53

PROPERTY

Among the many gloomy novelists of the realistic school, perhaps the most full of gloom is Gissing. In common with all his characters, he lives under the weight of a great oppression: the power of the fearful and yet adored idol of Money. One of his typical stories is 'Eve's Ransom', where the heroine, with various discreditable subterfuges, throws over the poor man whom she loves in order to marry the rich man whose income she loves still better. The poor man, finding that the rich man's income has given her a fuller life and a better character than the poor man's love could have given her, decides that she has done quite right, and that he deserves to be punished for his lack of money. In this story, as in his other books, Gissing has set forth, quite accurately, the actual dominion of money, and the impersonal worship which it exacts from the great majority of civilized mankind.

Gissing's facts are undeniable, and yet his attitude produces a revolt in any reader who has vital passions and masterful desires. His worship of money is bound up with his consciousness of inward defeat. And in the modern world generally, it is the decay of life which has promoted the religion of material goods; and the religion of material goods, in its turn, has hastened the decay of life on which it thrives. The man who worships money has ceased to hope for happiness through his own efforts or in his own activities: he looks upon happiness as a passive enjoyment of pleasures derived from the outside world. The artist or the lover does not worship money in his moments of ardour, because his desires are specific, and directed towards objects which only he can create. And conversely, the worshipper of money can never achieve greatness as an artist or a lover.

Love of money has been denounced by moralists since the world began. I do not wish to add another to the moral denunciations, of which the

efficacy in the past has not been encouraging. I wish to show how the worship of money is both an effect and a cause of diminishing vitality, and how our institutions might be changed so as to make the worship of money grow less and the general vitality grow more. It is not the desire for money as a means to definite ends that is in question. A struggling artist may desire money in order to have leisure for his art, but this desire is finite, and can be satisfied fully by a very modest sum. It is the *worship* of money that I wish to consider: the belief that all values may be measured in terms of money, and that money is the ultimate test of success in life. This belief is held in fact, if not in words, by multitudes of men and women, and yet it is not in harmony with human nature, since it ignores vital needs and the instinctive tendency towards some specific kind of growth. It makes men treat as unimportant those of their desires which run counter to the acquisition of money, and yet such desires are, as a rule, more important to well-being than any increase of income. It leads men to mutilate their own natures from a mistaken theory of what constitutes success, and to give admiration to enterprises which add nothing to human welfare. It promotes a dead uniformity of character and purpose, a diminution in the joy of life, and a stress and strain which leaves whole communities weary, discouraged, and disillusioned.

America, the pioneer of Western progress, is thought by many to display the worship of money in its most perfect form. A well-to-do American, who already has more than enough money to satisfy all reasonable requirements, very often continues to work at his office with an assiduity which would only be pardonable if starvation were the alternative.

But England, except among a small minority, is almost as much given over to the worship of money as America. Love of money in England takes, as a rule, the form of snobbishly desiring to maintain a certain social status, rather than of striving after an indefinite increase of income. Men postpone marriage until they have an income enabling them to have as many rooms and servants in their house as they feel that their dignity requires. This makes it necessary for them while they are young to keep a watch upon their affections, lest they should be led into an imprudence: they acquire a cautious habit of mind, and a fear of 'giving themselves away', which makes a free and vigorous life impossible. In acting as they do they imagine that they are being virtuous, since they would feel it a hardship for a woman to be asked to descend to a lower social status than that of her parents, and a degradation to themselves to marry a woman whose social status was not equal to their own. The things of nature are not valued in comparison with money. It is not thought a hardship for a women to have to accept, as her only experience of love, the prudent and limited attentions of a man whose capacity for emotion has been lost during years of wise restraint or sordid relations with women whom he did not respect. The woman herself does not know that it is a

hardship; for she, too, has been taught prudence for fear of a descent in the social scale, and from early youth she has had it instilled into her that strong feeling does not become a young woman. So the two unite to slip through life in ignorance of all that is worth knowing. Their ancestors were not restrained from passion by the fear of hell-fire, but they are restrained effectually by a worse fear, the fear of coming down in the world.

The same motives which lead men to marry late also lead them to limit their families. Professional men wish to send their sons to a public school, though the education they will obtain is no better than at a grammar school, and the companions with whom they will associate are more vicious. But snobdom has decided that public schools are best, and from its verdict there is no appeal. What makes them the best is that they are the most expensive. And the same social struggle, in varying forms, runs through all classes except the very highest and the very lowest. For this purpose men and women make great moral efforts, and show amazing powers of self-control; but all their efforts and all their self-control, being not used for any creative end, serve merely to dry up the well-spring of life within them, to make them feeble, listless, and trivial. It is not in such a soil that the passion which produces genius can be nourished. Men's souls have exchanged the wilderness for the drawing-room: they have become cramped and pretty and deformed, like Chinese women's feet. Even the horrors of war have hardly awakened them from the smug somnambulism of respectability. And it is chiefly the worship of money that has brought about this death-like slumber of all that makes men great.

In France the worship of money takes the form of thrift. It is not easy to make a fortune in France, but an inherited competence is very common, and where it exists the main purpose of life is to hand it on undiminished, if not increased. The French *rentier* is one of the great forces in international politics: it is he through whom France has been strengthened in diplomacy and weakened in war, by increasing the supply of French capital and diminishing the supply of French men. The necessity of providing a *dot* for daughters, and the subdivision of property by the law of inheritance, have made the family more powerful, as an institution, than in any other civilized country. In order that the family may prosper, it is kept small, and the individual members are often sacrificed to it. The desire for family continuity makes men timid and unadventurous: it is only in the organized proletariat that the daring spirit survives which made the Revolution and led the world in political thought and practice. Through the influence of money, the strength of the family has become a weakness to the nation by making the population remain stationary and even tend to decline. The same love of safety is beginning to produce the same effects elsewhere; but in this, as in many better things, France has led the way.

In Germany the worship of money is more recent than in France, England, and America; indeed, it hardly existed until after the Franco-Prussian War. But it has been adopted now with the same intensity and whole-heartedness which have always marked German beliefs. It is characteristic that, as in France the worship of money is associated with the family, so in Germany it is associated with the State. Liszt, in deliberate revolt against the English economists, taught his compatriots to think of economics in national terms, and the German who develops a business is felt, by others as well as by himself, to be performing a service to the State. Germans believe that England's greatness is due to industrialism and Empire, and that our success in these is due to an intense nationalism. The apparent internationalism of our Free Trade policy they regard as mere hyprocrisy. They have set themselves to imitate what they believe we really are, with only the hyprocrisy omitted. It must be admitted that their success has been amazing. But in the process they have destroyed almost all that made Germany of value to the world, and they have not adopted whatever of good there may have been among us, since that was all swept aside in the wholesale condemnation of 'hypocrisy'. And in adopting our worst faults, they have made them far worse by a system, a thoroughness and a unanimity of which we are happily incapable. Germany's religion is of great importance to the world, since Germans have a power of real belief, and have the energy to acquire the virtues and vices which their creed demands. For the sake of the world, as well as for the sake of Germany, we must hope that they will soon abandon the worship of wealth which they have unfortunately learnt from us.

Worship of money is no new thing, but it is a more harmful thing than it used to be, for several reasons. Industrialism has made work more wearisome and intense, less capable of affording pleasure and interest by the way to the man who has undertaken it for the sake of money. The power of limiting families has opened a new field for the operation of thrift. The general increase in education and self-discipline has made men more capable of pursuing a purpose consistently in spite of temptations, and when the purpose is against life it becomes more destructive with every increase of tenacity in those who adopt it. The greater productivity resulting from industrialism has enabled us to devote more labour and capital to armies and navies for the protection of our wealth from envious neighbours, and for the exploitation of inferior races, which are ruthlessly wasted by the capitalist régime. Through the fear of losing money, forethought and anxiety eat away men's power of happiness, and the dread of misfortune becomes a greater misfortune than the one which is dreaded. The happiest men and women, as we can all testify from our own experience, are those who are indifferent to money because they have some positive purpose which shuts it out. And yet all our political thought, whether Imperialist, Radical, or Socialist, continues

to occupy itself almost exclusively with men's economic desires, as though they alone had real importance.

In judging of an industrial system, whether the one under which we live or one proposed by reformers, there are four main tests which may be applied. We may consider whether the system secures (1) the maximum of production, or (2) justice in distribution, or (3) a tolerable existence for producers, or (4) the greatest possible freedom and stimulus to vitality and progress. We may say, broadly, that the present system aims only at the first of these objects, while Socialism aims at the second and third. Some defenders of the present system contend that technical progress is better promoted by private enterprise than it would be if industry were in the hands of the State; to this extent they recognize the fourth of the objects we have enumerated. But they recognize it only on the side of the goods and the capitalist, not on the side of the wage-earner. I believe that the fourth is much the most important of the objects to be aimed at, that the present system is fatal to it, and that orthodox Socialism might well prove equally fatal.

One of the least-questioned assumptions of the capitalist system is, that production ought to be increased in amount by every possible means: by new kinds of machinery, by employment of women and boys, by making hours of labour as long as is compatible with efficiency. Central African natives, accustomed to living on the raw fruits of the earth and defeating Manchester by dispensing with clothes, are compelled to work by a hut tax which they can only pay by taking employment under European capitalists. It is admitted that they are perfectly happy while they remain free from European influences, and that industrialism brings upon them, not only the unwonted misery of confinement, but also death from diseases to which white men have become partially immune. It is admitted that the best negro workers are the 'raw natives', fresh from the bush, uncontaminated by previous experience of wage-earning. Nevertheless, no one effectively contends that they ought to be preserved from the deterioration which we bring, since no one effectively doubts that it is good to increase the world's production at no matter what cost.

The belief in the importance of production has a fanatical irrationality and ruthlessness. So long as something is produced, what it is that is produced seems to be thought a matter of no account. Our whole economic system encourages this view, since fear of unemployment makes any kind of work a boon to wage-earners. The mania for increasing production has turned men's thoughts away from much more important problems, and has prevented the world from getting the benefits it might have got out of the increased productivity of labour.

When we are fed and clothed and housed, further material goods are needed only for ostentation.[1] With modern methods, a certain proportion of

the population, without working long hours, could do all the work that is really necessary in the way of producing commodities. The time which is now spent in producing luxuries could be spent partly in enjoyment and country holidays, partly in better education, partly in work that is not manual or subserving manual work. We could, if we wished, have far more science and art, more diffused knowledge and mental cultivation, more leisure for wage-earners, and more capacity for intelligent pleasures. At present not only wages, but almost all earned incomes, can only be obtained by working much longer hours than men ought to work. A man who earns £800 a year by hard work could not, as a rule, earn £400 a year by half as much work. Often he could not earn anything if he were not willing to work practically all day and every day. Because of the excessive belief in the value of production, it is thought right and proper for men to work long hours, and the good that might result from shorter hours is not realized. And all the cruelties of the industrial system, not only in Europe but even more in the tropics, arouse only an occasional feeble protest from a few philanthropists. This is because, owing to the distortion produced by our present economic methods, men's conscious desires, in such matters, cover only a very small part, and that not the most important part, of the real needs affected by industrial work. If this is to be remedied, it can only be by a different economic system, in which the relation of activity to needs will be less concealed and more direct.

The purpose of maximizing production will not be achieved in the long run if our present industrial system continues. Our present system is wasteful of human material, partly through damage to the health and efficiency of industrial workers, especially when women and children are employed, partly through the fact that the best workers tend to have small families and that the more civilized races are in danger of gradual extinction. Every great city is a centre of race-deterioration. For the case of London this has been argued with a wealth of statistical detail by Sir H. Llewelyn Smith;[2] and it cannot easily be doubted that it is equally true in other cases. The same is true of material resources: the minerals, the virgin forests, and the newly developed wheatfields of the world are being exhausted with a reckless prodigality which entails almost a certainty of hardship for future generations.

Socialists see the remedy in State ownership of land and capital, combined with a more just system of distribution. It cannot be denied that our present system of distribution is indefensible from every point of view, including the point of view of justice. Our system of distribution is regulated by law, and is capable of being changed in many respects which familiarity makes us regard as natural and inevitable. We may distinguish four chief sources of recognized legal rights to private property: (1) a man's right to what he has made himself; (2) the right to interest on capital which has been lent; (3) the ownership of land; (4) inheritance. These form a crescendo of respectability:

capital is more respectable than labour, land is more respectable than capital, and any form of wealth is more respectable when it is inherited than when it has been acquired by our own exertions.

A man's right to the produce of his own labour has never, in fact, had more than a very limited recognition from the law. The early Socialists, especially the English forerunners of Marx, used to insist upon this right as the basis of a just system of distribution, but in the complication of modern industrial processes it is impossible to say what a man has produced. What proportion of the goods carried by a railway should belong to the goods porters concerned in their journey? When a surgeon saves a man's life by an operation, what proportion of the commodities which the man subsequently produces can the surgeon justly claim? Such problems are insoluble. And there is no special justice, even if they were soluble, in allowing to each man what he himself produces. Some men are stronger, healthier, cleverer, than others, but there is no reason for increasing these natural injustices by the artificial injustices of the law. The principle recommends itself partly as a way of abolishing the very rich, partly as a way of stimulating people to work hard. But the first of these objects can be better obtained in other ways, and the second ceases to be obviously desirable as soon as we cease to worship money.

Interest arises naturally in any community in which private property is unrestricted and theft is punished, because some of the most economical processes of production are slow, and those who have the skill to perform them may not have the means of living while they are being completed. But the power of lending money gives such great wealth and influence to private capitalists that unless strictly controlled it is not compatible with any real freedom for the rest of the population. Its effects at present, both in the industrial world and in international politics, are so bad that it seems imperatively necessary to devise some means of curbing its power.

Private property in land has no justification except historically through power of the sword. In the beginning of feudal times, certain men had enough military strength to be able to force those whom they disliked not to live in a certain area. Those whom they chose to leave on the land became their serfs, and were forced to work for them in return for the gracious permission to stay. In order to establish law in place of private force, it was necessary, in the main, to leave undisturbed the rights which had been acquired by the sword. The land became the property of those who had conquered it, and the serfs were allowed to give rent instead of service. There is no justification for private property in land, except the historical necessity to conciliate turbulent robbers who would not otherwise have obeyed the law. This necessity arose in Europe many centuries ago, but in Africa the whole process is often quite recent. It is by this process, slightly disguised,

that the Kimberley diamond-mines and the Rand gold-mines were acquired in spite of prior native rights. It is a singular example of human inertia that men should have continued until now to endure the tyranny and extortion which a small minority are able to inflict by their possession of the land. No good to the community, of any sort or kind, results from the private ownership of land. If men were reasonable, they would decree that it should cease tomorrow, with no compensation beyond a moderate life income to the present holders.

The mere abolition of rent would not remove injustice, since it would confer a capricious advantage upon the occupiers of the best sites and the most fertile land. It is necessary that there should be rent, but it should be paid to the State or to some body which performs public services; or, if the total rental were more than is required for such purposes, it might be paid into a common fund and divided equally among the population. Such a method would be just, and would not only help to relieve poverty, but would prevent wasteful employment of land and the tyranny of local magnates. Much that appears as the power of capital is really the power of the landowner—for example, the power of railway companies and mine-owners. The evil and injustice of the present system are glaring, but men's patience of preventable evils to which they are accustomed is so great that it is impossible to guess when they will put an end to this strange absurdity.

Inheritance, which is the source of the greater part of the unearned income in the world, is regarded by most men as a natural right. Sometimes, as in England, the right is inherent in the owner of property, who may dispose of it in any way that seems good to him. Sometimes, as in France, his right is limited by the right of his family to inherit at least a portion of what he has to leave. But neither the right to dispose of property by will nor the right of children to inherit from parents has any basis outside the instincts of possession and family pride. There may be reasons for allowing a man whose work is exceptionally fruitful—for instance, an inventor—to enjoy a larger income than is enjoyed by the average citizen, but there can be no good reason for allowing this privilege to descend to his children and grandchildren and so on for ever. The effect is to produce an idle and exceptionally fortunate class, who are influential through their money, and opposed to reform for fear it should be directed against themselves. Their whole habit of thought becomes timid, since they dread being forced to acknowledge that their position is indefensible; yet snobbery and the wish to secure their favour lead almost the whole middle class to ape their manners and adopt their opinions. In this way they become a poison infecting the outlook of almost all educated people.

It is sometimes said that without the incentive of inheritance men would not work so well. The great captains of industry, we are assured, are actuated by the desire to found a family, and would not devote their lives to unremitting

toil without the hope of gratifying this desire. I do not believe that any large proportion of really useful work is done from this motive. Ordinary work is done for the sake of a living, and the very best work is done for the interest of the work itself. Even the captains of industry, who are thought (perhaps by themselves as well as by others) to be aiming at founding a family, are probably more actuated by love of power and by the adventurous pleasure of great enterprises. And if there were some slight diminution in the amount of work done, it would be well worth while in order to get rid of the idle rich, with the oppression, feebleness, and corruption which they inevitably introduce.

The present system of distribution is not based upon any principle. Starting from a system imposed by conquest, the arrangements made by the conquerors for their own benefit were stereotyped by the law, and have never been fundamentally reconstructed. On what principles ought the reconstruction to be based?

Socialism, which is the most widely advocated scheme of reconstruction, aims chiefly at *justice*: the present inequalities of wealth are unjust, and Socialism would abolish them. It is not essential to Socialism that all men should have the same income, but it is essential that inequalities should be justified, in each case, by inequality of need or of service performed. There can be no disputing that the present system is grossly unjust, and that almost all that is unjust in it is harmful. But I do not think justice alone is a sufficient principle upon which to base an economic reconstruction. Justice would be secured if all were equally unhappy, as well as if all were equally happy. Justice, by itself, when once realized, contains no source of new life. The old type of Marxian revolutionary socialist never dwelt, in imagination, upon the life of communities after the establishment of the millennium. He imagined that, like the Prince and Princess in a fairy story, they would live happily ever after. But that is not a condition possible to human nature. Desire, activity, purpose, are essential to a tolerable life, and a millennium, though it may be a joy in prospect, would be intolerable if it were actually achieved.

The more modern Socialists, it is true, have lost most of the religious fervour which characterized the pioneers, and view Socialism as a tendency rather than a definite goal. But they still retain the view that what is of most political importance to a man is his income, and that the principal aim of a democratic politician ought to be to increase the wages of labour. I believe this involves too passive a conception of what constitutes happiness. It is true that, in the industrial world, large sections of the population are too poor to have any possibility of a good life; but it is not true that a good life will come of itself with a diminution of poverty. Very few of the well-to-do classes have a good life at present, and perhaps Socialism would only substitute the evils which now afflict the more prosperous in place of the evils resulting from destitution.

In the existing labour movement, although it is one of the most vital sources of change, there are certain tendencies against which reformers ought to be on their guard. The labour movement is in essence a movement in favour of justice, based upon the belief that the sacrifice of the many to the few is not necessary now, whatever may have been the case in the past. When labour was less productive and education was less widespread, an aristocratic civilization may have been the only one possible: it may have been necessary that the many should contribute to the life of the few, if the few were to transmit and increase the world's possessions in art and thought and civilized existence. But this necessity is past or rapidly passing, and there is no longer any valid objection to the claims of justice. The labour movement is morally irresistible, and is not now seriously opposed except by prejudice and simple self-assertion. All living thought is on its side; what is against it is traditional and dead. But although it itself is living, it is not by any means certain that it will make for life.

Labour is led by current political thought in certain directions which would become repressive and dangerous if they were to remain strong after labour had triumphed. The aspirations of the labour movement are, on the whole, opposed by the great majority of the educated classes, who feel a menace, not only or chiefly to their personal comfort, but to the civilized life in which they have their part, which they profoundly believe to be important to the world. Owing to the opposition of the educated classes, labour, when it is revolutionary and vigorous, tends to despise all that the educated classes represent. When it is more respectful, as its leaders tend to be in England, the subtle and almost unconscious influence of educated men is apt to sap revolutionary ardour, producing doubt and uncertainty instead of the swift, simple assurance by which victory might have been won. The very sympathy which the best men in the well-to-do classes extend to labour, their very readiness to admit the justice of its claims, may have the effect of softening the opposition of labour leaders to the *status quo*, and of opening their minds to the suggestion that no fundamental change is possible. Since these influences affect leaders much more than the rank and file, they tend to produce in the rank and file a distrust of leaders, and a desire to seek out new leaders who will be less ready to concede the claims of the more fortunate classes. The result may be in the end a labour movement as hostile to the life of the mind as some terrified property-owners believe it to be at present.

The claims of justice, narrowly interpreted, may reinforce this tendency. It may be thought unjust that some men should have larger incomes or shorter hours of work than other men. But efficiency in mental work, including the work of education, certainly requires more comfort and longer periods of rest than are required for efficiency in physical work, if only because mental work is not physiologically wholesome. If this is not recognized, the life of

the mind may suffer through short-sightedness even more than through deliberate hostility.

Education suffers at present, and may long continue to suffer, through the desire of parents that their children should earn money as soon as possible. Everyone knows that the half-time system, for example, is bad, but the power of organized labour keeps it in existence. It is clear that the cure for this evil, as for those that are concerned with the population question, is to relieve parents of the expense of their children's education, and at the same time to take away their right to appropriate their children's earnings.

The way to prevent any dangerous opposition of labour to the life of the mind is not to oppose the labour movement, which is too strong to be opposed with justice. The right way is to show by actual practice that thought is useful to labour, that without thought its positive aims cannot be achieved, and that there are men in the world of thought who are willing to devote their energies to helping labour in its struggle. Such men, if they are wise and sincere, can prevent labour from becoming destructive of what is living in the intellectual world.

Another danger in the aims of organized labour is the danger of conservatism as to methods of production. Improvements of machinery or organization bring great advantages to employers, but involve temporary and sometimes permanent loss to the wage-earners. For this reason, and also from mere instinctive dislike of any change of habits, strong labour organizations are often obstacles to technical progress. The ultimate basis of all social progress must be increased technical efficiency, a greater result from a given amount of labour. If labour were to offer an effective opposition to this kind of progress, it would in the long run paralyse all other progress. The way to overcome the opposition of labour is not by hostility or moral homilies, but by giving to labour the direct interest in economical processes which now belongs to the employers. Here, as elsewhere, the unprogressive part of a movement which is essentially progressive is to be eliminated, not by decrying the whole movement, but by giving it a wider sweep, making it more progressive, and leading it to demand an even greater change in the structure of society than any that it had contemplated in its inception.

The most important purpose that political institutions can achieve is to keep alive in individuals creativeness, vigour, vitality, and the joy of life. These things existed, for example, in Elizabethan England in a way in which they do not exist now. They stimulated adventure, poetry, music, fine architecture and set going the whole movement out of which England's greatness has sprung in every direction in which England has been great. These things co-existed with injustice, but outweighed it, and made a national life more admirable than any that is likely to exist under Socialism.

What is wanted in order to keep men full of vitality is opportunity, not

only security. Security is merely a refuge from fear; opportunity is the source of hope. The chief test of an economic system is not whether it makes men prosperous, or whether it secures distributive justice (though these are both very desirable), but whether it leaves men's instinctive growth unimpeded. To achieve this purpose, there are two main conditions which it should fulfil: it should not cramp men's private affections, and it should give the greatest possible outlet to the impulse of creation. There is in most men, until it becomes atrophied by disuse, an instinct of constructiveness, a wish to make something. The men who achieve most are, as a rule, those in whom this instinct is strongest: such men become artists, men of science, statesmen, empire-builders, or captains of industry, according to the accidents of temperament and opportunity. The most beneficient and the most harmful careers are inspired by this impulse. Without it, the world would sink to the level of Tibet: it would subsist, as it is always prone to do, on the wisdom of its ancestors, and each generation would sink more deeply into a lifeless traditionalism.

But it is not only the remarkable men who have the instinct of constructiveness, though it is they who have it most strongly. It is almost universal in boys, and in men it usually survives in a greater or less degree, according to the greater or less outlet which it is able to find. Work inspired by this instinct is satisfying, even when it is irksome and difficult, because every effort is as natural as the effort of a dog pursuing a hare. The chief defect of the present capitalistic system is that work done for wages very seldom affords any outlet for the creative impulse. The man who works for wages has no choice as to what he shall make: the whole creativeness of the process is concentrated in the employer who orders the work to be done. For this reason the work becomes a merely external means to a certain result, the earning of wages. Employers grow indignant about the trade union rules for limitation of output, but they have no right to be indignant, since they do not permit the men whom they employ to have any share in the purpose for which the work is undertaken. And so the process of production, which should form one instinctive cycle, becomes divided into separate purposes, which can no longer provide any satisfaction of instinct for those who do the work.

This result is due to our industrial system, but it would not be avoided by State Socialism. In a Socialist community, the State would be the employer, and the individual workman would have almost as little control over his work as he has at present. Such control as he could exercise would be indirect, through political channels, and would be too slight and roundabout to afford any appreciable satisfaction. It is to be feared that instead of an increase of self-direction, there would only be an increase of mutual interference.

The total abolition of private capitalistic enterprise, which is demanded by Marxian Socialism, seems scarcely necessary. Most men who construct

sweeping systems of reform, like most of those who defend the *status quo*, do not allow enough for the importance of exceptions and the undesirability of rigid system. Provided the sphere of capitalism is restricted, and a large proportion of the population are rescued from its dominion, there is no reason to wish it wholly abolished. As a competitor and a rival, it might serve a useful purpose in preventing more democratic enterprises from sinking into sloth and technical conservatism. But it is of the very highest importance that capitalism should become the exception rather than the rule, and that the bulk of the world's industry should be conducted on a more democratic system.

Much of what is to be said against militarism in the State is also to be said against capitalism in the economic sphere. Economic organizations, in the pursuit of efficiency, grow larger and larger, and there is no possibility of reversing this process. The causes of their growth are technical, and large organizations must be accepted as an essential part of civilized society. But there is no reason why their government should be centralized and monarchical. The present economic system, by robbing most men of initiative, is one of the causes of the universal weariness which devitalizes urban and industrial populations, making them perpetually seek excitement, and leading them to welcome even the outbreak of war as a relief from the dreary monotony of their daily lives.

If the vigour of the nation is to be preserved, if we are to retain any capacity for new ideas, if we are not to sink into a Chinese condition of stereotyped immobility, the monarchical organization of industry must be swept away. All large businesses must become democratic and federal in their government. The whole wage-earning system is an abomination, not only because of the social injustice which it causes and perpetuates, but also because it separates the man who does the work from the purpose for which the work is done. The whole of the controlling purpose is concentrated in the capitalist; the purpose of the wage-earner is not the produce, but the wages. The purpose of the capitalist is to secure the maximum of work for the minimum of wages; the purpose of the wage-earner is to secure the maximum of wages for the minimum of work. A system involving this essential conflict of interests cannot be expected to work smoothly or successfully, or to produce a community with any pride in efficiency.

Two movements exist, one already well advanced, the other in its infancy, which seem capable, between them, of suggesting most of what is needed. The two movements I mean are the co-operative movement and syndicalism. The co-operative movement is capable of replacing the wages system over a very wide field, but it is not easy to see how it could be applied to such things as railways. It is just in these cases that the principles of syndicalism are most easily applicable.

If organization is not to crush individuality, membership of an organization ought to be voluntary, not compulsory, and ought always to carry with it a voice in the management. This is not the case with economic organizations, which give no opportunity for the pride and pleasure that men find in an activity of their own choice, provided it is not utterly monotonous.

It must be admitted, however, that much of the mechanical work which is necessary in industry is probably not capable of being made interesting in itself. But it will seem less tedious than it does at present if those who do it have a voice in the management of their industry. And men who desire leisure for other occupations might be given the opportunity of doing uninteresting work during a few hours of the day for a low wage; this would give an opening to all who wished for some activity not immediately profitable to themselves. When everything that is possible has been done to make work interesting, the residue will have to be made endurable, as almost all work is at present, by the inducement of rewards outside the hours of labour. But if these rewards are to be satisfactory, it is essential that the uninteresting work should not necessarily absorb a man's whole energies, and that opportunities should exist for more or less continuous activities during the remaining hours. Such a system might be an immeasurable boon to artists, men of letters, and others who produce for their own satisfaction works which the public does not value soon enough to secure a living for the producers; and apart from such rather rare cases, it might provide an opportunity for young men and women with intellectual ambitions to continue their education after they have left school, or to prepare themselves for careers which require an exceptionally long training.

The evils of the present system result from the separation between the several interests of consumer, producer, and capitalist. No one of these three has the same interests as the community or as either of the other two. The co-operative system amalgamates the interests of consumer and capitalist; syndicalism would amalgamate the interests of producer and capitalist. Neither amalgamates all three, or makes the interests of those who direct industry quite identical with those of the community. Neither, therefore, would wholly prevent industrial strife, or obviate the need of the State as arbitrator. But either would be better than the present system, and probably a mixture of both would cure most of the evils of industrialism as it exists now. It is surprising that, while men and women have struggled to achieve political democracy, so little has been done to introduce democracy in industry. I believe incalculable benefits might result from industrial democracy, either on the co-operative model or with recognition of a trade or industry as a unit for purposes of government, with some kind of Home Rule such as syndicalism aims at securing. There is no reason why all governmental units should be geographical: this system was necessary in the past because of the

slowness of means of communication, but it is not necessary now. By some such system many men might come to feel again a pride in their work, and to find again that outlet for the creative impulse which is now denied to all but a fortunate few. Such a system requires the abolition of the landowner and the restriction of the capitalist, but does not entail equality of earnings. And unlike Socialism, it is not a static or final system: it is hardly more than a framework for energy and initiative. It is only by some such method, I believe, that the free growth of the individual can be reconciled with the huge technical organizations which have been rendered necessary by industrialism.

(*Principles of Social Reconstruction*, London: Allen & Unwin; *Why Men Fight*, New York: The Century Companies (Appleton-Century-Crofts), 1916.)

NOTES

1 Except by that small minority who are capable of artistic enjoyment.
2 Booth's *Life and Labour of the People*, Vol. iii.