

CHAPTER IX

THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

THE foregoing examination enables us to give a comprehensive definition of Socialism, as follows :—

Socialism is an empiric system of organisation of social life, based on certain ethical and economic conceptions. Its ethical conceptions consist, generally, of the denial of individual natural rights and the assertion of the omnipotence of the State ; specially, of the denial of the right of the individual to the possession of the products of his labour, and the assertion of the right of the State to the possession of the products of the labour of all individuals.

Its economic conceptions are, that competition and private property in land and capital, and the consequent exaction of rent, interest and profit, *i.e.* surplus value, by private persons, are social evils, responsible for the material and mental destitution of vast masses of the people.

On these conceptions are based its industrial, distributive, and political proposals. They are : The gradual abolition of private property in and private control of the instruments and materials of production, land, transportation, trade, loan-capital, and public debts ; such abolition to take place without compensation, or through partial compensation only, of present proprietors as a whole. For these private rights it would substitute the collective ownership and management by the community, acting through local and central governmental bodies, of the instruments and materials of production, land, transportation, trade, and loans, continuing private property in and private control of all consumption-goods awarded to

individuals as their share of the products of the national industry.

The only arrangement possible under Socialism, for awarding to individuals a share in the products of the national industries, is, to allot to each an equal share, measured by value, in that part of the national income which remains, after due deduction has been made for the replacement and extension of national capital. The only possible standard of value, labour-time, however, would lead to inequality in the share of the national income obtained by each, and must, therefore, be supplemented or superseded by the arbitrary determination of the value of all products by State officials.

The political proposals of Socialism are : equal political rights for all adult individuals of both sexes ; extension of the powers and functions of local governmental bodies, and international control of international production and trade.

These proposals entail certain consequential changes in social organisation.

The management by the State of all production and trade involves a numerous graduated body of officials for the control of the individuals employed, and the determination of the kinds, qualities, and quantities of goods to be produced. These officials must determine the occupation and place of employment of all individuals of both sexes.

The distributive proposal involves some system of compulsion to honestly assist in the production of the national income, or to render other service to the community ; as also, the control of all literary, journalistic, artistic, and scientific production, and the selection of those who shall engage in such production. It also involves the following changes in the constitution of the family :—Economic independence of women ; abandonment of separate family homes ; early separation of children and parents, and transference of the former to the care of the State.