessarily carried on on a small scale and by a large number of independent and competing establishments, economic justice might be fully secured by guaranteeing to all equal rights

and opportunities to the soil and to the use of the implements of industry while leaving the administration of industry as a private function in the hands of the people as individuals and in their capacity of private citizens.

Under such an arrangement of things the exploitation of the laborer by the capitalist or landowner would indeed be impossible, nevertheless such a system is not adapted for the conditions of modern industrial society. Modern methods of transportation and communication and the marvelous technical development that has taken place within recent periods both in the field of extractive and manufacturing industries have made it necessary that in such industries and in others that are connected with and dependent upon these, labor to be most effective should be consolidated and operated under a unified management.

The progress of events in the industrial world affords convincing proof that consolidation to the point of monopoly is the normal, inevitable and logical outcome of industrial evolution and that there is, therefore, no choice but between a system of private monopoly for the benefit of the private monopolists, whether the latter be few or many, and one of public monopoly for the benefit of all. Competition in so far as it is still possible, is, in most instances, merely a waste of human labor and of resources of nature and society, the cost of which must be borne by all.

The interests of the people, as consumers, therefore, demand that society, in its corporate capacity, shall assume not merely the passive function of ownership of the land and capital but also the active function of administration of all such industries as the technical development of the age has converted into what we may properly denominate as natural monopolies, using the term to include all those industries which can more economically and productively be carried on under unified than under separate management.

In so far, however, as no advantage can be derived by the consumer from the performance of any particular industrial function by communal action there can be no reason why such function should be so performed. Private production in itself and under conditions where it can involve no exploitation is no evil any more than is private consumption, and as the object of production is consumption, that is to say, the satisfaction of the desires of the individual, it is but reasonable to suppose that unless artificially restrained the form of production will in many instances and with advantage ever coincide with or closely approach the form of consumption. As it is the needs of the consumer which set in motion the efforts of the producer then it would be a gratuitous injury and wrong to the former if when

his requirements are of such a nature as can best be satisfied or as can only be satisfied by individuals working independently, the voluntary performance of such services were prevented by the coercive power of governmental authority.

It is unfortunate that in the reaction from the present economic chaos some Socialists should have been carried into the advocacy of the opposite and almost equally undesirable extreme of universal and compulsory centralization of all economic power under collective control, the doctrine that every individual, whatever his occupation, and whether he be a farmer or a bishop, a tailor or a magazine editor, a barber or a novelist, must be a public employe drawing his salary from the national treasury and subject to the orders of some superior official or administrative committee.

As we have seen, however, the protection of the producers or laborers from capitalistic exploitation, does not in itself require the taking over by the community of a single economic function except that of banking and landowning, and that the real justification for the socialization of any industry or form of service is that the interests of the people as consumers can best be promoted thereby.

The co-operation of all for all in the production and distribution of the objects that minister to the ordinary material needs of life is without doubt a superior and more effective method of satisfying the economic wants of the people than the system of private and competitive or private and monopolistic production affords, but it can easily be shown that in certain branches of economic effort more satisfactory services could be obtained by the consumer from private individuals or associations than from the collective body of society consciously organized for such economic purposes.

Will any one seriously maintain, for example, that a government department or bureau would be as successful in catering to the diverse religious needs of the population as the present independent and specialized armies of priests and clergymen of the various denominations, including Christian Science readers and healers, Spiritualistic mediums, Mormon apostles, Dowieite missionaries, Salvation Army street exhorters, Theosophical adepts, Ethical Culture lecturers, etc., etc., together with the constantly arising new prophets and founders of religions who, by their very success in making converts, prove their fitness for partaking in the task of supplying the demand for religious ministrations?

Or again, would it be carrying to an unreasonable extreme the principle that religion is properly a private matter to question the wisdom of a policy of State administration of theological seminaries and to condemn the establishment of a government mo-

nopoly in the training of students for the ministry? Would it not, on the contrary, be clearly a backward step in historical development, an atavistic return to a more primitive social stage to thus bind together church and state by amalgamating their functions?

Or to take an example from another field of economic effort, let us ask ourselves how the benefits of a multiform free press, representing all shades of public opinion and every sect, school, organization and interest, political, industrial, religious, scientific, literary, artistic, local and miscellaneous, dealing with all manner of topics and freely commenting from all points of view upon men and events; admonishing, guiding and influencing the actions of individuals, organizations and governments; the bulwark of democracy, the champion of popular rights and without which government must inevitably relapse into a despotism; let us ask ourselves how the advantages of this great and beneficent modern institution could be retained by the people if journalism in all its forms is itself to become a department of the government and if editors are to be the appointees of the very officials or bodies whose actions and policies they are to review.

It is plain, therefore, that there must be some exceptions to the rule that every economic function shall be socialized and that all capital shall be held in common. Just as Socialists of all schools agree that municipalities and other local bodies should share with the central government in the control of industry, on the ground that the municipal administration of enterprises of a local nature would be for the best interest of the municipalities concerned, so should it logically be also conceded that occupations of an individualistic nature, that is, occupations that must naturally be carried on by individuals or even, in some cases, by groups of individuals working by themselves, should be carried on by them as private undertakings for themselves. As there is a proper sphere of economic activity for society as a whole and another also for municipalities and local government bodies, so likewise should it be recognized is there a proper field for the independent economic activity of private individuals.

The precise bounds of the economic sphere that must be thus reserved wholly or in part for private effort can not of course be definitely outlined. The question whether any given industry at any given stage of its development shall be considered as lying within the proper field of collective administration, must in each case be decided on its own merits. It does not follow, however, that even within the economic area at any time embraced by collective action the field must be entirely closed to private individuals, that is to say, by means of legislation.

If, notwithstanding the possession of the advantage of unlimited capital upon which no interest or profits need be earned, and

of having by the right of eminent domain the use of the best points of natural productivity for which no rent need be paid, the State as producer can not so satisfy the requirements of the consuming public as to displace by mere superiority of service and not by the exercise of political authority all private production within a given industry, then to the extent that private production thus succeeds in maintaining itself it thereby demonstrates its superiority for such forms of economic activity over the method of collective or socialized production and should therefore, if only in the interest of the consumer, be permitted to retain free of legislative interference its occupancy of such portions of the economic domain.

The common or joint rights of all in the natural and social means of production must no doubt in diverse instances require and justify restriction of the private use of such means of production. Such restriction, however, while fatally handicapping private industry for the larger part, should not be imposed as the act of a hostile government, seeking by the arbitrary exercise of its legislative power to stifle private competition, but should come only as part of the necessary communal administrative duties and in the exercise of just and impartial communal property rights in the communal property.

But now, if the prohibition of private competition, *per se*, where the latter is possible, is undesirable, and if where competition is impossible legislation is unnecessary, then it follows that practically no legislative action on the matter would really be required at all, and that there would need to be almost no interference whatever under Socialism with the industrial liberty of the individual. Given public ownership of the natural resources and of as large a fund of capital as is required to most fully and productively employ the labor power of the people, then exploitation of man by man being thus rendered impossible, labor will flow towards the collective or individualist form, as either is most profitable to itself and the community.

Of course, the recognition of the right of individual liberty in production, subject to the ownership by the whole of society in the major portion of the means of production, must be coupled with a recognition of the right of individual liberty in consumption, and such individual liberty in consumption must include not only the liberty of demand and the right to have the demand supplied in the case of objects produced or that may be produced by collective agency, but also the right to avail one's self by means of a universally accepted medium of exchange and token of value of the services voluntarily offered by private individuals, and to use such medium of exchange for any other purpose or transaction of a private character not opposed to the public welfare.



When money will have lost the power to breed money, that is, when interest on capital will have fallen to zero, and surplus profits will have become impossible, as a result of the socialization of as large a portion of the field of industry as would be required to absorb all the labor seeking employment free of exploitation and supply in full the public demand for goods and services at cost; then, as the mere accumulation of money by a private individual beyond an amount reasonably required for purposes of consumption would no longer avail as now to bring in a revenue of itself, or, rather, out of the labor of others, all such private accumulations, representing, as they would then, the product of the labor and abstinence of the owners, would be as socially harmless as they would be unusual.

The objection will perhaps be made to this that the liberty to accumulate capital which may be used for private purposes must give it an income bearing power when employed at least within the economic domain reserved for private enterprise, for example, when employed as the plant of a college of phrenology, or, say, of a magazine devoted to the advocacy of the doctrine of reincarnation, and that, therefore, nothing less than the absolute prohibition of all gainful private economic activities and of all private property in objects available for productive and money making purposes will suffice to permanently and completely eliminate the possibility of the recurrence under one form or another, of the evil of usury or capitalistic increase.

To this, the reply that must be made is, that where the income that might be thus derived from private sources would exceed the value of the labor expended, manual and intellectual, and include the equivalent of what would now be called the interest upon the capital, then the fact that capital could thus command interest would indicate that society had been remiss in the performance of one of its necessary economic functions, namely, that of supplying *at cost* and free of interest the capital required by the people for their private use, where such private use could not detrimentally affect the capital in public use. Private capital could not command interest in the presence of a fund of public capital sufficiently large to supply the full private demand and available to all under such terms and regulations as would merely secure its maintenance and replacement. In the absence of an exploiting class to abstract from labor the larger part of its product, the earning power of the citizens mutually guaranteed, would afford a perfectly safe and ample basis of credit upon which to secure all loans that might be required by them for private purposes, industrial or otherwise.

Thus there is no reason to fear that the liberty of individuals under Socialism to remain outside the bounds of the collective or-

ganization of labor, in those isolated instances where such a proceeding would be profitable to them, would be attended with evil consequences to the remainder of the community. On the contrary, in making it optional with the individual whether he shall avail himself of the advantages of associative labor, trusting to the coercion of self-interest rather than of political authority to force men into the necessary state of economic integration required by the development of production, and in providing an opportunity for the eccentric and unruly as well as for those who really have a service to perform for the community or any portion thereof which society has failed or can not undertake to perform for itself; in providing an opportunity for all such to seek if they will economic autonomy, much will be gained in the lessening of social friction and the avoiding of a spirit of discontent.

The changes passed through by the social organism in its development from a lower to a higher type, like the changes passed through by the animal organism in the development of a new species, follow the law of least effort and leave outstanding and transmuted as little as the new conditions allow, all organs and functions appropriate to the preceding type. This parsimony of nature's efforts at progress is very strikingly illustrated in the survival in higher forms of life, individual and social, by inheritance from long extinct lower forms, of organs and rudiments of organs which under the new conditions of existence of the species or society, have become not only completely useless but even positively harmful, as in the case of the appendix vermiform in the human body and of the effete and parasitical ecclesiastical organizations in the body politic. Now, as society is an organism, the evolution of which must follow the connected and orderly method of natural law, we can not expect, judging from analogy, that the change from the capitalistic to the collectivist economy and from competition to co-operation will involve so tremendous a break with the past as to result in the complete disappearance and exclusion from all departments of the economic life of the nation of that principle of private effort which to-day is almost the sole form of economic activity.

Just as the coming of Socialism and in a remote future of an all-embracing Communism is foreshadowed in the Socialistic and Communistic institutions already prevailing and which color present day capitalistic society, as for example, the institution of a nationally owned and nationally operated postal department, of public schools, government lighthouses and life-saving stations, national and municipal parks, etc., so must there be a survival of certain phases of the modern individualistic economy in the midst of collectivism.

The matter assumes, however, a very different aspect, if we

ask ourselves whether these survivals of individualism are likely to continue throughout all future stages of social development.

When we measure the progress that has been achieved by man, since the time, ten thousand years ago, when by the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile, he first awoke from the racial sleep of savagery; when we remember that the period which has since elapsed is but as a moment compared to the ages during which the earth has been in a habitable state, though inhabited only by our kindred of lowliest forms, and but as a moment compared to the ages that are still to pass during which it will continue to provide a home for the countless generations of our successors and descendants; and when we reflect that the forward and upward movement of progress must continue in the future with a never-diminishing and ever-accelerating speed as man rises to the consciousness and the dignity of his position as master of nature, sovereign and supreme on a planetic domain; we are overcome by the conviction that, in the course of this progress, political, economic, ethical and intellectual, our race will cast away, one by one, the institutional swaddling clothes of its infancy, and arrive at last at that exalted and divine social and ethical condition in which there shall be neither money nor private property, whether in objects of production or of consumption, and in which men shall nobly live and faithfully labor without constraint or authority and without a thought of emolument or wage; a social and ethical condition which shall bind every man in love to live for all and in liberty to serve all, every man finding the reward of his labor in the common gain and in the joy of his work the only incentive.

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