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DEMOCRACY

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STEVENSON LECTURER IN CITIZENSHIP IN THE
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PREFACE

DEMOCRACY is treated in this book mainly as a problem of political philosophy and not merely as a system of government. The institutions which are usually called democratic are therefore discussed only in reference to the purpose or ideal for which they were devised. A fuller description of these institutions can be found elsewhere, especially in such books of this Series as Sir Courtenay Ilbert's *Parliament*. The principles upon which public discussion, criticism of authorities and the removal of those in control of government, at the will of the governed, seem to be in doubt in some circles to-day. A book on democracy, therefore, cannot be a colourless scientific analysis, but must involve some psychological discussion and some moral judgment.

C. D. B.

GLASGOW.

September, 1934.

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING OF DEMOCRACY

I

DEMOCRACY is a word with many meanings and some emotional colour. It is not an algebraical symbol, but a flag or the call of a trumpet for some ; and for others an obsolete mythology, which has undesirable connections with capitalism and imperialism. The subject of this book, then, is not to be found in a dictionary, but only in the passions and prejudices, the customs and beliefs of living men and women. To discover what democracy means, it is best to look round us, at what men and women are doing. It is almost useless to discuss the derivation of the word. In some countries ordinary men and women have a share in political power through representative assemblies and responsible ministers : these countries are democratic. But among the greater part of mankind the

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community is controlled by a few uncriticized and absolute rulers ; and in some countries recently the older form of political power has been revived.

Twenty years ago the principles of democracy were regarded by most people in the Western world as obvious platitudes. It was supposed that, although men were not altogether rational, they were at least not ashamed of such little reasoning as they could do. It was imagined that, if one wanted to go anywhere, it would be better to go of one's self than to be driven. The more extremely " advanced " used to say that it was better to persuade ordinary folk than to compel them to do what was good for themselves or for others. And the institutions, especially the political institutions, generally called democratic, were supposed to give play to a certain amount of reasoning and spontaneity in common folk and to assist discussion between those whose views differed, as a preliminary to decisions about public policy. But it is dangerous to treat any principles,—even those of arithmetic, as platitudes ; because

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if we do so, we forget that they were once discoveries made by deliberate effort, and not truths revealed without reasoning, imagination and experiment. For example, even multiplication by numbers above ten was too difficult for ordinary folk until the sixteenth century ; but we treat it as easy enough now. In government many different methods have been tried, in order to promote mutual help among neighbours ; and some advance in the art had been made in the nineteenth century. The long history of the art of government has sometimes involved the use of religion and poetry. But fear, greed and reckless devotion have all been used for keeping order and for improving social relationships. Some men have made themselves into rulers ; and in other cases the rulers have been brought into power by chance or by groups which looked for leadership. And the forms of government have changed much oftener than the kinds of religion or the ways of getting and using food and clothing. But after many experiments, a new form of government called “ demo-

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cracy " began to be consciously adopted at the end of the eighteenth century in Europe. The name given to this new system for ruling and being ruled was taken from the Greek, because the political thinking of that time was dominated by a revived interest in the old slave-civilization of Greece and Rome ; and because the thinkers of the eighteenth century, who desired social reforms, looked to Greek and Roman literature for lessons in methods of displacing personal caprice as the basis of government. The alternative seemed to be the rule of " the people," which was supposed to have been practised in slave-owning Athens and Rome. In Athens and Rome, freedom and equality were privileges of a few male householders who ruled the rest, but these few shared political power.

II

The practices of ancient Athens and Rome are largely irrelevant in our day, because slavery is not openly accepted : and references to these practices have been obstructive in the recent past, in the effort

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to reach what we mean by democracy by the elimination of poverty, oppression and war. These three great evils are irreconcilable with "democracy" in our sense, but were assumed to exist in all ancient forms of government. For this among other reasons the earliest forms of government called "democratic" need not be discussed. After the disappearance of the Greek-Roman civilization in the Dark Ages, feudalism—or public authority based upon the service of persons and the inheritance of land—was almost universal in the West. But in the fourteenth century of our era, a new form of government was developed among the traders and craftsmen of some small cities. In Italy, especially in such cities as Florence, Siena, Venice and Genoa, the art of government was advanced by co-operation between equals, as an escape from the lordships of Europe. Small areas in Switzerland also were governed by groups of equals,—peasants and craftsmen : and in the Netherlands, at a slightly later date, the cities made progress in material and spiritual civilization

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under the control of a "democracy" of local traders. In the Hansa cities of Germany the same experiment in government was made. It was "democracy" in the sense of control over public affairs by a group of free and equal citizens. But the power of these men depended upon their property ; and they ruled over a majority of fellow inhabitants of their cities, as a sort of oligarchy.

Mediæval city-democracy was overwhelmed by the development of autocracies in the new "nations" of Europe in the sixteenth century. But the power to criticize and make suggestions to the autocrat or sovereign was derived from the experience of the consultation of those who owed allegiance by the local lord, and used especially in England. The English Parliament, which had been merely a means for the king to obtain more money and for his subjects to attach conditions to their payment, became a means for discussing and criticizing all public policy. But this is one essential of what is now called democracy—the criticism of established authority and

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the free discussion of public policy. And although the Parliament before the late nineteenth century expressed mainly the opinions of landowners and traders, its methods were adapted later to the expression of a more generally shared opinion. Secondly, the mediæval and Renaissance Assemblies of representatives, and especially the English Parliament, established the "rule of law" in place of the caprice of the ruler. This is "civil liberty," which has become another of the basic elements in democracy. As Herodotus had said of the Athenians, to have the law as a master meant liberty. It meant that each man and woman in the community had security against violence and arbitrary power, had the right to trial by independent judges and protection against violators of established expectations, property and contracts. Thus public discussion of policy and general agreement as to the conditions under which ordinary life was carried on, became fundamental habits, even before what we call democracy was possible.

A little more than a century ago, most

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men lived with their fellows, eating and sleeping and trading, under the control of kings and their agents. No king could do exactly what he liked¹ with other folk ; but some kings were more closely controlled than others by groups of landowners and traders, assembled in what we now call Parliaments, Congresses or Chambers of Representatives. The king's authority, however, seemed to the majority to be in some sense "divine" : and the king's person had some of the magical quality of the early medicine-man or priest. But new ideas had disturbed the Christianity of the Middle Ages ; and in the sixteenth century in North-western Europe and later America, religion had come to be organized by small independent groups of equals for themselves. This Protestantism in religion taught men the possibility of a sort of Protestantism in politics, which is democracy. Also the kings of the Reformation period had assisted in destroying the prestige of the clergy in religion, and thus undermined their own authority ; for if a man could get what he wanted of religion

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for himself, without the magic powers of a priesthood, a man might also get what he wanted of government for himself, without the "divine right" of kings. Again, if public discussion and criticism of authority were useful in religion, they could be used also for politics or public affairs. Religious groups made new experiments in "popular" government—for example, in Switzerland; and in England some such groups, in the seventeenth century, made themselves a nuisance to the body of landowners and traders who tried to substitute Parliament for a King. The Levellers and other advocates of social equality caused some trouble by disputing whether the ownership of private property should give political rights.¹

Some writers on public affairs meantime worked out a theory of human nature which was intended to explain the moral authority of rulers, upon another basis than the old belief in a magical quality called "divine right." First came the theory of a contract between men which was supposed to

¹ See the books in this Series on *Political Thought*.

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have originally established government ; and this made the basis of government some kind of consent, not appointment by God. Then the terms of 'the contract were explained by John Locke to be limited—mainly to the protection of property ; and ordinary folk were left free outside the terms of the contract. And among the few who could read and write, the phrase which served as a counterblast to the “ divine right of kings ” was “ the rights of man,” “ natural ” rights, from which government took its rise. The magical quality was transferred from the king to a mysterious group called “ the people.” The “ People ” never meant quite everybody ; and even now, in some countries, does not include women. But in any case, it was supposed that a considerable number of male adults should control government in their neighbourhood. In the development of the art of government it is difficult to distinguish clearly the influence of theory. Philosophers usually made theories which were intended as explanations and served as excuses for what had already been done.

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But theory sometimes gave men new plans of action.

[The objection against "divine right" and the rule of a single person was not, however, theoretical. The theory about "the rights of man" and the methods for taking rule out of the king's hands were the results of the discomfort and uncertainty which the traditional system caused. This discomfort chiefly concerned money. The method of government by kingship was burdensome; and traders especially felt the burden of levies and taxes. For centuries those who had been called upon to pay for the king's policy had endeavoured to protect themselves by attaching conditions to their payment.] In England the Parliament had begun in the thirteenth century by requiring from the king some redress of grievances, before consenting to pay taxes. In other countries the kings managed "to live of their own," that is to say, to secure other sources of revenue, less easily obstructed than taxation. But the English first definitely set a limit to the king's power to be a nuisance in deciding

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for himself when and how he should demand money. Also the English for nearly nine hundred years have been accustomed to kings who were foreigners : the Normans, the Plantagenets, the Tudors, the Stuarts, a Dutchman, and then the Hanoverians could all be subtly or directly controlled by local landowners and " the Commons." And it is now traditionally accepted as a fact that Cabinet government and the responsibility of Ministers to Parliament were the results of a king's ignorance of English habits and customs. Thus control of taxation by taxpayers, redress of grievances under popular pressure and finally " responsible " government were first developed in England ; partly, no doubt, because England was less disturbed by war than the European countries, partly because England became a single unit of government more easily. Until the end of the eighteenth century, however, law was still conceived to be either an eternal rule interpreted or the " will " of the ruler. Even the English Parliament only suggested and criticized. It did not attempt to

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govern, nor to exercise supreme control over government ; and at this stage in the development of government by all citizens, the Americans established the United States and the French Revolution followed. The ideas that there were “ natural rights of man ” and that all government ought to be based upon a sort of contract or the consent of the government were generally accepted by the leaders of the American and French experiments in government. But the English went further.

The English Parliament gradually took over control of all law-making and Executive government, by the contrivance of Cabinet government, in which Ministers of State were members of Parliament and therefore under continuous fire of criticism as well as removable by the will of Parliament. This became another essential device of democracy—control of the Executive by an elected Assembly : and when in the nineteenth century membership of this Assembly came to depend upon the votes of the majority of male adults, modern democracy began. The phrase “ the people ”

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thus came to mean male adults and not "the holders of property," as it had done in America and France as well as in England, until the early nineteenth century. The "people" who elect representatives are still only male adults in France, Switzerland and some other "democracies"; but in more logical nations a share in political power through voting is now granted to women also. The franchise for women, obtained in Great Britain only in 1928 in its widest application, and in some other democracies only a few years before, is the latest step in the influence of democratic ideals upon political institutions. Advance in the art of government, therefore, has brought us to where we now stand in North-western Europe, America and the British Dominions; and the functions of the State are changing under the influence of the new forces in politics.

The general tone of life in community is more "democratic" in France and America than in Great Britain: but that is not due to political organization. In France it is the result of a system of education and a

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wide distribution of private property. In America it is due to the absence of an "upper" privileged class, to the sentiment of equality among "pioneers" and the deliberate influence of a few men such as the three Presidents, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. Indeed Jefferson, who himself belonged to a landed aristocracy, expressed the essential principle of democracy, when he wrote that "man is a rational animal, restrained from wrong and protected in right by moderate powers confided to persons of his own choice and held to their duties by dependence on his own will."

III

The democracy with which we are concerned here then is something quite new. During the past century this new "democracy" has had many different meanings : but to-day it seems to mean to most people — the power of a large number of ordinary folk in any country to change their rulers ; some influence of such folk over the way their rulers govern ; and the public dis-

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cussion of all plans and acts of government, accompanied by continuous free criticism of all authorities. This method of government, of ruling and being ruled—is clearly more complicated than the older methods, as a machine to produce electricity, for lighting, is more complicated than a candle. But the result also is different ; and if a sufficient number desire that kind of result which democracy gives, they can generally manage to find ways of running the new machine. So much effort and experiment, however, have been expended upon the different ways by which democracy can be made to work that many have forgotten the purpose for which the original effort was made. [All government, democracy as well as any other, is intended to make it easier for men to live together ; but it is clearly more difficult to live together with others, if everyone has his say ; and besides large numbers of people do not want any “ say ” at all. There may be opposition, therefore, to democracy, not only because it does not give us what we want, but also because we do not want what it might give.

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The desire of a local group of property-owners and traders to control the regulations under which they lived combined with the more general feeling that the caprice of a ruler was a nuisance to taxpayers, to form the most important force which produced democracy. In one aspect this movement was a protest against "outsiders," as in the War of Independence in the British colonies in North America. The United States established a sovereign government, without a king, on what was then called a democratic basis, in their Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Constitution of 1787. The French monarchy had assisted this new Union of States against Great Britain ; and French writers were familiar with the British theory of civil rights. Then, in 1789, a revolution began in France which led to the execution of the French king in 1793, the proclamation of a Republic and a complete break with the traditional principles of government internally and in foreign affairs, by the nation which had already led in European civilization for more than a century. The Ameri-

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cans used the phrases “ the rights of man ” and “ the sovereign people ” ; and the French adopted the same phrases as expressions of the new principle on which the system of government was to be based.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789, accepted by the National Assembly in Paris, asserts that—“ ignorance and contempt of the rights of man are the sole causes of public misfortune and corrupt government.” The first Article of the new faith says that “ Men are born equal and remain free ; and they are equal in rights ” ; the second Article says that “ the aim of any political association is the preservation of the natural and prescriptive rights of man ” ; and the third Article that “ the original principle of all sovereignty must lie in the nation.” In the seventeenth Article it is assumed as obvious that “ property is an inviolable and sacred right.” What had been the theory of philosophers therefore had become an immense force in the system of government. The conceptions of “ right,” “ sovereignty,” “ nation ” and “ property ” were by no means clear ;

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but in practice a new step was taken in basing the authority of government upon the consent of those who were directly interested in public affairs—chiefly those who held some property—and thus democracy, in our sense of the word, became a political fact.

Both the American and the French owed their theory to English writers, chiefly to John Locke : and they were influenced in practice by the current interpretation of the English system of parliamentary government. But in those days, it must be remembered, the English Parliament was controlled by great landowners, voting for representatives was a farce played by a very few men who had inherited or bought the right ; and there was no Cabinet responsible to the elected Assembly, as we know it. Posts in the Civil Service were in the gift of the few who had control of government, and bribery was common ; but a certain tradition of public service already existed which was quite unnoticed by political theorists. The dominant ideas about the English system, partly due to

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Montesquieu, were not correct. However, clearly the English, the American and the French were together the founders of modern democracy. The institutions of the new form of government were English and most of the ideals involved : but the French version of them has been most influential elsewhere.

It is true that in Switzerland some localities had practised small-scale popular government and that everywhere in Europe—in Germany and Italy especially—there had been centuries of experience of city-government by small groups of traders. But even the advocates of democracy at the end of the eighteenth century were doubtful whether that system could be used on a large scale for a whole nation. The difficulties were two. First, in a large-scale government, the governed could not directly in their own persons influence their rulers ; and secondly, war was an affair of State, with regard to which town-government by traders gave no guidance. The “ bourgeoisie,” as the trading and professional classes came to be called, was a “ Third

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Estate " which had had no experience of policy on a national scale. The difficulty was both " internal " in the relation of subjects to their government, and " external " in the relation between Governments.

The first difficulty was met by the extension and modification of the mediæval system of *representation*. The " sovereign people " was to elect some of its citizens to speak for it. In the old " democracies " of Athens and Rome and even in some of the Swiss cantons, " the people " themselves decided the law and controlled the ruler : and in theory, according to some writers, especially Rousseau, a people would be " free " only if all acted directly upon public policy. But the idea of advocates and representatives was already familiar, in the presentation of grievances. And so it was natural to assume that the people still held supreme power, if all elected a few to do for them what all could not do together. Representatives in the oldest form had been selected by lot ; and this is obviously a better way of selecting a typical, average

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man. But "election" was the traditional method of selecting an executive officer ; and the new representatives therefore became not "average men" but specialists in a new function.

Election, when there was any disagreement, involved counting votes ; and the practice of majority decision was thus introduced. The elected body carried on into its own practice the method of majority decision, on which its members had depended for their share in its power ; and their theories were made to show either that the "will" of the majority in the Assembly was in fact the "will of the people," or that it was the only practical substitute for it. Nowadays in most countries, we are so familiar with representatives and majority-rule that they seem to be quite natural and inevitable incidents in a system of government. And since the beginning of the nineteenth century "the consent of the governed" as the basis of government, and "public opinion" as a motive force in public policy, have been accepted as obvious. Indeed, it is hardly yet quite

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proper for anyone to ask whether there is such a thing as "the will of the people" or "public opinion"; and if there is, what it is. This does not imply that the traditional conceptions in the democratic tradition are wrong or misleading. They referred to facts: and they were effectual in causing actions, in so far as they did refer to facts. But now we know much more about the facts they refer to, because of modern psychology, modern anthropology and cultural history. It remains true, however, that in government what men believe is almost as important as the facts of the case: and this too only implies that belief is a fact among other facts. It was believed that voting expressed "opinion" or, so far as action was concerned, "will." The democratic institutions of government are therefore intended to make the opinion or will of all citizens direct or influence the practice of government.

A sufficient number of active men and women have believed in democracy during the past century. They had to contend against traditional customs and beliefs,

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often decorated with resounding phrases. Many books have been issued to protest against any extension of political or social powers to ordinary folk. The intellectuals said, and some of them still repeat it, that democracy would destroy order and culture and "true" liberty—which is, of course, the liberty *they* enjoy. The sentimentalists have lamented the disappearance from government of "the tone of time" or of certain reverential elements. But in spite of opposition, during the past century voting-power was extended to more and more ordinary folk ; government was more closely watched and controlled by them than ever before ; and the benefits of law and order have been distributed more equally among all citizens. Also, on the whole, the relations between Governments have become less those of gladiators or pirates and more in accordance with those principles of peace and justice proclaimed at the French Revolution. War is not quite so respectable as it was a century ago, largely owing to democracy.

The partly successful effort of ordinary

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folk to share in public power had a set-back in Europe between 1793 and 1830. But after 1830 the principles of the American War of Independence and of the French Revolution began to gather force again. The franchise was extended in several countries in Western Europe. The slave-trade and eventually slavery itself was abolished. The business and trading classes secured influence over public policy. Some "liberal" revolutions occurred in the 1830's; and again in 1848. Monarchs granted "constitutions" in some countries, which allowed some little influence to a select few of their subjects. And by the 1870's it was regarded as old-fashioned if any country still was ruled by the uncontrolled caprice of a king and his courtiers. Kings acknowledged, more or less candidly, that they held power from "the people"; and Presidents of Republics were admitted even into the select circles of diplomatic society. Traditional kingship had compromised with the democratic ideal; but the advocates of that ideal had also compromised with the established order.

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IV

The trouble about a political movement is that it cannot be stopped when its leaders are satisfied. Democracy had been supported by a cry for "liberty"; and at the end of the nineteenth century, most politicians had as much "liberty" as they desired. They thought that if other people got more, it might be bad for them. In the process of expanding production and markets, the European nations had acquired certain possessions, called "colonies," in Africa and Asia. The "white man's burden" was conceived to be the duty of governing peoples whom the white man thought incapable of governing themselves. Thus the great Democracies became Empires; and it happened that there was neither theory nor practice of colonial government in the democratic tradition. All colonial government, therefore, still remains despotism, and worse still, alien despotism, sometimes benevolent and sometimes not. Democracy had been concerned with the freedom of a "people" from control by

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foreign rulers and with control by a "people" over the government in their locality. But both these principles were violated in Empires with subject populations. Therefore "liberal" influences in the nineteenth century tended to oppose colonial government of any kind. In France those who accepted the responsibility of governing colonial territories tried to reconcile empire with democracy by providing representation in the French Chamber of Deputies for small groups of the "natives" of French territory beyond the seas. In theory, therefore, these territories became parts of France itself. Similarly in the United States, even after the conquest of territory from Spain in Porto Rico and the Philippines, theory refused to recognize any imperial power, but assumed that these territories also were parts of the United States under the same system of government. The new Imperialism in Great Britain, especially in its "liberal" version, attempted to reconcile the government of subject races by the British with the traditional conceptions of freedom.

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But democratic ideals continued to be disturbing influences among all subject races.

With regard to the relations between States, the democratic ideal implied at least that persuasion, not force, was the best way of supporting any claim to rights. But the States which men called "democratic" were as heavily armed as any others : and their foreign policies were indistinguishable from those of the old order. Two different theories might explain this : either "the peoples" were exactly the same as kings had been in their relationship, one to the other, or foreign policy and diplomacy were entirely unsuitable to democracy. That is to say, either democracy was identical with despotism in international affairs or the principles of democracy were entirely "domestic" and had no application to the relation between States. In any case, in practice, war and increasing preparations for war continued during the nineteenth century. Thus in spite of the institutions of democracy within certain States, even those States maintained the old institutions of the State-system almost unchanged. In

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colonial government and in the relation between States or " international " government, therefore, the principles of democracy have hardly yet been supplied.

The survival of the old pre-democratic order is to be found also in the economic system. But here the old order is assumed by most people, even most of the advocates of democracy, to be " the nature of things." Democracy had led to a more general sharing in political influence, in so far as this could be secured by voting. And undoubtedly the Chartists and others who claimed the right to vote for all sane adults, believed that political power would lead to a redress of economic grievances. Undoubtedly also some oppression of the manual workers was abolished or decreased by the extension of the franchise. But only a very few in the nineteenth century imagined that democratic principles could be applied to the system of production and distribution : and even those few thought of democracy affecting trade and industry in terms of voting and representation. The real difficulty, however, which we now

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recognize and our forefathers did not, is that the economic system is generally regarded as "the nature of things." That some people should have surplus wealth and leisure, while the great majority have only just enough to keep them alive and working, is seriously believed to be as "natural" as the course of the stars. The industrial system and the traditional system of property-owning, on which it was based, are believed to flow from the nature of man. They are supposed to be inevitable. Therefore the principles of democracy seem to have no more relevance to industrial organization or productive policy than they would have to breathing or digestion. It still seems absurd to the "educated" that democracy, which implied equal political power, should be believed by anyone to imply also equal economic wealth. The "liberal" tradition in democracy, therefore, carefully avoided the application of its principles outside the sphere of politics. And that is the position of most of the supporters and advocates of democracy to-day.

But the same impulse of common folk

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towards a share in public power goes on still. In the nineteenth century in a few Western countries, the manual workers established trade unions in order to obtain some security for themselves from the vicissitudes suffered by those without private property, under the traditional system of exchange and production. This "industrial democracy" produced its own leaders, its restricted but quite consistent policy and, above all, a general sense among its members that political institutions would be useless, if economic institutions continued to decide the allocation of power. The trade unions contrived to obtain some influence over the rates of wages and the conditions of employment, under the traditional system, in Great Britain, France, Germany and some other West European countries. In the United States trade unionism was weak, because of immigrant labour, and conservative in economic policy, because the opportunities for personal enrichment were more equal than in Europe. But by the end of the nineteenth century, trade unionism in all Western countries had

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acquired an orthodoxy of its own, which slowed down, if it did not actually obstruct, the further advance of the impulse towards democracy. And now the conception that all members of the community should have an equal right to a share in all the benefits of civilized life, and not only in civil liberty and legislation, continues to work like a ferment beneath the surface of the industrial system.

V

It would be ridiculous, therefore, to suppose that democracy has been achieved. Even what has been achieved already is indeed threatened, but largely because it is so little. Democracy, which has been won in certain political aspects, is now fought for on a wider front ; and at the very moment when the more general action is opening, an attack upon the rear of the whole position—indeed upon the very basis of all civilized government—is being made by Fascism and Communism. While the supporters of democracy are reforming colonial government and establishing sub-

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stitutes for war and devising social controls for the production and use of wealth, the opponents of democracy advocate not merely imperialism, war, civil or national, and compulsory labour, but also the suppression of public discussion and of the criticism of authority. They desire to make men unequal and most of them subject, rather than all equal and free. Once again, as many times before in history, we are confused by controversy both about what we desire and about the way to get it.

The discussion of democracy, therefore, should distinguish the ideal called "democracy" from the actual institutions of government in certain countries, which are called by the same name. As an ideal, democracy is the emotional conception of a community still to be created in which all men and women have an equal right to a share in all the benefits of civilized life—security against violence and against arbitrary rule, adequate wealth and leisure, in order that each may have free play for whatever abilities he or she possesses. But since the most important of these abilities

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is the ability to work with others for a common good, the democratic ideal involves also a society in which each contributes spontaneous thought and emotion to the common store, as well as ordinary work for the maintenance of civilized conditions. An ideal is the expression of a desire for something: but it implies a knowledge of facts, about what is actual and possible. It would be futile, for example, to desire that an acorn should become anything but an oak. It would be equally futile to desire that men should be disembodied angels. Therefore, in order to make our desire operative, some knowledge of the facts about human beings must be implied.

The democratic ideal at one time seems to have depended upon a belief that human beings were originally separate atoms—"free" in the sense that each had no contact with others; and that these atoms came together to make society or "the State." The ideal was connected in the eighteenth century with the appeal to "reason" against traditional dogmas, sentiments or "enthusiasm." Thus originally

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the democratic ideal was both individualistic and "rationalist" or intellectualist. But now we know that community between men is at least as deep down in the nature of man as any individuality or separateness between them : and we know that reasoning is not merely calculation nor separable from emotions. The ideal of a society of equals to-day, therefore, does not imply the conceptions about human beings which were accepted generally a century ago. It assumes, however, at least that every man or woman has some ability to reason, some spontaneity and some capacity for fellowship. There is also in men and women some irrational passion, some inertia and some hostility to others. But the democratic ideal implies that reasoning, spontaneity and fellowship in ordinary folk can be brought increasingly into play.

The group of institutions, chiefly political, which is called democracy, on the other hand, is simply the instrument or means by which the democratic ideal may be approached. An ideal is not a fixed Utopia but a sign-post or a mark of direction. By

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creating institutions and acquiring skill in using them we follow the direction indicated : and in the democratic tradition, we aim at a community of equals working for a common good among themselves and in concert with other such communities. The institutions now called democratic are in some cases adaptations of pre-democratic institutions ; in others, inventions and experiments in new fields of action. Parliamentary government, or representative and responsible government, is more than a century old ; but its roots go much further back into the past. And there are some institutions, such as armed forces for inter-State war and property-owning as a means of control over men and women, which have been hardly affected at all by the democratic ideal. But other institutions, such as the system for promoting popular education and health, are very recent inventions. The State itself and the State-system connecting many States are very ancient ; but the meaning of the words " State " and " government " have been changed in fact, by democratic practice,

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more than is generally understood. "Law" and "liberty" and "peace" have all changed their meanings, in the improvement of the art of government under the influence of the democratic tradition. And therefore it will be well to keep one's eyes upon the actual habits of men and women rather than upon words, in what follows. It will be necessary first to discover how far democracy as an ideal is either desirable or practicable and, secondly, how far the actual institutions of democracy, so far used, are good or bad.

CHAPTER II

RIVAL GOSPELS

I

DEMOCRACY is everywhere criticized. Its supporters and advocates cannot, on their own principles, refrain from criticism : and its opponents point out the defects of democratic institutions in order to promote an alternative system. In order to make sense of the controversy, we must ensure that both the advocates and the opponents of democracy give the same meaning to the word " democracy," although in some current controversy that seems doubtful. For the purpose of the discussion here, however, one definite meaning must be accepted. Democracy, then, is taken to mean a system of government by representative Assemblies controlling responsible Ministers of State. It is assumed that the representatives in Assemblies are, more or less, controlled, directed or incited to action

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by a body of citizens, having no official status, differing among themselves in political opinion ; and it is also assumed that ministers, besides being controlled in larger issues, have power enough to act on their own judgment ; for if they have no such power, they cannot be responsible at all. It is sometimes forgotten that responsible government must imply the effectual authority of those who are responsible.

Political philosophers have been at work for generations, discussing how government operates and how it should be organized. Their discussions have supplied ordinary people with a language about votes and elections and law. A theory is implied in the current language of conversation and journalism, and this theory affects any discussion of democracy. But the discussion of the theory underlying practice must not prevent our seeing what actually occurs ; for if we swallow the theory whole, we shall be disturbed quite unreasonably by discovering that certain habits and customs are not what they are said to be. The free and sovereign " people," choosing out of

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their wisdom the noblest and cleverest among them to express the general will, in a perfectly organized meeting of statesman-like paragons, and so directing the still wiser and nobler Ministers of State—that is fairy-tale. It is a long way from the text-books to the practice of politics and government ; although what great numbers believe is often more important in public affairs than what is actually the case. In practice, democracy is a product of the first half of the nineteenth century, the result of an attempt of European nations to meet some of the difficulties of the new industrial system. But clearly, the active minds of that time had to use the ideas and customs already available : and they had all been trained by the “enlightenment” of the eighteenth century. Therefore they assumed, almost unconsciously, the truth of certain ideas about men and women, which we should regard as, at least, doubtful. They assumed, for example, that any one could be educated to use reason competently in matters affecting public policy—which is not quite true. But they also

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assumed that reasoning was a sort of calculation of advantages, best when unaffected by emotions—which is quite false. And with these assumptions they proceeded to work out a new system of government to satisfy the needs of which they were aware. The result is not the ideal but the actual practice still surviving in some Western States.

In practice, therefore, democracy is a form of government in which the organized public power is maintained by a tacit agreement between different groups, who want to use that power for their advantage,—an agreement not to fight, if each can have a turn. The groups are organized in political parties, which in some countries are traditional, as in the United States, in others, as in Great Britain, are based upon economic and social distinctions ; and in others, as in France, are small groups of professional politicians. Each group attempts to obtain support and votes from as many citizens as possible. They are opposed' in the details of the policy they advocate ; but all assume that their pro-

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posals are for the advantage not only of themselves but also of the whole community, conceived as a "nation." Political rhetoric is the chief means of showing personal ability and therefore attaining power ; but when in office, a person may sometimes be caused by the Press to derive some prestige from efficient administration or negotiation. The majority of active politicians are supporters of one or other group or party under an elected leader. The majority of citizens do not attend and probably could not attend to public affairs continuously ; but they can all be called upon to exert influence in times of excitement ; and there are various small circles of persons, actively interested in public affairs, who make what is called " public opinion " on this or that subject. Democracy of this kind is obviously an experiment in inducing as many as possible in any community to assist in public affairs, not merely with their hands but with their emotions and intelligence. It is not a method of discussion between philosophers, nor is it a quarrel between fools. It is a

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means by which ordinary men and women can reach enough agreement to act together for certain common purposes. And these purposes also are important ; because the word " democracy " sometimes means an ideal, not an actual machinery of government. Indeed, the political parties, elections, discussion as a basis for passing laws and other such devices, do imply that a society of equals is desirable. That is to say, the devices of democracy are intelligible only as means for producing a community of men, women and children, each of whom has the right to full development of all abilities in intercourse with all others, none of whom is merely an instrument of the advantage of anyone else nor of any " nation " or State. Clearly a system of government which uses discussion and criticism and bases decisions upon agreements which may be refuted later, cannot produce blind obedience or infallible authority. It is not good for war. It does not promote slavery, even of an industrial kind. And it implies an aim nowhere yet realized. Its influence is dynamic, not

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static. In practice, it affords cover for all kinds of private greed and popular fraud. It may support the illusions of a political mythology. But it has developed a certain technique in orderly administration and skilled legislation.. Democratic government is not all that it claims to be ; but it had done more good than any other system until the Great War.

II

In contrast with this actual system, certain groups in Russia, Italy and Germany maintain an alternative called dictatorship. There is not the smallest trace among the leaders or advocates of dictatorship that they have ever had any practical experience of democracy. Some of their attacks upon the parliamentary system or upon responsible government seem to indicate that they have no acquaintance with the actual practice of government by these means. And even in countries which are called democracies, thousands of young men, especially in the "educated" class, seem to have only the vaguest ideas about any government

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at all. A new generation has suddenly been made aware of ancient institutions, some of which are certainly obsolete ; and not being experts in public affairs, they are easily persuaded by the simplest rhetoric to attempt to set the whole world right. But the desire to do so is altogether honourable ; and therefore, putting aside for the moment the criticism of democracy, the most popular alternative to it may be considered. We may learn more of what democracy means by contrasting it with other systems and ideals of government. But it would be quite useless nowadays to place democracy in contrast with monarchy or oligarchy ; for they are not now practical alternatives. They survive only in textbooks. Even where they are still practised, in India or Africa, they are evidently dying out. There is only one practical alternative to democracy in the modern world—dictatorship of the Right or the Left. We may contrast democracy with that.

The alternative to democratic government which is now called dictatorship, rests partly upon mythology. In theory a dic-

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tatorship is the control over a whole community, for the good of all its members, exercised by a select few who have in its highest form the "sense" of a common good and devotion to that good. This select few, which in the Fascist gospel is bound in loyalty to one inspired "leader," uses persuasion for obtaining consent from the innocent majority, and compulsion for preventing criticism by anyone whom an earlier training has rendered less susceptible. The two existing forms of dictatorship are Communism and Fascism. The communist theory asserts that dictatorship is necessary for the destruction of control by capital-owners over the community. It is said to be the expression of the true mind of the "proletariat" or the manual workers in industry. And it is believed to be a means of establishing a "classless" society, which has never yet existed anywhere. Any disagreement with this view is regarded as a sign of moral turpitude or payment by "capitalists" and opponents are killed or imprisoned. The terminology of this theory belongs to the middle of the nine-

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teenth century and is almost entirely drawn from the works of Karl Marx. His analysis of social distinctions and social power is assumed to be correct: and a policy is derived from certain detached sentences of his about "revolution." The communist theory, therefore, is a fixed doctrine which has not arisen out of current experience, but out of that of about a century ago.

The Fascist dictatorship looks back behind Marx to Marx's teacher, Hegel; but less consciously, because Fascists are less highly intellectualized than Marxists. By an accident of history this form of dictatorship was first established in Italy which, as everyone knows, is still obsessed by the memories of ancient Rome—its "fasces" and its "Ave Caesar!" addressed to a dictator, its excellent roads and its military conceptions of glory. But only the rituals of Fascism are Roman. Its theory belongs to the middle of the nineteenth century in authoritarian régimes which feared the people and sought support for authority in the new nationalism. Therefore Fascism is a German version

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imply belief in the inspired leader, immune from criticism, who acts with the select few to establish the glory or "equal" status of the chosen "nation." All men are supposed to serve the nation, embodied in "the State," as Hegel imagined it; and the most glorious of all acts is conceived to be war—of course, for the sake of peace. The faithful require only leadership; and opponents, who are obviously rebellious against the revealed truth, must be "educated" by violence or imprisonment.

The theory of dictatorship in both forms, Communist and Fascist, is offered as a substitute for old-fashioned democracy. Liberty and impartial justice are regarded as ridiculous or fraudulent excuses to cover exploitation and blindness to social or racial divisions. And in both its forms dictatorship maintains the "right", in some new magical sense of that word, apparently identified with "power,"—to kill, maim or imprison without trial anyone who attempts to change the established order. In theory, both forms of dictatorship are accepted by the majority under control; for the plebis-

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cite and other forms of voting are used, as in earlier forms of tyranny, to give a general impression of overwhelming popular support, even if no criticism or discussion is allowed to precede the voting. The theory seems to be that those who are not to be trusted to discuss the meaning of a question are competent to answer it. It is not clear, even in theory, how the superior competence and public spirit of the actual few in control, is supposed to have been tested. But presumably the test has been applied, even if it seems to the unbeliever to have been only the force which obtained in civil war and still holds control.

But the practice of dictatorship, like that of democracy, is more important than the theory. Whatever the sources of the new gospels in the philosophical literature of the nineteenth century, undoubtedly the psychological influence which formed both these alternatives to democracy was that of the Great War. Dictators are many and various. But we need not discuss here the forms of military dictatorship, familiar long before the Great War in many countries, nor

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the continuance of this military dictatorship in some countries to-day. After-war dictatorship is a new phenomenon. It was born in the ranks of defeated armies. Its psychological source is the chaos of spirit which followed upon a deep experience of comradeship under discipline, when all that noble effort proved to be vain. In Russia the common soldiers lost confidence in the Powers that had called upon them : and a general confusion followed the proved incompetence of those who had control of public policy. To fill the void, a few resolute men appealed to a new sense of comradeship, discipline, blind obedience and an orthodox faith derived by them from the writings of Marx. Chaos, following defeat in war, left Russia to be violently converted by an appeal to feelings developed in war : but the methods used at first by the new régime were not unlike those of the old, under an older orthodoxy. In Italy, defeat at Caporetto had to be forgotten and its psychological effects overcome by a restoration of self-respect. Thus early Fascism soon turned to the older Nationalism for support : and confidence

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in themselves was restored to large numbers of young men by a counter-attack on the critics of military incompetence and by denunciation of irresolute or corrupt politicians. In Germany, defeat in the Great War hurt the feelings of thousands who had, perhaps unconsciously, accepted the military ideal and the belief in the invincibility of German arms: the Versailles Treaty was felt to be an enslavement because of some of its more obvious injustice: and an economic depression, from which the whole world was suffering, caused the final excitement which broke into a violent persecution of Jews, as in the Middle Ages in times of popular enthusiasm. Some killing and imprisonment of persons suspected of having favoured peace or social betterment for the manual workers, gave satisfaction to the middle classes—who were taught to fear a mythical “ bolshevism ” by memories of civil war in 1919. An entirely new era was generally believed to have begun, apparently based upon the magic qualities of a chosen race under leaders who could kill either their opponents

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or their associates. The new dictatorship, even if it is opposed to democracy, did not arise out of discontent with democratic government. The arguments of the advocates of dictatorship against free discussion, the criticism of authorities and the replacement of the government by popular vote, were all discovered after power had actually been seized by armed bands. There is a sort of fatalism in the minds of most men, owing to which whatever has already occurred seems to have been inevitable. And without arguing that subtle question, it may be admitted that the experience of the past twenty years has shown the incompetence of representative Assemblies in countries unfamiliar with democratic methods. Discussion of public policy is valuable : but democracy has never implied that discussion could be a substitute for decision. Criticism of authority is valuable ; but it has never been supposed that the command of those in authority should be rendered ineffectual by criticism. And in countries where no decision and no authoritative command could be maintained by its

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government, clearly the system was bad. In short, peoples unfamiliar with democratic methods often misunderstood the nature of the Executive in a democratic system of government ; but the forms of government which preceded dictatorship in Russia, Italy and Germany were only in their most superficial features, democratic.

III

Whatever the sources of dictatorship, however, in theory or in practice, the actual operation of the system is worth attention. And for the purpose of contrast with democracy, it may be best to give dictatorship credit for all that its advocates claim. Let us suppose then that there is no private greed or personal appetite for power disguised as public duty in dictatorships ; that the select few who hold power are in fact both the most competent and the most public-spirited of any in the community ; that uncriticized leaders or committees in control in dictatorships do not deteriorate, as ordinary men do, when they are immune from opposition. Indeed, let us suppose

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that we are discussing, not the actual working of dictatorship in any country, but what dictatorship might produce when its advocates have done their best. Clearly they may be able to do some things better than those in power under democracy—for example preparing for war. But then the question would be whether what dictatorship can do best is worth doing at all. Perhaps democracy, for example, is not a good method of preparing for war ; and yet it may be the only method for eliminating all danger of war. On the other hand, for some of the functions of government, both dictatorship and democracy are supposed to be useful—for example, for health, education and industrial efficiency.

The advocates of dictatorship usually point to improved health, education and industrial production as signs of success for their method. And certainly both Russians and Italians may be healthier and better educated and perhaps also better supplied with some industrial products than they were before dictatorship was introduced among them. In Germany

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dictatorship cannot so far claim to have progressed any further in health or education than the great municipal enterprise of the German tradition before Hitler and his followers discovered politics. Let it be granted, however, that any dictatorship can improve health and education. Even so it would not follow that dictatorship is better than democracy; because the *methods* used by dictatorship for these purposes were discovered and perfected under democracy. Sanitation and water-supply and the new methods of school organization, now used by dictatorships, are derived by them from the results of precisely that form of government which they affect to despise. Thus the dictators adopt the results of the process which they condemn—namely free discussion of opposing views and the criticism of authority. The very practice of dictatorship in adopting the discoveries of democracy is a confession of its debt to democracy. Naturally those who are unaccustomed to think for themselves do not understand that the results of thinking are not ready-made revelations, but painfully

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acquired conclusions. The unintelligent imagine that a conclusion is a "dogma," because they cannot understand the argument from which the supposed "dogma" was once derived. And so in public affairs many imagine that drains and schools are known to be good by a sort of revelation to an inspired dictator, whereas in fact drains and schools were discovered to be good by a repudiation of the principles for which dictatorship stands.

To suppress public discussion of opposing views of public policy and to prevent criticism of established authority, is essential to dictatorship. Decisions in this system, therefore, are reached by some other method than reasoning or by a very limited use of reasoning. It is not necessary, for our argument here, to analyse the actual method used under dictatorship for reaching decisions. But it is clearly not the democratic method, precisely in so far as it rejects free discussion and public criticism. Thus it is not the method by which science has improved the cure of disease and the methods of teaching. But the methods of

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science have been proved more useful than any others ; and even dictatorships use the conclusions of science. But it is better to be able to discover something new than to accept it without understanding how it was arrived at. It is better, however, only on the assumption that there is still something more to be discovered, for which the same method may be used : and if all truth is known, this is not so.

Again, still assuming that those in power under a dictatorship are perfectly honest and quite competent, the effects of the system upon the others, who do not share power, must be considered. They are compelled or induced to leave all questions of public policy to the discussion and decision of a superior few. In the educational system children and students are given precise doctrines which must be accepted without doubt. The educational process is supposed to make all children and students into instruments of the will of a " leader " or a select party. But this implies that all truth that is important is already known and therefore that the pro-

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cess of discovery is useless : and it implies that the “ will ” of the leader or party is so good that it could not be bettered by the process which made it. The “ leader ” in Fascism is believed to embody the “ national will ”—a mythological conception ; and under Communism “ the party ” is supposed to express the mind of the proletariat, which is presumably otherwise dumb. Thus all modern inventions for spreading ideas and arousing emotions, in schools and outside—the cinema and the radio, the printed word and the public “ demonstration ”—are used to fashion the majority into efficient tools for a “ higher ” will. Therefore those who are not the few in control in a dictatorship are deprived by the system of the exercise of their intelligence and the play of their emotions upon large areas of human experience. They are deprived of the experience of personal discovery or of the effort to discover and limited to those objects of emotion which are convenient for their rulers. Every authoritarian system diminishes the vitality and intelligence of those under authority.

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Dictatorship, therefore, exalts the leader or the few in control, at the cost of reducing the moral stature of the majority of men, women and children.

Further, decision without public discussion, as a method of government, has the effect upon the majority of making caprice and not "right" seem to be the basis of authority. The dictatorship, either of a person or of a party, may in fact be based upon some general conception of right in the minds of those in control : but in effect, no reasons are given for decisions taken. This is a return to the caprice of feudalism, from which the French Revolution and the democratic movement of the nineteenth century provided an escape. It is clearly possible to argue, with Thrasymachus in the *Republic* of Plato, that all "right" is merely the will of the stronger—that is to say, caprice. But that argument has been many times refuted. It will be discussed again when we analyse the basis of democratic authority. But here it is assumed that "right," and not force, is the proper basis of authority in all government. If

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that is so, then dictatorship is bad because it weakens the sense of a right which is independent of the will of any ruler.

Quite apart, then, from the fact that in practice all dictatorships, of the Left and of the Right, use torture, maiming, killing and imprisonment without trial, as means of overcoming their critics, the principles of dictatorship are bad bases for government. It may be argued by the advocates of dictatorship that there is an " invincible ignorance " on the part of their opponents ; but if persuasion is not effectual, that may be due to lack of skill in those who attempt to persuade or to the weakness of their argument. It cannot be assumed that if an audience does not understand a speaker, the audience alone is to blame. It cannot be assumed by anyone not already convinced that the arguments against dictatorship are due to ignorance of what it is.

It remains only to deal with the rhetoric—it is hardly argument—of certain demagogues of the " upper " classes, playwrights and clergymen, who say that democracy is bad because it does not permit *them* to rule.

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The usual method of saying so is to misrepresent the honesty and intelligence of elected representatives, in the hope that readers and audiences will have forgotten the facts of history with regard to the dubious honesty and weak intelligence of kings and aristocrats. The Western world adopted elections as a means of escaping from the proved incompetence of those whom literary critics of democracy now admire. But let us suppose it reasonable to say that—"all will be well, if *I* am dictator," on the assumption, of course, that "*I*" am what I now am—honest, intelligent and competent. Let us assume a benevolent tyranny or a perfectly beneficent and far-seeing dictator. In that case the argument against dictatorship is simply this—If a man is dictator because he is honest, intelligent and competent, to make him dictator is the surest way of destroying all three of those virtues. No dictator can escape the inevitable consequences of a lack of public discussion and free criticism. The nature of man is such that not even a successful dramatist or a dean could

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maintain his excellence, if he were a dictator ; or in the famous phrase of Lord Acton,—“ All power corrupts : and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

IV

It must be admitted, however, that the arguments against dictatorship are not likely to convince either a Fascist or a Communist. These arguments rest upon assumptions about the nature of human beings and human intercourse, which are not those of the convinced Fascist or Communist ; and most assumptions are themselves emotionally secured below the level of conscious reasoning. If anyone really believes that he possesses all the truth that matters, either about public affairs or about the world, it is not possible to make him understand the value of the method we call scientific. He escapes from reasoning upon a gust of emotion or rhetoric about “ intuition.” Again, if anyone really believes that there are certain men and women who are inevitably incapable of understanding what is good for them, he will not appre-

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ciate what " democracy " means. And in every age there are many who are naturally " cocksure " and " superior." They are immune from the effects of reasoning ; and usually confess that defect with pride, when they say that reasoning is " analytical," superficial or materialistic.

The assumption that one possesses final truth and has an intuition of moral good superior to that of others is a source of belief in the mythology of " higher unities " —" the nation " or " the proletariat," to which mere men and women may be sacrificed. Thus a primitive patriotism among Fascists or " the revolution " among Communists become mythological entities disguising the love of power among those who preach devotion to one or the other. Among schoolmasters " the old school " is sometimes used as an excuse for urging devotion or obedience to themselves. And similarly the " nation " is easily confused with those actually in power in any community. The " revolution " is what those desire who are not competent to acquire power in other ways. But this does not

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imply hypocrisy among Fascists or Communists. The best among them are not conscious of the deeper psychological impulses by which they are moved, any more than are the ordinary politicians or "statesmen" in the democratic tradition. Political influences are much the same among the advocates of any form of government. The only advantage of the democratic tradition, in this regard, is that more can be known and said about such influences under a democracy than under a dictatorship.

The analysis of the theory and practice of dictatorship, however, must not be taken to imply that all advocates of Communism or Fascism, as alternatives to Democracy, are knaves or fools. A system of government may be bad and yet it may have arisen out of the urgent needs of a social situation. It may be the result of accident, in the type of personality which seized power when the chance offered. But it is usually also the result of an attempt to supply certain needs of the youthful, the vigorous or the generous and enthusiastic. Virtue itself is sometimes the origin of evil, as when a believer

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in a creed seeks the salvation of those whom he persecutes. Acts which are bad may be done by a "virtuous" man, if his intentions are the test of his virtue. And so, the rise of after-war dictatorship was evidently due in part to unsatisfied desires which ought to be satisfied. If democracy cannot satisfy such desires, it will be rejected, in spite of what has been done in the past within the democratic tradition. And when such desires played upon a community without experience of democracy or lacking leaders of the democratic kind, the result has been after-war dictatorship.

The desires which should justly be satisfied are such as these. First, a desire to feel that one has a "place" in the community; but unemployment, uncertainty and the vague sense of neglect which so many have suffered since the Great War have made them ready to follow any call to act for themselves. The traditional conception that the ordinary man or woman had only to vote occasionally, in order that all evils should be amended, is certainly not

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inspiring. On the other hand, many young men and some women had had experience in the Great War of daily duties in pursuit of a common good, with a comradeship supported by uniforms, flags and drums. The "political" uniforms of continental Europe to-day are partly the result of the adolescent desire for service in arms, among those who were children during the war. But it is reasonable enough that men and women should seek some expression of comradeship in a common purpose.

Secondly, the Communist believer is rightly stirred by the traditional evils suffered by the manual workers. The appeal for patience in reform is often only the excuse for inaction by those who are not suffering. Whatever the theory to explain it may be, quite clearly there is an opposition between the interests of the owners of industrial property and those who make a living by using machinery, power or land. With the memory of a Great War behind one, the "class war" becomes a vivid metaphor to describe an actual fact. And the desire to redress the evils of poverty

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and exploitation should somehow be satisfied. On the other hand, the Fascist believer is generally a person who has inherited or acquired some admiration for the traditional culture, which in some ways did depend upon the subordination of social classes. It is right to desire the preservation of culture. It is unlikely that the victims of a system will be capable of replacing it by a better. If they are so capable, they have not been victimized in the most important aspects of their personality. Therefore, the Fascist calls upon youthful enthusiasm to maintain against radical change the best of tradition.

The fact that both Communism and Fascism supply the emotional needs of some, is not an argument in favour of either. Such needs might be supplied otherwise. But it must not be imagined, in contrasting dictatorship with democracy, that actual dictatorships are altogether evil.

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By contrast with dictatorship, it is easier to understand the connection between the

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democratic ideal and the institutions by which its realization has so far been sought. Democracy implies at least an attempt to use all the capacities of ordinary folk in the formation of public policy ; and clearly this implies a certain faith. It implies that ordinary folk have capacities, hitherto unused, which may be brought into play by a suitable system of government. The purpose of government, then, is conceived to be not merely benefits for the governed but the formation of a certain type of man and woman. Health and knowledge, courage and loyalty, are good qualities in all men and women : and the finer kinds of all these characteristics are the result of the spontaneous impulse of individual persons. The institutions of government, like those of religion, exist for the sake of these persons. Individuals do not exist for the sake of those who govern them, nor for the sake of the glory or prestige of any institution, State or Nation. The test of the value of any system of government, therefore, is the moral and intellectual “ stature ” of the persons who maintain it, and all men

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and women have the capacity for moral and intellectual excellence.

Secondly, the best way of using all capacities is to allow free play for any capacities which may happen to exist in anyone at any moment. This clearly does not imply that the abilities of different persons either are or ought to be equal. That there are different kinds of ability is one of the bases of democratic co-operation ; and therefore any institutions which imply that anyone can do any job are not genuinely democratic, although in practice they have been supposed to be so. Again the differences of ability in any community, even one so small as a family, are differences not only of kind but also of degree. One person is more excellent than another in the same kind of ability : and one is better than another in precisely those abilities which are most useful for public policy. The institutions of democracy should therefore allow of ability, for example, to lead others but not for ability to dominate. Some will be able to see the common good more clearly, to understand social problems

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or their solution more easily. It is not assumed in the democratic tradition that everyone will be or ought to be equally good as a judge of public affairs and public policy ; but it is assumed that everyone ought to make some judgment of his or her own on these matters. It is assumed that ordinary folk do normally make such judgments and that it is better for all if they make more of them. For example, ordinary folk can tell, at least, whether their government is hurting or helping them. Clearly they are sometimes mistaken in their judgments ; but the evidence shows that even uncriticized dictators are sometimes mistaken. They undoubtedly change their policies. The liability to error is recognized in the democratic tradition to be an opportunity for the discovery of new truth. The democratic system of discussion and criticism of authority, therefore, is part of the " scientific " system in vogue since about the sixteenth century in Europe ; and it can be opposed only by assuming the obsolete conception of fixed and final truth, familiar to the Middle Ages.

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The spontaneous effort to reach truth or to do what is good may fail ; but the effort itself is valuable, in so far as it is spontaneous, in raising the " level " of personal conduct or character. Any system of government therefore should promote spontaneity in its citizens.

Again, the truth or the good, discovered by discussion and experiment, is the only possible basis for the moral authority of those in control of government. This is a direct contradiction of the statement that " right " is only or merely an expression of superior force. But this principle of right or good, independent of the " will " or desire of anyone, is the basis of democracy : for if any common man may discover what is good by the use of his own capacities, then the " authority " of government can rest upon this good perceived by each. That is to say, the moral influence in the command of a democratic Government is the tendency or impulse in each man, which induces him to move, of himself, in the direction indicated by the command. Thus in a truly democratic situation, no person

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is only the instrument of another's will ; and therefore the possible external force or pressure which can be exercised upon any man by a Government is not the basis of the moral authority of that Government. The moral authority of a democratic Government is based not upon the " will " of the people but upon the fact that such a " will " is right or is itself in contact with what is good. The self-moving characteristic or " will " in any person is what is referred to as giving consent or contribution to government. But the person is moved, of himself, by the good which is independent of his passing moods.

Some confusion appears to be caused by the use of force, against criminals and lunatics, by democratic Governments ; and it has been argued by some, especially among the followers of Tolstoi, that no force at all ought to be used for the maintenance of justice. This, however, does not follow from the principle of moral authority. Force is never the *basis* of government or of justice ; but force may be its *instrument*. It becomes necessary to

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use such an instrument, if and when certain persons are proved to be unmoved by all the normal methods of persuasion or moral influence, known in any community. There are certain persons who lack intelligence, obviously enough for them to be treated as, in this aspect, not human. These are lunatics. And criminals, properly so called, are particular kinds of lunatic. It is not in opposition to the principles of democracy to restrain such persons. Liberty never involves anarchy. The theory of anarchism, which implies that no restraint at all is necessary, is a mistake due to a faulty analysis of the facts of experience. There are some persons who are so defective, in certain aspects, that they may be justly compelled by others to adhere to the common rule of the society in which they are living.

Clearly, however, mistakes have been made and may yet be made in deciding *who* is a lunatic or a criminal. Our standards of sanity may be too crude. What is "crime," in the sense of an offence against the law, may not be morally wrong,

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if the law is bad : and those who are treated as criminals may be the victims of social oppression for which the whole community is responsible. But, once again, the liability to error in the application of a principle is no proof that the principle is wrong. Governments claiming to be " democratic " have been oppressive and unjust, especially in the treatment of alien races ; but when they were so, they were violating, not maintaining, the principles upon which their own moral authority rests. Those principles always leave it possible to dispute or oppose a Government, on the ground that it is wrong in its claim to apply them in certain cases.

It is sometimes argued that in practice there is nothing to choose between democracy and dictatorship, because democracy treats its criminals as dictatorship treats its opponents. But such an argument misses the point of the contrast of principles, drawn above. The fundamental difference between the two systems is to be found in the fact that any decision affecting public policy in a democracy may and can be

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criticized by anyone ; and this implies the still more fundamental principle, referred to above, that what is right is discoverable by further discussion between opponents and is not already known in its entirety.

The two gospels, therefore, of dictatorship and democracy are not merely variations upon a central theme—the power of those who seize power, but are morally opposed. They are not opposed as “ natural ” forces are opposed, as tides or currents or inevitable impulses. They are opposed as barbarism is opposed to civilization, as dogma is opposed to science. The principles of democracy, in fact, are merely the principles of science applied to the improvement of public policy, the principles whose operation has raised men from the status of anthropoid apes and may yet raise them higher than we can imagine. But the principles of a gospel must be tested by reference to their applications in practice ; for even if the ideal is excellent, it may be impracticable or so obscure that it gives no guidance in the art of government. We must pass from consideration

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of “ the gospel,” therefore, to think of “ the church ”—from the conceptions of what is desirable to the actual results of trying to achieve it.

CHAPTER III

DEFECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF DEMOCRACY

I

IF the most obvious contemporary alternatives, Communism or Fascism, are not to be preferred to democracy, it does not follow that democracy is worth preserving ; for there may be some other system, not yet tried nor even named, which would be better. And in fact the defects of actual democratic institutions are many. The democratic faith in the competence of ordinary men and women and the hope for a society of equals should not prevent criticism of the actual practice which these have caused. In the early days of democratic institutions when political discussions referred mainly to the franchise and the rule of the majority, the common objection against democracy was that it would restrict " liberty." But the first purpose of advocates of democracy had been to extend

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“liberty.” The first criticism of democracy, therefore, rests upon a conception of liberty which somehow differs from that of the first democrats. The early years of the nineteenth century were employed in struggles against different kinds of privileges or special powers of certain castes or groups. At that time all the intelligent praised “liberty”; and the very word “franchise” is connected with freedom. The “liberties” of the Middle Ages were certain rights recognized by overlords; and the *laissez faire* of early industrialism was a demand for “liberty” of a sort. The first kind of “liberty” for which the earlier advocates of democracy contended was a security from the personal caprice of rulers: and it was obtained by the maintenance of certain laws, in accordance with which a person might reasonably assume that all public power would be exercised. This “civil” liberty came to be identified with the right to trial, and even to a certain kind of trial—trial by jury, before any compulsion was used against anyone. The “habeas corpus” principle—that those having

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public power should render account of charges against anyone arrested—was established : and secret arrest, secret condemnation or punishment without trial, now revived under dictatorship, were abolished. The next step was to secure that the operative laws should embody current morality and not that of ancient times ; and this involved a new method of legislation. Liberty implied a share in the power to say what the laws should be : and because most laws were ancient, the making of new laws seemed to be the chief function of government which “ the people ” should have. A share in legislation, therefore, was called “ self-government,” a people which made its own laws was called “ free ” : and the franchise was extended to make more men and women, in that sense, “ free.” Actual law-making changed in character. At first, the old commands and prohibitions had to be revised or rejected and new duties of citizens defined : and, in the second place, “ law ” became the establishment of new offices or functions of the public power.¹

¹ See Sir C. Ilbert, *Parliament*, in this series.

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This was done by asking more and more among the ordinary folk of the nation, what their opinions were : and they were said to have political " freedom." But this also is rejected by dictatorship.

Even in countries with a democratic tradition, however, the connection of democracy with an extension of " liberty " was ambiguous ; for some argued that the democratic process was going too far. Undoubtedly the extended franchise led to new laws and regulations about sanitation, epidemic disease, schooling and working conditions in industry. Did these restrict " liberty " ? To increase the number of those who shared civil or political " liberty " was said to be dangerous to " liberty " of enterprise and thought. In fact, no sooner had the restraints of traditional privilege and ancient institutions been removed than it became necessary, in the opinion of some, to regulate conditions of employment, to provide against adulteration : and thus the State, which had assisted traders and manufacturers against landowners, became a nuisance to them when it set limits to their

efforts at earning money for themselves. These efforts were called "private enterprise"; and in the original faith of the advocates of "liberty" in industry against certain traditional privileges, such enterprise was believed to secure the greatest good for all. The competition of each against all, if each sought his own good, was "the simple system of natural liberty" according to Adam Smith. Therefore any State regulation of the conditions of employment was believed to be opposed to "liberty." The assumption seems to have been that each individual was sufficiently strong and wise to secure as much for himself as was good for him. This clearly excluded lunatics; but it also entirely discounted the different positions in society of those in different social classes and treated traditional customs and institutions as if they were "the nature of things." Hence property, in the eighteenth-century sense, was conceived to be "natural": and "property" as well as "liberty" was to be secured by democracy.

When democracy in the sense of a fran-

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chise extended to manual workers was foreseen, not only the advocates of private enterprise against all State regulation but also the successors of the eighteenth-century intellectuals protested. The new intellectuals feared that democracy, expressing the "mass-mind," would restrict the liberty of the artist and the pioneer in social experiments. And it is sometimes said even to-day that "democracy" involves bad taste, or noise and confusion or the suppression of originality. The newspapers are said to reveal in their "stunts" the worst features of the democratic appeal to all and sundry ; and leisure for common folk is said to degrade civilized enjoyment by allowing no "liberty" for the rarer choice of the enlightened. Therefore, it was argued that "true" democracy should go as far as it went in the middle of the nineteenth century ; but no further. More "liberty" could only be "licence" : and worse still, regulations which helped the manual workers or the uneducated would restrict the liberty of those who were already free.

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As a restriction of the liberty of those who have what they want, in private enterprise or in the enjoyment of leisure, democratic institutions have to meet the same objections to-day from the middle class as they once met from the landed aristocracy and their admirers. The same principle which freed the trader, the manufacturer and the unorthodox thinker from the control of the landowner and the ecclesiastical authorities, is now opposed by some traders and some writers, if anyone suggests that it might be so applied as to give economic freedom to the manual workers. The vote, which has secured a certain kind of freedom, is regarded by many as enough, because it allows those with control of economic resources, enough for themselves ; and the old connection of democracy with the maintenance of property as well as liberty, makes democracy itself seem to be an obstacle to further liberty. Two opposite currents of opinion, therefore, arise out of the issue. On the one hand, Fascists determine to maintain private property at all costs and condemn " democracy," in so far as an ex-

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tended franchise may lead to the restriction of property rights. On the other hand, Communists condemn democracy as a fraud because the liberty it actually provides is limited by certain private rights to property. The Communists argue, therefore, that such "liberty" is a "bourgeois illusion"—which may mean either that it is not the sort of liberty they desire or that any form of "liberty" is anti-social.

All these criticisms of democracy, by the older "liberal" individualism as well as by the newer tyrannies, reveal the need for a clearer conception of what we want when we seek "liberty." Whether democracy can produce the right sort of thing for ordinary folk—that is the practical issue, not the abstract definition of liberty. But clearly the traditional conception of what was wanted when it was first named "liberty," was associated with the belief that each person was a separable unit, an atom combining with other atoms to make a community. That is false in fact ; and it is not nowadays regarded as desirable that persons should be kept apart. That is to

say, the modern ideal of personality is not an atom but an integral part of a community. Therefore what we mean when we claim liberty is not the absence of any social relationship, nor merely the protection against any others, but power to use all one's capacities and, in the first place, those involved in friendly co-operation with others for work in common. Thus in the modern meaning of "liberty," the power to work together with others is one of its chief aspects : and thus the regulations according to which citizens maintain, for example, a common drainage system or water-supply are not restrictions of liberty but extensions of it. Any regulation may be defective or mistaken ; but some regulation is necessary for action in common. That kind of regulation which arises out of public discussion and consent to a decision is most useful for such action in common ; and therefore institutions, which promote discussion and consent rather than dogmatic assertion and compulsion, favour liberty in its modern sense. That existing institutions have not extended such liberty into other spheres

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than those already covered only shows that the principle has yet to be applied further. It cannot show, as Communists suppose, that democracy is helpless ; because, even with regard to the rights of private property, great changes have already been made. It is simply not true that the established rights of property in any era have been successfully used to resist the democratic process of extending liberty. Indeed, the traditional rights of property have been continually modified and the meaning of the word "property" changed. Similarly, the further application of democratic principles cannot, as Fascists suppose, destroy the use of such capacities as are exercised in exceptional circumstances, because those principles would allow the social abilities of each man and the exceptional social abilities of any to have freer play. But, of course, at no point would the principles of democracy establish a power to destroy all forms of property, and at no point would they give even the exceptional person complete control over others. Democratic institutions may be improved ; but for some purposes

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they are indeed useless. Those purposes are assumed to be bad, if the democratic ideal is accepted.

II

The second and more modern criticism of democracy is that it rests upon certain pretences, not to say frauds. Political parties, for example, are supposed to be free associations of persons choosing for themselves one or other kind of policy. But in fact most members of a party belong to it because of their parents' politics, or because of some irrelevant connection between the party and some locality or economic "interest" or religion. Indeed, it is impossible to believe that the majority of voters carefully weigh the arguments for and against the proposals of the party for which they eventually vote. Still less do they consider precisely the common good of the whole community when they send one or other representative to act for them in an elected Assembly. Most voters make a very cursory judgment on quite irrelevant grounds.

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In the first place, the effectual appeal for votes is never a rational process. And if this is made the basis of a criticism of democracy, the critic adopts the very dubious psychology of the early democrats ; for he assumes that the appeal for support ought to be “ rational,” in the eighteenth-century sense of that word. At that time it was believed that reasoning was a special kind of unemotional calculation, rather like addition and subtraction. Mind was believed to be a sort of automatic machine ; and if one put in the right argument, the right vote was believed to come out. In fact, there is nothing wrong with emotion or emotional appeals. To suppose that they are dangerous is perhaps a result of asceticism or Puritanism ; but it is, no doubt, also due to the eighteenth-century fear of “ enthusiasm.” In any case, there is no reasoning which is not more or less highly coloured emotionally. The normal man is never a calculating machine. Therefore it cannot be a valid objection to democracy, if it does not treat men as calculating machines. But clearly the objec-

tion to emotional appeals rests upon the existence of some degrading emotions ; for a person may be " levelled down " by fear or jealousy, just as he may be " levelled up " by confidence and generosity—and all of these are emotions. In practice, therefore, the evil in an emotional appeal is due to the low level of the emotions actually used and not to emotion itself. We should not fear a motive force, even if it can be used as an explosive for destruction. What is meant by the danger of passion in politics is that the more primitive or degrading emotions are often used to obtain support for persons or politics. But that obviously is not peculiar to democracy. Mob oratory and mass passions are as common in dictatorships and were common in the monarchies and oligarchies of ancient times.

If, however, it is admitted that some emotional appeal is good, democracy in practice may still seem to be fraudulent in the opportunity it gives for argument to be presented to those who are not really moved by argument. This is an objection against the practice of politicians. But here again

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the critic assumes too much. Democracy is "fraudulent" indeed, if it involves a pretence of argument ; but the critic of democracy usually confuses the theory with the practice and condemns the practice because it does not conform with an obsolete theory. It may be true that few voters actually use original reasoning to decide how to vote ; but democracy does not involve that all voters should. It involves only that each should have an opportunity of using such reasoning as he chooses to use ; and thus promotes the growth of the little that exists. Democracy does not, in practice, imply that each person is rational in every issue, but only that each person may be so in any case. That implication is not fraudulent.

Another sort of objection, however, refers not to the promotion of a policy, but to its first discovery or invention. In practice the policy of a party is never the result of intellectual contributions to it by most of the members. It is the result of thinking by one man or a very small group of men : and when "public opinion" demands this

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or that, what generally happens is that a few induce many others to make or to support statements of which most of the supporters have only the very slightest understanding. Public opinion is, therefore, treated by critics of democracy as a myth, because the majority have no opinion at all on most of the subjects with which public policy is concerned. Indeed, it is sometimes said that government by "the people" is a mere pretence, to cover the real power of those few who manipulate the instruments for forming opinion. The great majority of voters in any party and on any side are in fact under the influence of a few ; and the few who actually do control opinion, especially through the Press, are the rich and their agents. Thus "public opinion" is said to be made by the information selected for certain purposes by the owners of newspapers and by the desires for power or prestige of these magnates. It is merely the expression of the gullibility of the majority ; and the policy which it is supposed to support or create, is merely that of "the invisible

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hand ” of a governing class or caste. There is a “ ring ” or gang in the centre of power whose members know only what is to their own interest.

In reply, it must first be admitted that “ public policy ” is formed mainly by a few with influence. That would be the case in any state of society ; but that the influence is mainly that of the rich in our society is not due to democracy at all. It is due to the survival of a pre-democratic relationship between different social classes with respect to wealth, even in communities in which legal and political rights are equal. On the larger issue, however, apart from economic inequality, it is quite true that personal or intellectual inequality leads to the influence of some over others in the formation of policy. But if democracy permits or promotes this kind of influence, that is not objectionable. Democracy never implies either that men are equal intellectually or that they ought to be. Indeed, it has been well said that it is only an assumption that all men are equal, which assumption is made as a working hypo-

thesis "in order to discover who are the best."

The "career open to talents," in its best meaning, is the democratic principle that equal opportunities for obtaining influence will allow those who are more competent, honest and public-spirited to secure power. That such persons should have power is not denied by any school of thought. It is, however, an argument against the actual practice of democracy to-day that the opportunities are not equal, because the children of the rich have advantages in the pursuit of political influence and also because the tests of competence, honesty and public spirit are too crude. This, however, is not an argument against what is aimed at in a democracy; for the tests can always be improved, as education is more general, as the sense of community becomes more acute and as the inequality of riches is reduced by democratic measures. Democracy, however, is not committed to the elimination of exceptional ability. To suppose that is to misrepresent or to misunderstand the principle of equality. No one has ever

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believed that the influence of a slow-witted person should be equal to that of a genius in the formation of opinion. Opinion is not less "public" because it is formed under the influence of a few, if any and every citizen has an equal opportunity of contributing to it.

It is sometimes said that if a more equal distribution of wealth reduced the control of the great capitalist instruments of opinion, democracy would be more genuine and effectual. Economic changes then would prevent the control of political power by the few rich. Industrial democracy would make political democracy possible. This will be discussed later. But there is a further criticism of democracy which would still be valid, even if the influence of wealth were removed. This criticism rests upon the supposed incapacity of the ordinary man or woman to decide issues in public affairs or to choose the best persons for public office.

The argument runs as follows. Democracy involves a "cult of incompetence," as Emile Faguet called it, because the

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majority choose the sort of person they can understand and, as the majority are incompetent in public affairs, they tend to prefer persons like themselves to hold office. Again, the easiest method of gaining power when power depends upon the vote of the majority, is to appeal to the very simplest and not usually the most correct ideas about the situation. The politician in a democracy, therefore, "plays down" to the public and puts a premium upon incompetence.

The charge of incompetence brought against elected representatives is not easy to meet ; because different people give different meanings to the word "incompetence." Students of political theory are sometimes quite wrong about the practical politicians whom they condemn. The test of competence in administration or the conduct of public policy should be very different from an academic examination in knowledge ; and if a speaker influences ordinary folk, he is not necessarily less competent than one who can persuade only philosophers. . On the other hand, if ordinary folk prefer some person who is distasteful to

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the learned or the cultured, that is no proof that they are incompetent in choosing a leader. Indeed, one of the difficulties of democracy is that the traditional standards of culture, usually accepted by the opponents of democracy, imply a society of castes, if not actually a slave-civilization. What is sometimes called bad manners may be only manners unsuitable for an obsolete social system. What is called incompetence may be only inability to do what no longer need be done—for example, the giving of orders to inferiors. It is, indeed, doubtful whether the critics of democracy are themselves competent to criticize, because their tests of competence imply assumptions that are invalid. And the most important of these assumptions is the unconscious admiration for “superior” persons among whom they naturally expect themselves to be counted. Democracy has so far used experts and elected persons to improve health, education and transport, not to speak of methods of taxation and the organization of employment. As it will be argued in what follows, these achievements

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provide the most cogent replies to criticism of democratic methods ; but here it may be noted that these and not the preservation of a traditional culture are the valid tests of competence in government.

The criticisms so far discussed refer mainly to the application of certain principles to the practice of governments, and we have been concerned only with those fundamental criticisms which seem to imply a doubt about the very purpose for which democratic institutions exist. But the best general reply to such criticism is a description of the actual results of democracy in the past century.

III

If “ the proof of the pudding is in the eating,” the value of the democratic system of government is to be estimated not by reference to its easy working but by reference to its results upon the normal lives of ordinary folk. Obviously what has been done is no justification for complacency : and even if democratic institutions have been useful during the last century,

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they may nevertheless be useless now. But before discussing our own problems, it is worth while to consider how certain other and earlier problems were solved. Many evils remain to be dealt with ; but that fact should not blind us to the value of methods by which earlier evils were removed. Thousands of men and women and children now suffer from privation and lack of vitality. All of us suffer also from the immense burden involved in preparing against the danger of future war. But we do not now suffer, as our forefathers did, from the failure of a harvest in any one area, from plague, cholera and typhus in city areas and from the brutish ignorance and drunkenness of the early industrial era. These evils have been removed, largely by the art of government in the democratic tradition, when the power to remove them was gained by the advance of science and the increase of knowledge among ordinary men and women.

The organization of government within the democratic tradition was not the only cause of improvement. But without that

organization, the application of science and the spread of knowledge would have been less possible. This is proved by the fact that, even after science has been applied to public needs, and popular education had been spread widely in some countries, other countries still suffered from mediæval diseases and famines ; and the escape from mediæval conditions of living for the majority occurred only where the influence of ordinary folk upon the action of those in control of government could be felt. In Great Britain, France, the smaller West European States, in some German municipalities and in the United States and British Dominions, epidemics and famines are prevented more successfully than elsewhere—that is to say, under democracy.

The prevention of epidemic disease by the action of democratic government during the nineteenth century is an old story ; and no one is interested in dangers from which he has already escaped. Indeed, if he feels safe, he is the more inclined to curse his rescuer. The fellow has such a commonplace appearance ! There is no

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“glory” in the battle against disease or ignorance. To the sound of bugles and drums we march to the digging of trenches for war, but not to the digging of drains. And everyone will admit that there is nothing romantic about sewers or a piped water supply. But the results? The results are—our noble selves! But for the public health organization of the democratic tradition, most of us who are over fifty would by now be dead; and all of us would have been more weakened by the diseases we would have survived. That may be a disadvantage for the younger generation, who now wait for our jobs and our possessions; but on the whole it seems to be an advantage if any community is less obsessed by death and disease than our forefathers were in the Middle Ages. Those who have smaller incomes, under a democratic system of government, are not therefore diseased or devitalized, as they used to be in earlier times. The diseased and crippled beggars, who used to be seen at the doors of mediæval churches, are no longer among us. Better food and the application

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of science to the cure of disease made the new situation possible ; but the art of government promoted the use of both. And even where the more ostentatious activities of government in capitals were controlled by kings or ruling castes, as in Germany and Austria before 1914, in municipalities the beginnings of democratic government improved health for all.

The institutions by which this was secured will be discussed later. But here the effect of the new system must be noted : for to say that health was improved may seem to be of little importance. In fact, a new type of men and women was brought into existence and therefore a new kind of community whose members were more equal in bodily and mental capacities. Most of the change was the result of " local " government—the organization of the daily relations of neighbours : and traditionally this is still regarded as somewhat commonplace. But the closer contacts in factories and city areas, due to the new industrial system and the increased facility for commerce, had increased the dangers

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of disease and devitalization a century ago. The town areas were under the control of a few of the wealthier sort : and no one then knew that disease could be prevented by the provision of public services. But the obvious evils of the new situation aroused enough interest and criticism to lead to the invention of new institutions for public health and new methods of preventing disease. And the result, which was not intended, has been that the average expectation of life at birth has been raised from about 34 to about 59 years in less than half a century ; and the general ability to see and hear and feel has been greatly increased.

In the second place, the organization of education and some educational methods have been improved under democracy. After the extension of the franchise in the early nineteenth century, schools were supplied by public authorities for the great majority of the population in democratic countries. Ordinary folk desired more knowledge, as their unaided effort in the early nineteenth century indicated ; and it was found convenient, largely for industrial

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reasons, by those in control of economic power to employ more educated workers. But whatever the reasons, in countries of the democratic tradition the proportion of illiterates decreased and the habits and customs of the majority became more civilized. Methods of teaching improved under the combined effects of experts under public authority and public discussion. And now for the first time in history and only in countries of the democratic tradition, the parents of the present generation have all been to school. The old schooling was defective and the present system is inadequate ; but it would be fantastic to suppose that the social situation which is the result of general education is not incalculably better than that of the pre-democratic tradition.

Finally, under the democratic tradition, conditions of work have been improved partly by law, partly by the spontaneous organization of wage-earners, using rights given by law. At this point it is useful to distinguish between industrialism—the necessary methods of production in the

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modern world, and "capitalism" or the control of those methods by owners of capital and their agents. There are dangers in industrialism because of the massing of great numbers of workers in factories and in certain neighbourhoods ; but the new system of production had obvious advantages for all—such as the cheapening of food and services, security of supply, and the increase of the kinds of available goods. So much for industrialism ; but to capitalism it is due that the advantages of the new system were not equally shared by all. Indeed, its introduction gave exceptional advantages to a few who were capable of seizing any chance that offered, to acquire wealth for themselves. It was generally believed that everyone would derive benefit from the activities which allowed great wealth to the few ; and the new system of production merely gave opportunities to new kinds of activity—for trade instead of land-cultivation ; and therefore new kinds of men. There was nothing new in the idea of a community in which the great majority had only just enough. But the

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evils of the factory system, especially as it affected women and children, rousing a humanitarianism which had supported the early democrats and the signs of revolt among the workers, led to legislation for controlling the activities of the "enterprising" few and to the admission of the right of manual workers to organize Trade Unions and other societies for mutual assistance and protection. Even the power of the capital-owners in the new industry was not strong enough to resist the increase of freedom for manual workers and wage-earners.

It is argued by some few critics of democracy that all these improvements in the lives of ordinary folk were only gilt upon their chains. Social reform is regarded by these critics as objectionable in so far as it makes the majority less revolutionary. It is an exceedingly bad argument ; but perhaps its meaning should be discussed. It assumes that the worse a situation becomes, the better it will be for a radical transformation. But this is bad psychology. Starving and diseased folk do not become more energetic and intelligent, but less so.

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Better food makes men and women more and not less inclined to work for what they desire. And in practice, even if force and not persuasion is to be used, health is a better basis than disease even for revolution ; for the diseases and ignorance of the poor in mediæval conditions enslaved them more completely than any laws. But there is a more impolite reply to those who criticize the results of social reform, to the effect that they seem to desire power for themselves more than happiness for ordinary folk. Impatience at reforms of detail and the desire to destroy " the system " may be in some cases praiseworthy ; but in other cases they are signs of the ambition to rule, among those who are not good at persuading others. The desire to rule at all costs may be unconscious and therefore not criminal. It occurs in all forms and variety ; but in the democratic tradition those who discuss public policy are always on guard against the danger from their own ambition. They always fear to forget the actual betterment of the lives of common folk, in devising some new scheme or

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perfecting some administrative machine. The democratic tradition has indeed suffered from the impatience of its advocates ; but it has always supported the actual improvement, in specific details, of the lives of ordinary men, women and children ; and these improvements have made the whole community, in every democratic country, more vigorous and intelligent. The achievements of democracy in health, education and industrial organization are therefore not obstacles to progress but opportunities for more radical transformation of society.

CHAPTER IV

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

I

WHAT has already been done and what may yet be done depends in part upon the institutions which have been used and may still be used. Democracy as an ideal has given rise to certain new institutions which are regarded as typical of democracy in practice ; and these institutions have attracted more attention than the purposes for which they were devised, largely because practical politics and the art of government are more concerned with the question *how* to do what is required than with what is required. The ideal is reasonably believed to be more attractive if it can be proved to be realizable : and so the efforts to reach a society of equals, whose rights depend upon the consent of others and not upon the force of each, have not required a constant discussion of the

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end in view. That end has been assumed to be generally agreed upon, while the institutions by which it may be reached have been developed. It is no longer safe to suppose that a society of equals, not controlled by force, is generally preferred ; but clearly unless the development of such a society is desired, the methods used in the democratic tradition cannot be understood. The institutions of democracy will be described and discussed here, therefore, on the assumption that equality and consent are desirable, as the purpose of government.

The institutions traditionally associated with democracy are voting for representatives, open discussion of public policy by opponents organized in parties, and ministers responsible to an elected Assembly or an elected President, controlling the administration. The institutions of any kind of government have two chief functions to perform : one is the maintenance of existing law ; the other is the changing of the law. Every system of government maintains and changes law both by per-

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suasion and by force ; but the proportion between the amount of force and of persuasion differs in different systems. The democratic system tends to the elimination of all force, except in constraint of sub-human types ; but even a democratic system inherits some practices from earlier kinds of government, and no government, however democratic, can avoid all use of force.

The institutions for maintaining the established law under a democracy are more flexible, more amenable to criticism and more dependent upon persuasion than those of other systems of government. But it is in the institutions for changing law that democracy is most clearly distinguishable from its rivals. Early forms of government did not provide for change, because the historical sense was lacking ; and ancient laws were believed to be eternal. But now we know that change in methods of government is necessary, because of the inevitable natural changes in climate, the fertility of land, population and the relation between the generations : and so what

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Benthamites called "the principle of continuous legislation" was discovered. A community is always in need of adjustment to new situations, both because of new progressive forces in it and because of incidental evils. Revolution is the name for a violent, sudden and far-reaching change : and some propose revolution as a policy. But history seems to indicate that all revolution is accidental or unintended and therefore cannot be planned. In any case, the practical method of change in the democratic tradition is the use of institutions for gradual change by public discussion, voting and continuous criticism of public policy. For this kind of change the institutional means are Parliaments and other such Assemblies and the use of these legislative institutions is characteristic of democracy in practice. The working of these institutions may now be examined, in order to discover how far they fulfil their functions. They are not eternal and absolute : they are experiments in directing normal human habits and customs.

The most obvious sign of democracy in

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any community is *the vote*. In the early nineteenth century the chief political issue was the right to vote ; and at the end of the century women were granted the vote in many countries, on the same principle as that which had led to earlier extensions of the franchise. In France and certain other countries which claim to be “ democratic,” women have not yet any right to vote ; but adult suffrage for both sexes is now generally regarded as the only true political democracy. Citizens are supposed to think of public affairs and to make decisions by voting on certain issues in public policy ; and this is held to distinguish a citizen from a subject. The actual voting is clearly less important, as Tocqueville showed, than the discussion which precedes the vote ; for this discussion defines policy, illuminates the situation and the forces available for dealing with it, and should make all citizens more willing to live in peace with those who disagree with them. It follows that a vote taken in a dictatorship, without preliminary discussion of opposing views and without free criticism of authori-

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ties, is not at all the same as a vote in a democracy. Votes under dictatorships are in no sense democratic. They are only cheers for whatever the Government proposes, which do not at all imply any understanding of the proposal. The vote, then, in a democracy is an expression of an opinion, right or wrong, wise or foolish, following upon free discussion. Public discussion between those of opposing opinions is assumed to have given the vote its quality of intelligent consent. Voting is not the only duty of citizenship and it may not be the chief duty ; but it is one of the duties of a citizen in a democracy to discuss and express an opinion upon public policy.

Voting occurs in election of representatives and in the making of decisions by representative assemblies. So far as election of representatives is concerned, the right to vote was originally claimed, in the early nineteenth century, as a means of sharing political power with certain privileged classes or groups. It was assumed that the " interests " of any person were

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best promoted by his electing a representative to an Assembly. In the Middle Ages, the kings of England, as it was said in the first chapter, raised money from subjects by a process gradually developed into the modern parliamentary system. When a claim was made for funds the subject expressed his point of view through representatives, and eventually the choice of these representatives came to depend upon local lords or wealthy men who used the representative system as a means of controlling public policy. It was natural, therefore, for reformers at the end of the eighteenth century to believe that the vote for a representative was a means of sharing powers. The right to vote, which had been inherited or bought in earlier times, was granted in many countries, after about 1830, as a privilege of certain social classes, primarily men, not women, holding real property. There was much talk of "the people" and "the sovereign people," but the only persons who were "the people" politically, throughout most of the nineteenth century, even in democratic coun-

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tries, were a small number of male property-owners. They were supposed to have "a stake in the country"; but others—women, for example, or manual workers—presumably had no such stake; although many women had children, and manual workers were expected to serve in war. So fantastic is political mythology!

By contrast with absolute monarchy, however, or with privileged oligarchy under nobles and clergy, the limited franchise of the early nineteenth century was called "democracy." And indeed, as it was noted above, the ancient city-states of the Greek-Roman civilization had been called "democracies," when power was held by a considerable number of male householders, controlling women and a slave population. But it was found impossible, under the social conditions of the nineteenth century, to resist the claims to a share in political power, put forward by manual workers and by women. And so the present form of democracy with adult suffrage was established in certain countries. The countries which do not yet allow the right to vote to

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women are in general those with an authoritarian social tradition as in Japan, or those in which the Roman Catholic religion is strong.

The vote, under a democratic system, for the election of members of a representative Assembly, is by *secret ballot*. The voter thus escapes intimidation. And in the organization for counting votes under democracy, a fundamental distinction appears between the system of government and the Government of the day. If the Government of the day, that is to say, the particular persons in control, whose actions are to be judged by the voter, has power over the counting of votes, no confidence can exist among voters as to the results published. Therefore there must be some institution of government which carries on the administration independently of the policy of this or that political group in control at the moment. Hence the need for a civil service, whose members are not removable solely at the will of the Government of the day. The aim in the organization of voting is to arrive at the unforced

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expression of the desires or “ will ” or “ opinion ” of the citizens.

The expression of public opinion is sometimes supposed to require, in the election of representatives, some method of *proportional representation*. It is said that, if the representative Assembly for legislation and the control of policy is to “ reflect ” the character of opinion in the whole community, each considerable body of voters should be represented in the Assembly. In this theory, the Assembly is regarded as a sort of miniature copy of the community in all its shades of opinion. The proportion of votes of different groups in the Assembly would then be the same as the proportion of votes in the whole community, either national or local. Political devices based upon abstract theory, however, are exceedingly dangerous ; for all abstract theory depends upon assumptions ; and some of the assumptions are not consciously present to the theorist. The plan of counting all the voters as separate units and adding those of one colour in one district to those who seem to be of the same

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colour in another district may be a mistake. It is known, for example, that " Liberals " in England are not exactly like " Liberals " in Rumania : and even within one State, local and personal controversy, not political principle, sometimes determines the character of the parties in a constituency. Again, is an Assembly desirable which includes as many different opinions as there are different opinions in the whole community ? Even the advocates of the extreme plan for proportional representation do not propose that *every* group should be represented. There are some which, in any system, " do not count." The only practical question, therefore, is which groups are to count at all in the representative Assembly : and in practice the answer depends upon what the Assembly is supposed to do. The democratic principle allows, as we have said above, for free discussion of all views, but not necessarily in the Assembly. In the Assembly, Congress or Parliament, decisions on public policy have to be made ; and anything which makes decision less positive or clear

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is likely to affect injuriously the art of government. This is not a justification for the tyranny of a majority. In the art of government, skill consists in obtaining as much agreement as possible ; but it also implies definite and determined action by those responsible, even if such action is likely to offend certain groups. No system of government, however democratic, can provide that everyone should have his own way. It may be necessary to revise the areas of constituencies or the particular way in which elections are carried on in different countries ; but the leading idea of the advocates of proportional representation, the reduplication of varieties of opinion in the legislative Assembly, where it has been adopted in practice, has not improved democratic government. Minorities have many other ways of making their influence felt, apart from representation in an Assembly. The test of any reform proposed should be the effect it would have upon action ; and although it may be dangerous to say, with Lord Beaconsfield, that “ England is not governed by logic,

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but by Parliament," nevertheless there is a logic of practical affairs, which subordinates differences of opinion when public action should be taken.

II

The organization of voting and of the control of the representative Assembly under the democratic system requires the spontaneous association of citizens in various *political parties*. Parties are older than democracy ; and even under democracy parties inherit some of the habits of cliques or coteries under absolute monarchy or other forms of government. Some of the defects of party organization and party " politics " are not due to democracy at all, but to the nature of the " caucus " or the small sect in control of followers. But a political party under a democratic system involves a party " office " with officials, a programme and some influential personalities ; and all these may be dangerous in the pursuit of the democratic ideal. A party which is weak in one of these three essentials, however, is without hope of power.

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Every party consists of a small nucleus of persons who are active in public affairs, and a variable following of ordinary folk who "belong," more or less indefinitely, as they may belong to a church or a club. Each party tends to express the views of some group having a special interest or financial advantage in view. In some countries, as in the United States, parties are hardly distinguishable in policy : in others, as in France, they are associations of small groups of professional politicians, with the subtlest distinctions of outlook or policy dividing them. But in all countries of the democratic tradition parties assist in bringing out differences of opinion and experience with regard to public policy ; and when one party or group of parties succeeds in persuading a majority of citizens to adopt its view, the other parties accept its control of government. This is so familiar to British and American readers that we fail to recognize both how new the system is and how many subtleties of habit and custom are required to make the system operate successfully. It is not a system

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which can be established suddenly. It implies a habit of discussing public policy among those who disagree. It implies an atmosphere of social stability in which the use of personal violence is at least unusual, if not impossible. And it implies a very general understanding of the use of reasoning in the discovery of new ways of doing what is required. Authoritarian religion and uncriticized traditional customs do not provide a suitable background for democratic discussion between those who belong to different parties. Rigid distinctions between social classes also may interfere with friendly discussion between those of opposite views. But in some countries the social habits and customs favour open discussion with those of an opposite view ; and in those countries political parties have promoted social improvement.

Party politics, nevertheless, everywhere has a bad name. The critics of democracy often assert that " national " interests or the interests of " the community " are sacrificed in party politics ; and some politicians, even in the democratic system,

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pride themselves on being " independent." It is clearly possible to have too much of a good thing. Even devotion to " the nation " has led to evil deeds : and devotion to God has sometimes been the ground for cruel persecution. Clearly also some adherents of a political party may be irrational, blind or selfish. Also the parties of to-day have developed under the influence of the nineteenth-century belief that the common good was a collection of separate goods, shared by competing interests ; and in such a situation each party tends to work for one interest or group or class, on the assumption that other interests are sufficiently defended by other parties. Thus " the balance of interests " comes to mean a competition between opponents ; and the metaphors of warfare are imported into political controversy. Indeed, each voter is appealed to, on that assumption, as likely to gain individually from this or that proposal ; and some politicians seem to believe that they are more likely to be elected the more loot they promise to their supporters.

A party, however, need not be a herd of

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pigs at the public trough. It may express a policy intended for the good of the whole community, just as a voter may support some measure not for his own gain, but for a common good, shared with others. There are many different possible views of what the common good is. The divergence of views between parties may be based, therefore, not upon competing interests, but upon different points of view, even if all are looking at the same object or working for the same purpose. The democratic tradition has been connected, as it has been shown above, with individualism and the balance of competing interests. But these are no more essential to democracy than the Greek word by which it is known. What is essential is the discussion of different and even opposing views, as a means of discovering the right action : and that discussion is promoted by political parties. All efforts to abolish parties are attempts at giving control to one party or another, by destroying its critics and opponents. But parties which aim at the common good of the whole community,

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even if that good is differently conceived, are essential to public discussion and therefore to popular control of government. They operate outside and within the representative Assembly.

III

Representative Assemblies were originally means of resisting or limiting the powers of the Executive. Government has generally in the past been regarded as a danger to the governed : for government in the past has been mainly the control over communities exercised by a few men for their own advantage. And even to-day the great majority of men and women regard government as the power over them or their neighbours, of a mysterious " They " called " the Government." The Government is in fact a small group of persons who, by some means or other, have control of the key positions which give influence over others. But after the experiments of the nineteenth century, " the Government " in most democratic countries has been made a part of the Legislative Assembly. The

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great exception is in the United States where the executive is entirely outside the Congress ; while Congress is assumed to be a sort of watch-dog and limiting force set over against " the Government." But in all democracies the old suspicion of " the Government " survives.

The representative Assembly, in the democratic system, watches Cabinet Ministers, questions and criticizes them. In France, the Chamber of Deputies usually adopts an attitude of suspicion towards any Government. And in the old theory, called " the division of the Powers," it seems to be implied that liberty depends upon setting one man to do a job and another to prevent him doing it. Hence a certain irritation in the relations between representative Assemblies and responsible ministers. And yet it is essential to democracy that " the Government " shall be answerable to representatives of the citizens and that representatives should allow " the Government " full power to do its work. The democratic system attempts to combine in the same system of government,

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free criticism of authority and clear decision as well as resolute action by those in authority.

The chief function of the representative Assembly is legislation—that is to say, the passing of new laws. The alternative to democracy, in this function of government, is promulgation of laws by the Executive, without public discussion. But it is also an advantage under democracy that the kind of new laws passed should change in accordance with any widespread change of attitude among the citizens. Thus the process of changing ministers and majorities in the elected Assembly provides an alternative method to revolution, for meeting social changes. The laws passed in democratic Assemblies are first discussed in draft, as Bills or “*Projets de loi*,” by committees of the Assembly or by the whole body. The drafts may be changed under criticism. In the earlier forms of government new laws were few and simple and therefore, in the earlier theory of democracy, any member of the Assembly could propose a new law. But now, in practice,

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the Executive proposes all important new laws, except under the American system. An important change has occurred in the character of law since democracy has begun—for new laws now generally concern either the establishment of public services or general rules according to which all citizens desire to act. Thus law, in the old sense of prohibition with penalties attached, is less important nowadays ; and the conception of supreme authority or of “ sanctions ” is less prominent. The basic rights, however, of the community are still maintained by criminal law and punishment, which has gradually become more humane under the influence of democracy.

Membership of the ancient institution, the House of Commons, in England and in the predemocratic Congress of the United States, has come to depend upon the choice of a general body of voters, which now includes all sane adults ; and therefore these institutions now operate under new influences. They have in fact been changed more radically than their traditional forms of procedure would indicate. But none

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of the existing Assemblies was organized after the establishment of adult suffrage and after the development of the new functions of government, in health and education, except in the new states created after the Great War, such as Czechoslovakia. The legislative Assemblies of representatives under democracy, therefore, to-day are in most cases ancient institutions having old customs surviving between a radically new voting population and equally new functions of government.

Survivals of earlier forms of non-representative Assembly exist even in countries controlled by democratic institutions ; and the most important of such survivals to-day is the British House of Lords. Its history is part of the record of progress. It has performed important functions in the past ; but it is in no sense a part of the democratic system of government. Similarly the monarchy, in some of the smaller European countries and in Great Britain, is a pre-democratic survival ; but the democratic tradition, in its purest form in France and America, clearly implies Republicanism.

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That is to say, in a democracy the institution expressing the unity of the whole people is an elective office. There are disadvantages in that system ; but it is habit and not those disadvantages which probably secures the continuance of monarchy in some countries. And clearly the important point of principle is not whether the " chief Executive " is elected by popular vote but whether in fact the person who holds that office does so by the choice of the elected Assembly and under its continuous control. In so far as the Assembly controls, a Constitutional Monarchy may be useful even within a democratic system. The adaptation of ancient institutions, like the use of an ancient language, has certain emotional advantages, not to be despised in practical politics. Such adaptation is more generally understood than the establishment of entirely new functions and forms, as it is sometimes better to use an old word in a new sense than to invent a new word. The practical issue is the nature of the executive in government.

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IV

We may now look at the action of the Executive under a democratic system. In the British tradition "the Crown" has always been the final or supreme embodiment of executive authority. The Crown is not the King ; but clearly the King is the chief element or component of that power which is called the Crown. In some aspects the Crown seems to be the name for the powers of the Commonwealth as a whole. But these constitutional questions do not arise except in crises ; for normally the work of government in the British tradition is carried on by a Civil Service, the King's servants, and a committee of political leaders, the Cabinet. The history of the Cabinet and the Civil Service is as illuminating as the history of Parliament for the understanding of the art of government ; because Parliament was originally, and still is mainly, a sort of brake or steering-wheel, but not the actual engine which moves the car. The "machinery" of government is mainly the Executive and

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the Administration. It has always been so ; but historians are only now beginning to study these elements in government. For some generations we have been living under an almost mediæval fear of the Executive, as a tyrant to be controlled ; and now that the secret of government is coming out, some lawyers in England have become very angry at what they call " bureaucracy " or " the new despotism." The delegated power to legislate in minor matters, necessary under modern conditions and conferred by Parliament upon ministers, has been the subject of public enquiry.¹ Similarly in the United States, the Executive is not loved. As government there has been more under the influence of conscious plan and less an unconscious growth than in England, the actual powers of the Executive were laid down in the Constitution ; and those who designed the system were greatly influenced by a certain misunderstanding of the British system. It seemed to them essential to

¹ See Report of Committee on Ministers' Powers. Cmd. 4060. 1932.

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“ balance ” the power of the Executive by other powers. However, even under a written Constitution, daily practice gradually transforms the system of government : and the Executive, now at last developing a permanent Civil Service, is in practice as supreme as it is in Great Britain—supreme, that is to say, not with regard to the direction to be followed, but over the forces which actually move the State forward in its daily work.

In France, recent controversies have brought into prominence the same field of controversy between the Executive and the Representative Assembly. The French President is less powerful than the American ; and the Cabinet is not completely at the mercy of the President in France as it is in America. But in general terms the same tendency towards concentration of power in the Executive has been at work in all democratic countries. This has been greatly assisted by the development of the Civil Service. Indeed the history of the Civil Service is one of the most important aspects of the history of democracy. Even

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in the Middle Ages in England, a Civil Service, nominally personal servants of the King, preserved a sense of national interests, in spite of the fact that the higher posts were often given as rewards to followers of any person or group with political influence. Since the 1870's, however, competitive examination for entry and parliamentary control have established a very high sense of service of a common good in the Civil Service. In all democracies, the new services which the State has undertaken, as it will be shown later, have increased the importance of the services of peace, by contrast with the service in the armed forces. And the art of government to-day consists, in great part, of the daily acts of officials in departments or ministries, who are not subject to the ordinary influences of political controversy but are continually engaged in work for the common good under different politicians, as Governments change. The skill of the Civil Service reinforces the power of the Executive.

If actual practice, therefore, and not

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theory is to be the evidence of the character of democratic government, it is not indecision or lack of supreme effectual authority with which it can be charged. Indeed, from some points of view, there is a more effectual authority in the Executive in a democracy than in a dictatorship. Appearances are sometimes deceptive. Orders are issued by dictators which seem to be like army orders by a commander-in-chief ; but the very refusal of the right to criticize is a confession of the weakness of the dictator's authority. A continuous flow of official " propaganda " has to reinforce and explain the dictator's order ; whereas in the democratic system, criticism having preceded decision and being always possible afterwards, the Executive is normally obeyed with intelligence by the great majority of citizens. The respect for authority is not really, although it is seemingly, greater in an army than in a company of free men working for a common purpose. But whatever the general contrast between dictatorship and democracy with respect to the authority of the Executive, clearly

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in a democracy decisions are taken daily and orders issued. Government is a continuous series of acts, not an occasional episode.

A part of the daily work of government is the application of law to doubtful situations : and this is done by a judicature or *the Courts*. All systems of government include law-courts ; but as the art of government has improved, the law-courts have been more and more independent of the will or caprice of those in actual control of government at any moment. The courts even under kingship have provided some security against arbitrary acts of the king or his officials. It has been agreed generally that there is a body of moral rights which is more or less embodied in " law," which is independent of the desires or opinions of those in power. Thus what the Germans call the *Rechtstaat* or " State based upon Right " may exist even outside the democratic tradition. Also, before democratic principles, in our sense, were generally expressed in institutions even in the English tradition, the so-called " separ-

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ation of the Powers " led to the practice of making judges independent of the Government of the day. It is better to speak not of separation but of a " sharing " of the powers of government ; and in that sense the Courts have a share both in carrying out the law and in a form of interpretation which has the effect of making new statements of the law. On the other hand, the Executive and the legislative Assembly, under a democracy, cannot remove a judge without due forms already laid down nor command the decision of a Court. Also the acts of the Executive in all democratic systems can be judged in Court ; and in the American system the Supreme Court may even enforce certain of its judgments against the laws passed by Congress. The details are discussed elsewhere. Here the essential principle is important that " civil liberty " and " the rule of law " are maintained in democracy through the courts.

V

The daily acts in the art of government may be classified as, first, police and

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“ defence ” ; secondly, control or direction of production ; and, thirdly, social development. These are functions of all modern government, although, until the middle of the last century, government was hardly concerned with the system of production and did not organize education or health. The extension of the art of government, beyond the mere keeping of order and the “ defence ” of supposed national rights, took place at the same time as the extension of the franchise and the withdrawal of some privileges of the traditional ruling caste. This extension itself, therefore, may be connected with democracy. Many other causes besides the increase of the number of voters and the improved control by public opinion over government may have led to the new functions of the State ; but certainly the increased effectiveness of the influence of common folk was one among the causes of the change in the character of government. Even Dictatorships, therefore, which are primitive in other ways, adopt the results of democracy in organizing health services and education. The modern State is

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entirely different from that known to Plato and Aristotle and even that known to Hegel and Herbert Spencer. A plain account of the daily acts of government in any modern country to-day would wholly astonish ancient philosophers. But the theory of the State usually taught in universities to-day is still based upon an analysis of the situation which is no longer adequate.

In order to understand the working of democratic government, one should watch the Minister and his officials in any Department making decisions, issuing instructions and interviewing or being interviewed by "experts" or representatives of different interests. The older functions of government continue; but even they have changed their character. Owing to the increase of democratic sentiment, the army is not now raised by private gentlemen who hire soldiers and make up regiments of their own. The press-gang also has disappeared; and the men who serve in the armed forces do so either under a general law of conscription or by voluntary choice under control of the representative Assem-

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bly. Officers cannot now buy commissions. In the police forces for keeping order, less attention is paid to the catching of criminals and more to the prevention of crimes and the direction of traffic. The law-courts are considerably less prejudiced against the poor or the ill-educated than they were even fifty years ago. Among the best lawyers and in the Law Schools of France and the United States there is a general recognition of the "social" background implied in all law and of the "social" functions of law.

In the economic functions of modern government there is the old provision against fraud in business or adulteration of foods. There is still a struggle of one or other group of "interests" to obtain funds or other assistance from the State, especially in the case of foreign trade ; but this use of government was known even in the sixteenth century. It is not peculiar to democracy. A new section of economic functions performed by government includes the administration of factory laws

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and regulations, and the provision of insurance against unemployment. Labour organizations are now as closely in touch with administrative offices as financiers and traders were in the old days : and under a democratic system these labour organizations are voluntary groups of persons with views of their own, not creations of the Government. The art of government is concerned to-day with the prevention of strikes and lock-outs, not by command but through conciliation or arbitration between the parties, and government is continually promoting the better organization of production, both as regards material conditions and as to the treatment of the workers in industry and agriculture.

Finally, the third section of functions of modern government deals with social development through improving health and knowledge. Since the 1850's government has dealt with sanitation and water-supply and other means of preventing disease. In these services government is thoroughly democratic, since the advantage aimed at is not for any special class or caste but for

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the whole community and equally for all members of it. The drains and water supplied for the use of the poor are just as good as those supplied to the rich. An increasing part of the medical services is now organized by the State for the benefit of all citizens alike ; and the whole health-system is under continuous criticism, local or national, from specialists or from voluntary groups of persons interested in this aspect of the common good. Similarly in the organization of education the modern State provides that all future citizens shall have at least a minimum of the knowledge required for large-scale contact in society, through reading and writing. As a direct result of the democratic tradition, education is no longer the privilege of a caste or social class. It is organized in schools and, in some countries, through universities under the supervision of the State and the control of the representative Assembly : and therefore, theoretically at least, under democracy education is supposed to give not a fixed orthodoxy but capacity to criticize and to decide for one's self.

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The institutions of government under the democratic system form one whole. They are the results of experiment in different directions, either for the destruction of certain evils or for the release of new forces in the life of the community. But some of these institutions are merely adaptations of older devices ; and some are defective. The principle or purpose, however, which gave rise to their present use, is the only valid ground for criticizing them. A Parliament or Congress, for example, may need reform ; but it cannot reasonably be attacked because it does not establish heaven on earth or enable everyone to have his own way. Representative Assemblies and the other institutions of democracy were never intended for that. A generation new to political devices—given new power by a recent and rapid increase in the franchise and new feelings towards government because government now enters so intimately into daily life—may expect too much ; and it would be foolish to promise, for any form of democracy, the universal satisfaction which simpler minds seek in dictator-

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ship. But discontent with tradition may be a good basis for sane reform, if the same course is followed which has already been proved to give good results.

CHAPTER V

DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

I

THE democratic tradition developed during the nineteenth century together with a new "nationalism." The "scale" on which most political thinking proceeded was defined by the assumed limits to a "nation"; and so Hegel made a theory of "the State" by careful consideration of specimens in isolation, finally idealizing one specimen—the Prussian; and Herbert Spencer made another theory, based mainly upon another single specimen—the English. Each wrote about "the State" in its essence; and clearly there was something of this essence in any State. But the problems which concerned them chiefly, because of the limits to their experience, were problems of internal structure—that is to say, mainly the relation of the system of government to its own citizens and sub-

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jects. One would imagine, in reading the old political theorists, that the citizen or subject in any State had no relations of importance to any other State or to the citizens of any other State than his own. In practice, however, occasional war and continuous trade involved relations across State-frontiers. Treaties and the diplomatic system kept States in contact ; but the effect of these upon the nature of " the State " was not understood by the theorists. The current political controversy concerned mainly the activities of government within the frontiers of any State.

It is true that the first advocates of democracy in the French Revolution aimed at transforming not only the relation of the people to their system of government, but also the relation between States. They recognized that war was an evil closely connected with the ambition of princes ; and declarations were made against any war of aggression. But no institution was established as an alternative to war ; and no new policy was clearly conceived, to take the place of war as a " defence of rights."

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Similarly in America, the United States, founded on a democratic basis, were assumed not to be concerned with war. Washington's famous advice against "entangling alliances" was intended as advice to avoid occasions of war, and is so understood by most people in America to-day. Indeed, thousands of those who sought freedom from European Governments by emigration to the United States felt that one of the greatest evils from which they had escaped was war. Hence the popular belief in America that war is a bad habit of the Old World. The whole movement towards democracy implied a repudiation of the oldest traditional institution in government—war and the preparation for war. But it was a purely negative attitude. There was no real understanding of the relation between States, nor of any alternative to the old anarchy. In popular sentiment the democratic tradition was unconsciously limited by the frontiers of each State. The claim for political rights and powers was made within the assumed limits of a "nation," which was vaguely

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felt to unite people of the same speech and customs. The art of government had developed most recently by centralization in a capital city ; and it was the power exercised there which was the prize sought by the radical reformers. Therefore the democratic tradition was “ nationalist.” Those who were called “ the people ” were also called “ the nation ” : and the “ public opinion ” which was supposed to control a Government, was the sentiment of its own subjects—certainly not that of any foreigners. This general sentiment did not imply that alternatives were considered and rejected : for in fact, apart from a few jurists and students of “ international ” law, no consideration at all was given to the question of the responsibility of any Government towards other Governments or towards the citizens and subjects of other States. In the controversies about foreign trade, for example, both protectionists and free-traders seem to have assumed that each Government could disregard the effect of its policy upon the citizens of other States. It was never urged as an objection

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against a trade policy that it would injure foreigners.

Again, democratic theory and practice were closely connected with "individualism." A person was considered primarily as "a man." The rights of "man," as man, had no reference to differences of race, creed, tradition or place of dwelling. And the result was that democracy seemed to have no bearing upon differences of nationality. The Englishman and the Frenchman were simply men: the new ideal of the eighteenth-century revolutions seemed to imply disregarding such differences as English and French. And so, when Karl Marx made current a new distinction, not that of nationality, a distinction between "men" in reference to the sources of their incomes, this new distinction seemed to the "liberal" tradition to be even worse than that of nationality. But the institutions of government, organized in "States," were in fact based upon territorial, linguistic and customary distinctions between men. And these institutions, reformed so far as each separate "democracy" was concerned,

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continued to operate as between States in much the same way under democracy as before.

Within the State under democracy, as it has been shown above, the public discussion of policy and the control of the Executive by elected Assemblies had been secured. But the traditional institutions connecting States, chiefly the diplomatic system of ambassadors and Foreign Ministers, had been hardly affected. The majority of States before 1914 were monarchies. Foreign policy was regarded as a prerogative of kings. Ambassadors were accredited to "Courts," not to popular Assemblies nor to peoples. And as more than half the world was still at the stage in the art of government of the European Renaissance, it is not astonishing that the new "democracies" followed the fashion in their foreign relationships. Thus even under democracy some treaties were signed, committing the whole people, without any reference to the elected Assembly. And Foreign Ministers adopted the Renaissance excuse "reasons of State" or "the public

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interest " as a ground for refusing to give information or discuss foreign policy.

The American Constitution gave some powers to the Senate over treaties, in an attempt to " democratize " foreign policy : and in the French system a special commission of the elected Chambers was created to control foreign policy. But in practice the Presidents of Republics found that their relations with foreign Governments were largely dominated by the old system of ministers of kings.

Among the traditional institutions of government were the armed forces. Democracy was concerned with these, first to secure that they should be made subservient to the " Civil Power " ; that is, to the ordinary elected and responsible Executive. The traditions of the armed forces in most European countries are those of feudalism. Loyalty is still commonly conceived as the service of a person. But it proved possible in some States, partly by personification of the State or Nation, to transfer loyalty to " the people " and their ministers. Democracy was, however, also

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concerned with the armed forces as instruments of policy. They were organized for what came to be called "defence": and therefore democratic Governments took over with the armed forces the traditional attitude towards foreign States expressed in the word "defence." Foreigners were regarded as naturally untrustworthy, dangerous, and generally beyond the reach of reasoning. And besides, democratic systems of government grew up in a world generally still controlled by monarchs: and monarchs might very well threaten the system which seemed to some to involve displacing them. Democracy was, therefore, naturally on the defensive.

The result was that Democracies, as well as other Governments, in the past century increased their armaments, adopted the methods of war as an instrument for enforcing claims; and in the European version of democracy, the State adopted conscription or compulsory service in the armed forces for all men. Indeed, the ancient conception survived, even under democracy, that the supreme duty of citizens was service in war.

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Inevitably, even if unintentionally, the development of democratic government affected the relations between States. In practice ordinary folk, most of whom are manual workers and the great majority of whom have to work for a living, are more concerned about food and clothing than about glory or prestige. Both glory and prestige are the mythological purposes of a leisured upper class whose members are not compelled to work for a living. They refer to that romantic glamour which surrounds traditional customs whose original meaning is forgotten. They are the essential elements in the reputation of leaders in war ; and although the attitude which implies admiration for prestige gained by victory can be widely spread among a large population, if reference is made to the " national " honour or prestige, the democratic system of government is not naturally useful for preparing the mind for war. Hence the frequent suggestion during the nineteenth century that democracy implied " peace."

The political reformers and the early advocates of free trade believed that peace

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would be the natural result of government based upon a popular franchise ; but peace at that time seems generally to have meant only a friendly attitude of one Government or people towards another. It was a matter of sentiment or good intentions, not a problem of institutions and policy. And therefore, although the democratic tradition favoured " peace," the old institutions continued to flourish.

Again, although there were no new institutions of government to fill the empty space in the relations between nations or peoples, traders and other adventurers carried the products and the influence of Europe into Asia and Africa. And Governments were compelled to follow—chiefly the democratic Governments under which the new industrialism first flourished. Thus Great Britain, France and Holland—all " Democracies," before the end of the nineteenth century—were committed to the ruling of subject peoples. The new Imperialism took up " the white man's burden." Rule over subject peoples was based, even under democratic Govern-

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ments, upon power and not upon the free consent of the governed. But democratic principles had never been considered at all, as affecting the relation between peoples ; and Colonial or Imperial government was therefore based upon the old despotism, benevolent or otherwise. The establishment of Empires, Protectorates, spheres of influence and other such situations reinforced the traditional rivalry of States which could pretend to be equally sovereign. A veiled contest for control over subject areas passed into open war at certain times ; but in fact no principle was available which could provide any alternative method of adjustment between the claims of rival Governments.

The relations between peoples had never been considered as one of the problems of democracy ; and the advanced thinkers seem to have argued either for isolation or for an atomism of separate Governments. That is anarchy ; and its inevitable result is war.

. II

The experience of the Great War, however, brought home to a large number of

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ordinary men and women the need for some permanent organization to prevent war. In more scientific terms, "peace" ceased to be merely a matter of sentiment and became a problem of political organization. The art of government was seen to need extension so as to cover the relation between States. In Western States at any rate, the majority had come to think of the State as a public service, not as a mythological person to whom the citizen might be sacrificed. Men asked what war was supposed to be *for* ; and they were not satisfied with "victory" or "glory." Therefore during the Great War, they were appealed to, on the ground that conditions would be better afterwards. The world was to be "fit for heroes" or "safe for democracy," owing to the experience of war. But it was fairly obvious, that if these were the results of war, it would be better and easier to obtain them by some other means ; for in any case, war was generally believed to be bad. The common tendency among ordinary men and women to look for tangible benefits from the art of government increased

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the desire to have done with war. As a means for this end, small groups in some democratic countries before the Great War ended had proposed a League of Nations ; and eventually President Wilson took up the idea. The result was the establishment, under the Peace Treaties, of the present League of Nations—an association of States whose Governments are bound to work together for the maintenance of peace and the pursuit of certain common interests in health, transport, social reform and the other new functions of the art of government, developed in the nineteenth century. The League, the International Labour Organization of the League and the International Court associated with it now provide institutions within which the “ sentiment ” of peace can become a policy. Peace, therefore, now means something new, never possible before.

The League system and the obligations of the Covenant of the League have been fully described elsewhere. For our purpose here it is enough to show the relation

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between this system and democracy. The system itself is simply the latest result, in the international sphere, of the development of the democratic tradition. Some such system was natural and inevitable as soon as the State came under the control of the majority of ordinary folk ; but the experience of the Great War provided the special incentive to creating new political institutions to cover the relations between States.

III

In the first place, the League system is the natural result of the development of democracy in the art of government ; and secondly, the League system cannot operate at all unless at least the chief States-members are democracies. As for the effects of democracy upon the relations between Governments or between people organized in separate States, the tendency in a democratic tradition to discount the glories and to question the usefulness of war has been already noted. But it is not simply a matter of attitude or sentiment among common folk.

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The whole character of government in a democracy changes the traditional activities of the State by putting more weight upon service and less upon authority or power. The organization of power or military force has been associated with the simpler forms of government under monarchs. Despotisms do not condescend to devote much attention to water supply or drainage. Command and obedience are the characteristics for pre-democratic society. And the traditional conceptions of law as a command or even as a prohibition with "sanctions" attached, of sovereignty and authority, can all be useful in war. But for the better organization of health or education, force and sovereignty are of no importance; and in proportion as the State is an organization of public services for the normal advancement of civilized life, so the use of force by the State becomes less important. Therefore democracy, favouring social services, tends to make of the State less an armed camp or band of brigands and more of an association for co-operation among citizens for a common good.

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Again, in the modern world, in which large quantities of goods cross frontiers, in which travel is easy and communication universal, no community can maintain a high standard of living, either materially or intellectually, unless its Government assists and is assisted by other Governments pursuing the same object. Frenchmen, for example, are secured from epidemic disease and given more opportunities for varied enjoyments and the use of new ideas, if the Governments which desire such things for the British or the Germans also assist Frenchmen through their own Government. Not sentiment, nor altruism but ordinary common sense is the basis for a policy which brings Governments into co-operation. Thus the common sense which has developed within any State the democratic system of government, naturally drives that State to amicable rather than warlike activities externally. In general, the State which has to perform functions for the sake of its own citizens in organizing health, education, trade and finance, cannot perform those functions unless it

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co-operates with other States. But this co-operation needs to be organized : and co-operation between States, so organized, is genuine peace. Thus peace is an institution and a policy, not a sentiment. It is an entirely new factor in the art of government. It is not a mere avoidance of war, but a positive State-system, connecting many States.

Again, democracy naturally tends to meet difficulties by discussion rather than violence within the State. Even drastic changes of rights in law are made under democracy by discussion between those who are opposed. Thus both the maintenance of existing rights and the recognition of new rights are provided for within the democratic tradition without resort to violence of the parties concerned ; and force is not admitted to be justifiably used, except by public authority, which is not a party to any dispute, and in order to prevent any such party using force on his own behalf. In the democratic system, even if the State, uses force, its authority is not based upon force. It follows naturally

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that the State in its relation to other States has, according to democratic principle, no right to use force in its own behalf to resist infringements of its rights or to support its own judgment of its claims. Even in the case of self-defence, the citizen in a democracy has no right to use force except, as it were, on behalf of the police or as a public agent and certainly no right to decide for himself, without afterwards proving it to a judge, that the situation involved risk to his life. Thus the State in relation to other States ought, according to democratic principle, to maintain its claims by discussion and not violence ; and it ought to use force only for the defence of the State-system and not for its own advantage. But this is a denial of the traditional " right " of the State to use war as an instrument of national policy. War is such an ancient institution, maintained by so many false sentiments and romantic lies as well as by so many personal and financial interests, that a mere denial of the old " right " to go to war is not likely to reduce the danger of future war. But so far as

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democracy is concerned, clearly war is opposed by it, not only by sentiment but also on principle. War and democracy are irreconcilable opposites.

It follows that peace, in the democratic tradition, requires institutions for organizing upon a permanent basis the relation between States. There must be some actual means by which States can work together for the common ends of all modern government—for example, health, education and social service generally: and there must be some established system for dealing with disputes between Governments by discussion, compromise or conciliation instead of war. A system of government in any modern State which has not developed, for its external or foreign relations, these institutions and the policies natural to them, is in that degree not a fully developed democratic system. In other words, the actual League system, or something very like it, is natural to the system of government called democratic. If the League did not exist, we should have to invent it in order to attain the purposes for which modern

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government exists. Without the League system we could obtain the loot derived from war and even such honour and prestige as primitive minds still find in war. That is to say, we could live in a mediæval or barbaric world. We could even have peace of a kind, without the League, if "peace" means only an interval between wars. But real peace and civilized life under modern conditions are quite impossible without an organized State-system : and of this the existing League is the first sign. No system of government is genuinely "democratic" unless it is connected with other systems of government by a political organization providing those services which are at least partly provided by the League. All government, therefore, which aims at democratic ideals must be government organized so as to cross the frontiers of States.

IV

On the other hand, no such system as the League can operate unless at least the chief States constituting the system are Demo-

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cracies. It is assumed that the only other practicable choice is some form of dictatorship : for we may discount the likelihood that the divine right of kings will reappear as a basis of government anywhere. Dictatorship is, in practice, the alternative to democracy ; and the foreign or external relations of a State under a dictatorship are here in question. In such a State, information from abroad and the opinions of foreign critics of its Government's policy are either censored or altogether suppressed. International voluntary societies are restricted, if indeed membership in them is not actually forbidden to the subjects of a dictatorship. Therefore no growth of a common opinion shared with those outside the dictatorship is likely. Secondly, in practice if not in theory, dictatorships prepare their subjects for war. Peace is not natural to dictatorship ; for even if a dictator desires what he calls " peace," preparation for war is a very useful discipline for other purposes. Thirdly, as we have shown above, every dictatorship resting on the force of the party in control

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tends to regard force as a natural and even desirable instrument of policy and therefore tends towards war. A philosophy of fatalism, concerning the inevitable or natural survival of certain nations or classes, supports the unconscious desire for conflict.

Fascist dictatorships are plainly favourable to war. The praise of barbaric or primitive virtues, the appeal to the excitement of deadly combat and other such ornaments of the speeches of Fascist dictators may be only rhetoric. But the sort of discipline most admired under that régime is the discipline of barracks and trenches. The most notorious dictator, Mussolini, has actually said that "war brings out what is noblest in man." And all speeches in favour of peace by Fascists can be interpreted as meaning that a suitable interval is required for preparation for war. But even Communism, which is theoretically against war, has not a natural tendency towards real peace; for the governmental control of all information and opinion even under a dictatorship of the Left, segregates the people ruled by such

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a Government. Criticism coming from abroad is not allowed to be known to the subjects of a communist dictatorship : and the foreign policy of that dictatorship, on which war and peace may depend, is presented dogmatically to those who will have to fight for it, if war comes. This tends to prepare the mind of a communist society for war against foreigners.

A democratic Government, on the other hand, allows foreign opinion to reach its citizens. It permits the association of its citizens with those of the same outlook in other States. It promotes discussion of its own foreign policy and opposition to it. In practice, the advocacy of peace and even of the extreme doctrine of non-resistance occurs under democracy and not elsewhere. Thus a general atmosphere unfavourable to war is prepared by democratic habits and customs. But a democratic Government is favourable to real peace also for the more tangible reason that its chief aims are those which can be obtained only by international organization. The aims of a democratic Government are the common

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satisfactions desired by ordinary men and women—not only health and food, but also serenity of mind and security of expectation. These are the aims of the League system, which therefore can operate only if a sufficient number of the States which support it are democratic. A League of Fascist or Communist States is possible ; but not for the purposes for which the existing League is designed. Only democratic Governments could make the existing League system operate as it was designed to do.

All this, however, by no means implies that any actual Government to-day is wholehearted in its promotion of organized peace. We are half-way between barbarism and civilization in all international affairs : and even those who see the possibility of civilization are aware of the danger of a relapse into barbarism by an appeal to force, when the interests of States are opposed. All States, not least the democratic States, are heavily armed ; and although the institutions of peace have been established in a tentative form, the

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policy of peace is hardly understood even by responsible Statesmen. In democratic Assemblies or Parliaments the ignorance of international issues among the great majority of members of all Parties leaves these issues to be decided by appeals to traditional prejudices. And at elections the voters are all opposed to war, but very few of them are in the least interested in any change of institutions or policy for the organization of peace. But to feel that war is evil and to cheer peace, is as useless as it was a century ago to feel that cholera was a disease and ought to be abolished. Such emotion is quite futile, until it inspires a definite plan of action. But plans of action for the elimination of war and the organization of genuine peace, like plans for drainage and water-supply, involve disturbing some ancient and honourable institutions. The reduction of armaments, for example, or the control of the trade in arms, would involve that no nation can have "the greatest navy" or "the greatest army," nor even the traditional armed forces and their influence abroad.

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And that the majority cannot face. They will do anything for peace, except what is necessary. Thus the principles of democracy, of discussion and agreement in contrast with the force of the claimant as a basis for rights, are not in practice applied to the relation between States. Even the institutions of peace—the League, for example—already brought into existence and maintained by the democratic tradition, are not used as they should be.

V

The institutions and policy of constructive peace are natural to democracy ; but it remains to be seen what effects would follow the application of democratic principles to government in the world at present, as regards that part of it which covers the relationship between peoples of different race or nationality. Let it be assumed that the purpose of government is that all men and women should be in some way agents of whatever good they share ; that no exceptional ability justifies taking all responsibility for government out of the

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hands of common folk,—still less can it excuse the accumulation of special benefits for the exceptional. It should also be assumed that the institutions by which this purpose is served, involve open discussion of opposing views, criticism of authorities and the removal of those in control at the will of the majority. But on these assumptions, it must not be supposed that democracy involves cosmopolitanism or world-government, in the sense in which such government would replace “national” government. The first step is clearly to make “national” government responsible for its foreign, as it is for its domestic, policy. And this involves international or inter-state institutions of a “federal” kind. It implies that the “sovereignty” of a people is not an absolute power outside or above law ; but a responsibility for action affecting other peoples.

Thus in the relation of highly organized to simpler communities—or what is called “colonial” government, the Mandate principle, already embodied in the League system, would have to be extended. Each

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“ democratic ” Government in control of simpler communities would be in some way responsible to a larger body of opinion than that of its own citizens. The “ sacred trust,” which has been said to be involved, is a duty to the whole community of peoples. The purpose is the liquidation of the “ trust ” by the success of the trustee in making his own position of trust no longer necessary. Similarly, the Governments with power over natural resources in undeveloped areas should be responsible to others besides their own citizens, for the use of those resources. The principles of democracy involve, therefore, both institutions and policy in this almost unexplored field. They provide an alternative to a brutish struggle.

In the relations of equally well-organized communities, all policies should be the result of negotiation, conciliation or, where these fail, of judicial decision by an established court. This would remove all excuse for war. No claim to rights would be recognized in public law which was enforced by the will of one of the claimants.

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Discussion and decision in inter-State matters would depend upon the same kinds of method as between citizens in any modern State. The Governments of the world would not, therefore, be subordinate to any superior World Government ; but would maintain jointly a judicial authority to whose decision they would bow.

In case of a refusal of any Government to submit to this rule of law, force or pressure of various kinds, as under the Covenant of the League, would be used by the other Governments. But presumably, if there had been a clear recognition by each Government of the duty of submission to a Court and if criticism of each by its own citizens—that is to say, democracy, survived, no Government could repudiate its obligations without causing a revolution among its own citizens. It is quite impossible to organize an international “ police force,” as it is called, except on the assumption that the States of the world admit the supremacy of the rule of law : and if they have gone so far, a “ police force ” would not be necessary as against a democratic

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Government. Non-democratic Governments are not likely to bind themselves to submission of all their claims to a superior Court, for the reasons given above, which show the tendency of all Dictatorship towards war.

In a world organized for co-operation between democratic Governments, the functions of government would not be performed only by territorial units. There would be "functional" or specialist international institutions for health, transport, education, labour organization, finance and other such subjects. The "Powers" of that new order would not necessarily be States. They might be Commissions of specialists controlled by organizations among all nations, for the special purpose which they serve. Already in the International Labour Organization, Conventions are based upon arguments drafted by representatives of other organizations, of employers and workers—not sovereign States. And the Central Banks, which are not in every case State-controlled, perform an international function through the Bank of

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International Settlements. Also diplomacy is tending to include contacts between Ministries of Finance and Commerce and not only Foreign Offices. In proportion, therefore, as the purposes of democratic government are more generally accepted, policy will disregard such issues as have usually in the past caused war.

Finally, constructive peace which is co-operation for civilized life and not merely an avoidance of war, would involve restoring to honour the normal work of ordinary men and women—the making of goods and the rendering of services for normal life. The traditional exaltation of warriors in each State would cease; and a more civilized attitude would be adopted towards the work of railwaymen, textile workers or clerks in banks on whose daily labour depends the success of a progressive policy for increasing the length of human life and improving its quality. The ancient rhetoric about dying for one's country, which covered the real purpose of warriors in killing for one's country, would be displaced by a less barbaric enthusiasm.

CHAPTER VI

DEMOCRACY AND INDUSTRY

I

SOME advance in the art of government has been made ; and there is good hope for the future. In spite of criticism and of alternative systems of government, democracy has served its purposes during the past century and is the natural basis for a progressive policy to-day. But that does not imply a complete satisfaction with things as they are—either in existing political and economic institutions or in the way they are used. All we have so far said implies only that the general principle of democracy is correct—that public policy should arise out of free discussion and that further discussion and criticism among the whole body of citizens should make changes in policy possible. But no one who seriously advocates democracy can be satisfied with the institutions we have inherited

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from the days in which the first experiments in modern democracy were made. In practice, existing institutions for election and public discussion and decision do not sufficiently permit the will or opinion of ordinary men and women to influence policy ; and worse still, these institutions do not promote the formation of a will or opinion which is worthy of exerting influence. Thus the two quite distinct problems of democratic government to-day are, first, how to make the will of the general body of citizens operative and, secondly, how to form a " will " or opinion which is good or correct. Existing institutions should, therefore, be criticized by reference to their utility in expressing the will of the people and in improving the character of that will.

As for expressing the will of the citizens, democracy certainly implies that laws shall be made either directly by general vote (referendum) or indirectly by representatives. Therefore, it is argued, the power over legislation of any body such as the British House of Lords is contrary to

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democratic principle. If we are serious in our maintenance of democracy, such bodies must either be abolished or kept for advisory or ceremonial purposes only. It is quite ridiculous to argue that a body of persons who have inherited or been given rights over legislation can be useful in expressing a public will or opinion. Such opinion may be wrong or bad ; but if it is not operative, the system of government is oligarchic, not democratic. A venerable institution may be worth preserving ; but if it is so preserved as to affect the character of a system of government, it is dishonest to assert or to suppose that the question of its functions is not fundamental. Second Chambers, elected in some way or other, may conceivably be democratic. They may not fundamentally violate the principle of democratic government. But a non-elected body with power, in practice, over legislation and general policy, makes real democracy quite impossible. Indeed, the British House of Lords continues to exist because of a disinclination in Great Britain to " make trouble " when

an issue can be avoided : but its present powers, even since the curtailment of powers by the Parliament Act of 1911, are clearly irreconcilable with democratic principles. Democracy may be held to be objectionable ; but if it is not, then non-elected legislative Chambers should be abolished.

Another reform proposed is the election of representatives of functions or economic occupational groups and not of localities. This proposal appears to have been " swallowed whole " by those who have established the " Corporative State " in Italy. The result which is aimed at is described in books on Fascism.¹ The proposal is derived from French Syndicalism ; and it was originally argued that, in the modern world, a person's occupation was of more importance than his dwelling-place. But apart from the fact that the State is necessarily territorial in its police services, health services and other functions, it is very doubtful whether occupational associations are

¹ See Major J. S. Barnes, *Fascism* in the " Home University Library."

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the best basis for the decision as to public policy. It is not admitted, in this book, that democracy is merely a balance of competing interests. And if it is not that, but a means of expressing a common will for a common good to be established and shared by all, then one's neighbours and not distant members of the same trade organization, provide the best means of learning how to work together for a tangible common good. In spite of large-scale organization, nothing can take the place of personal contact in some face-to-face community. The territorial constituency, therefore, as a basis for elections to an Assembly is the best. The proper place for the functional or occupational association is either in Advisory or Expert Councils or in some general Congress, apart from the controlling and supreme Parliament or Assembly.

This does not, however, mean that the existing Parliaments are altogether satisfactory. Detailed knowledge of industry is needed for some legislation : continuous special information is necessary for direct-

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ing foreign policy ; methods of education are changing so radically that the traditional politician makes quite irrelevant suggestions. For all such reasons, reform of the methods of discussion and decision in Parliament, Congress or Assembly is necessary. And besides, the amount and variety of modern legislation is ground enough for Devolution or Regionalism, with respect to some legislative functions ; but all these are reforms of detail, which cannot be discussed here. It is enough if the general democratic principle is understood, that the will of the citizens shall be effectual.

II

The severest criticism, however, of democratic institutions to-day is based upon the influence of the economic system in preventing the will of the citizens from controlling government. It is generally admitted that a few rich may control the formation of public opinion, through newspapers or by other means. But here the institutions which make this possible and their reform must be discussed. Of these

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institutions the most important is private property in industrial capital. It is said that political democracy cannot operate until private property in the means of production is abolished—that is to say, until Socialism is established instead of Capitalism : and, in a more limited criticism, it is said that democratic institutions should involve the control by public bodies over the chief uses of productive capital. It is to be noted that private property in hats or shoes is not in dispute. What is under discussion is the claim to receive payment of interest or profit for the use of land, machinery or power in production, which leads to control of those who use them.

In its most general form, the criticism of actual democratic institutions, on the ground that they do not in fact give power to the majority, points to the large proportion of rich industrial property-owners in representative Assemblies and of their relatives in the departments of government. But a still more biting argument is that men and women who depend for their livelihood upon owners of industrial capital

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and their agents, are unable to express their opinions freely and may be deprived of the means of arriving at a correct opinion. We must not be deceived by forms. A man or woman who is hard-driven in making a bare livelihood, with little leisure for thought and continually in dread of losing the work which is the only source of income, is not the "equal and free" citizen of the textbooks, even if voting is free from direct intimidation. Democracy, therefore, it is argued, must make the next step towards equality and freedom by destroying the power of the owners of capital ; and this not simply in order to make political freedom a reality but also to attain the democratic ideal—a community of men and women who can use their own capacities for their own common benefit.

In order to understand the issue, as it stands to-day in Western Europe and America, it is necessary to recall the recent history of the organization of production and consumption. All civilized life depends upon some form of organized production and on the use of products ; and in

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most civilizations the methods of exchange for goods and services has important social effects. Currency is now generally controlled by Governments ; credit is partly so controlled but very little ; but the actual methods of producing goods and rendering services to-day have arisen much more recently than the currency and credit system.

A century ago large-scale production by power-machinery introduced the industrial system into a society already dominated by the very ancient unconscious assumptions of slave-civilization. Modifications of the traditional dependence of manual workers upon landowners and other property-owners had been introduced by Christianity during the Middle Ages and by the humanitarianism of the eighteenth-century enlightenment. There was a very widespread feeling that men were equal, in some sense, " in the eyes of God," but not even the Churches supposed that men were equal in the eyes of men. The best life was believed to be that in accordance with " the position in which God had

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placed one " ; and most men and women were clearly placed in an inferior position. In practice, when the new industry required man-power or skill, great numbers of men, women and children were available, to be used as means of production. These were the " lower orders " or the " working classes." They had no means of obtaining a livelihood except by labour at the machines owned by others.

To interpret this situation as a conscious and deliberate exploitation of the manual workers would be a misunderstanding. There was no defiance of admitted rights by the owners of capital. They and their " hands " both assumed the existence of separate orders or classes : that is to say, they acted, perhaps unconsciously, upon the assumptions of all slave-civilizations. It appeared to be quite natural, not to say providential, that some were " called upon " to work for a bare livelihood and others " blessed " with surplus property and leisure. And this is still assumed to be the nature of things, in large circles of those who have control of political and economic

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power. The history of the use of labour in civilization proves that the situation in the new industry was no more natural or inevitable than any economic situation had ever been. It was the result of assumptions and habits which had been the basis of the slave-civilization of Greece and Rome. It was partly modified by the sentiments of later ages. But it was in no sense the result of "free competition" or "free enterprise": nor was the distribution of power as between property-owners and manual workers the "reward of abstinence," or the result of applying tests of ability. A mythology in the language of a new economic science was devised to explain the dominance of the few over the great majority in all communities; and almost everyone, the victims as well as the beneficiaries, believed in that mythology.

But the language of democracy in politics and the new sense of human dignity, derived from the French Revolution, combined with a greater sensitiveness to human suffering, began to undermine the assumptions upon which the traditional social

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divisions rested. Clearly if men are equal and free by nature or even in political rights, there is something wrong with an economic system which is dependent upon inequality and the restriction of the majority to continuous labour. It was at any rate peculiar that production could be carried on only under conditions which denied leisure to the great majority and maintained a "leisured class" which was entirely useless for production. Democracy, as a working system of social relations and still more as an ideal, was plainly opposed to the current practice of the new industrialism. It was nonsense to call men "equal," while the majority had only just enough for bare existence and a few had more than they could use. This was emphatically stated by many writers in the early days of industrialism; and finally with greatest effect by Karl Marx.

But the political reformers of the nineteenth century never faced this issue. They usually assumed that, if every man had a vote, the balance of economic inequality was of no importance. The ma-

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jority, who were "workers," would vote in their own interests and all would be well—especially if they believed that their own interests implied leaving the economic system as it was. The economists persuaded everyone that the system was in the nature of things,—the result of eternal "laws" and not of bad habits of domination over others nor of obsolete beliefs in a fixed social order. Therefore political action affecting the economic system was generally confined to the reduction of very obvious suffering and the easing of those incidental "frictions" which the new methods of production had caused. Factory Acts and the later methods for Industrial Conciliation, insurance against unemployment and workmen's compensation, had indeed a tendency to make economic relations more "democratic," but they were generally conceived as concessions or adjustments within the established system of authority and subordination, not as means of undermining the system itself. The more important political influence upon industry, in the direction of "demo-

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cracy," was the legal and political recognition of the right of workers to combine in Trade Unions. This implied a revolutionary change in the basic relationship of worker and employer ; for the worker was no longer a mere instrument if he could make his own policy. But even the legal right of voluntary associations is not yet assumed generally in the United States, where " democracy " is still individualistic.

III

The legal recognition of trade union rights in other countries was only an admission of a new situation, which was already in existence. The most powerful influence tending towards democracy in industry was not political. It was the spontaneous association of manual workers in Trade Unions, for their own protection and the advancement of their own interests.¹ This is real democracy. It arose at the beginning of the industrial era, out of the feeling of comradeship and the desire for mutual assistance among men and

¹ See Webb, *Industrial Democracy*.

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women who had practical experience of the way in which production was carried on. It was quite clear to them that, however benevolent those in control might be, wages would be decreased and hours lengthened whenever profits could be increased by such methods. For a time the expert economists proved, to their own satisfaction, that there was a "fund" out of which wages came and that no more could be obtained in wages than was actually at the moment given: they also "proved" that trade unionism could not raise wages. However, trade unionism increased; and wages rose and conditions in the well-organized trades were improved. The manual workers at any rate believed, in spite of established economists, that trade unionism had done it.

The way in which Trade Unions arose gave experience of practical democracy to the manual workers. Many mistakes were made. And the fact that small face-to-face groups of workers were the first springs of the new stream, led to rivalry and sometimes opposition between different kinds of

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manual workers. The history of trade unionism in all countries is not the application of an abstract principle, but the tentative experiment in this or that direction to escape from the traditional subordination of manual workers. Equality of status, action in common for a common good, free criticism of authority and control of agents and representatives—that is to say, democracy in practice, was learnt by millions in the trade union movement. And the range of sympathy across divisions of craft, industry, religion and nationality, as well as the scale of organization, were continually increased.

Again, in the middle of the nineteenth century in Great Britain and Western Europe, the Consumers' Co-operative movement came into existence. Those with small incomes, chiefly manual workers, organized for themselves the supply of some commodities in such a way as to reduce the price and escape the burden of profits earned by private traders. The principle was the joint use of capital in large-scale purchase and the management of sales. The result was a widespread ex-

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perience of the management of small and later on of vast trading enterprises, shared by manual workers and their agents. Here too there was experience of democracy.

But the growth of trade unionism and of Consumers' Co-operatives did not necessarily involve any clear contrast with the traditional economic system. The "labour" movement, so far as these were concerned, was only a corrective within the established order. The next step was due to the recognition among a few intellectuals, within and outside the wage-earning groups, of a conflict of principle between the established economic system and the conception of a society of equals. This led to the formation of Socialist Parties, seeking representation in Parliament or other representative Assemblies. In some cases these parties were called "Social Democratic": and in Great Britain the new party was the Labour Party. In their attitude towards democracy they all agreed that the political rights so far secured were inadequate; but there was and is still controversy among their members, some of

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whom believe that the process so far followed can be used to secure also economic equality, while others believe that the issue is so fundamental that only violent revolution is likely to destroy the dominance of the private owners of capital. The former are now called Socialists and the latter Communists. The Communist view has been discussed above. It implies criticism not merely of existing democratic institutions but of democratic principles. It is the appeal to force or civil war, on the ground that "the other fellow began it."

But here we are concerned only with the criticism of democratic institutions. The question is whether those now in existence can be improved so as to promote economic equality. That they need reform is generally believed, because they have in practice allowed private owners of capital to delay or to prevent the extension of the franchise, education for manual workers, the improvement of conditions in factories, pensions and compensation for accidents for workers, legal minimum wages, shorter hours, and other reforms which have been

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obtained only after desperate efforts. Again, the misuse and waste of labour and of invested capital by private controllers of production have been made more obvious by several recent frauds. And "lobbying" for grants or "loot" is highly organized by all great capitalist companies, among which the arms-traders are the most reckless. Some reform of the methods of government, therefore, is necessary, if the will of common folk is to prevail. And among such reforms are cheaper elections, fuller publicity for all information available on public policy, graded taxation, the restriction of inheritance, the public use of radio and cinema to counteract the effects of the Press. But all these reforms are possible only when there is a much more general desire for equality in a community ; and the increase of that desire depends, as it will be shown in the next chapter, upon the system and method of education.

IV

The institutions required by a democratic society, however, are not only political ;

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nor is it only the existing form of government which needs reform. Industry is organized, in the main, in such a way as to obstruct democracy. Economic institutions, such as private property in land or machinery or material for production, are indeed partly political, in the sense that they imply legal rights. But the existing system under which the capital-owner or his agent can decide what is to be produced, whether anything is to be produced and whom he shall employ—this system is fundamentally undemocratic, not only because it interferes with free choice by voters, but also because it degrades those so employed and gives arbitrary powers to a few over the goods and services useful for all. The reform of institutions, therefore, it is argued, for the sake of the democratic ideal, involves a radical change in the system of production. The existing system is only a modification of the traditional slave-system, which causes disdain of manual work and of the ordinary services upon which civilized life depends. Such services are “slavish” only because of the arbitrary power

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over production retained by the owners of capital and their agents. Only after the removal of that arbitrary power will manual work be felt to be as ennobling and civilized as any other.

But whatever conscious reform is undertaken, allowance should be made for certain unintended but desirable "democratic" changes which have already occurred since the days of Karl Marx. Cheaper food and clothing as well as education have made the distinctions between social classes less crude. The older "classes" are changing; and the relationship of all classes is much less a clean-cut opposition of rival interests, owing to modern methods of production. Therefore the "class war," as a policy, is less likely to occur, because a war requires a clear distinction between the two sides, and in modern conditions there are too many in "no man's land" for the Marxian battle to begin. Secondly, public services in some countries organized by the Central Government or local Authorities now control large amounts of capital: for example, in Great Britain

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about two-thirds of all the large-scale capital enterprises are either publicly owned or partially controlled by public bodies. It is possible, therefore, that economic or industrial democracy will come partly by an extension of purchasing-power for products, either by deliberate "planning" and the cheapening of production, or by an increase of the amount of production under public control. New forms of enterprise, such as the Electricity Commission in Great Britain, may decrease the power of private speculators. And besides, it is clearer to great numbers even among the owners of capital that financiers and company-promoters, who have been treated as the agents of capital-owners, have powers and interests that are by no means the same as those of shareholders. In the old days the owner of capital was regarded as the enemy of the workers : but in some cases under modern conditions he may be found on the side of wage-earners against those who derive gain from financial speculation. Thus the whole economic situation is changing. The changes do indeed

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give new opportunities for private greed or personal ambition ; but some recent changes are opportunities for an advance towards democracy.

If public policy takes advantage of the tide, new powers of production, new tastes in consumption, new methods of organizing credit, may lead to greater equality and liberty for manual workers and all those with small earned incomes. The problem then is to discover such a policy. The will or opinion of the majority who are, in every country, those with small incomes, would then have freer play, both because they would feel more secure and because they would have energy and leisure to spare for public affairs. The real contrast lies between an economic system in which the majority receive only just enough to keep them alive as producers, while a few have more than enough for the arts and graces of life, and on the other hand an economic system in which all have a share in the available surplus of leisure, goods and services over and above what is needed for their work as producers. In

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this second kind of system democracy is possible ; in the former, impossible. And in so far as the existing economic system is undoubtedly more like the former than the latter, it is opposed to democratic principles and ideals. Economic equality, therefore, as a democratic ideal, does not mean that everyone should have the same rate of income, as political equality does not mean that everyone should have the same amount of influence in politics. But it does imply that no one is dependent upon any other person's profit for his livelihood and his share in the benefits of civilization. It does mean a definite break with the domination of the agents of capital-owners.

The recognition of this opposition between the traditional economic system and the conception of democracy is one of the causes of Fascism. Fascism has arisen mainly in order to prevent the application of democratic principles to the industrial system. In its economic policy Fascism is a reinforcement of the traditional system and of the assumptions inherited from slave-civilization. As soon as Fascists control

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any community women are denied political equality, Trade Unions are destroyed and all spontaneous association of manual workers prevented. In the Italian version of Fascism, the other great working-class movement, the Co-operative Societies, was also abolished and its funds confiscated. This is done in the "true interest" of the workers, which in the theory of Fascism they are not competent to recognize. It is supposed to be all for the good of the manual workers, if they are prevented from doing anything for themselves! And to show that all is indeed for the best, new Trade Unions are created by the Government under dictatorship. These are more orderly, more closely co-ordinated, more easily dominated by national pride and completely subordinated to the Government's policy: they are no more like real Trade Unions than a regiment is like a club or a prison like a school. The Fascist Trade Unions represent reaction against democracy towards the old dependence of manual workers, traditional in slave-civilizations. But the issue is, at any rate,

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clear. Equality is not an ideal under that system.

Similarly, in Communist dictatorship, whatever the theory of Communism as a workers' movement, the Trade Unions are not spontaneous associations, but creations by a small group of those in control of government. These Trade Unions also, therefore, imply a repudiation, not an acceptance of democracy. It is not our concern here to decide whether the situation would be better or worse if a different industrial policy were adopted under Communism. The one obvious fact of importance for our argument is that there are no real Trade Unions of the democratic type where workers' associations are established by anyone but themselves.

The hostility to Trade Unionism on the part of all autocratic governments is not altogether unreasonable. The unity of the nation seems to be endangered by differences of interest and policy between different groups of workers. And under Communism the tendency of local or sectional Trade Unions is felt to be subversive of a

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common policy for the whole working class. In practice some Trade Union leaders have aimed at serving the members of their own union, not only against the interests of the whole community but also against those of other workers. Some unions of skilled men have deliberately injured the unskilled and women workers. And even when there is no deliberate policy in the pursuit of sectional interests, the fact that larger issues, concerning the whole community, are not usually considered by the members of most Trade Unions makes it possible for the opponents of trade unionism to treat Trade Unions as obstacles rather than as bulwarks of democracy. Democracy, as we have argued above, cannot imply that every person should think only or mainly of his own interest. It cannot be a mere scramble between rivals. Therefore the tendency to sectionalism in Trade Union policy may be opposed to democracy.

On the other hand, the Trade Unions in the more advanced democratic societies have used amalgamation and federation, so as to combine larger groups with common

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interests : and for the past twenty or thirty years, in Great Britain and France especially, Trade Unions have shown a very high sense of responsibility for maintenance of a public good much more inclusive than their own interests. For example, the proposals of Trade Unions for the reorganization of industry and their influence in the direction of preventing war are not sectional nor " class " policy. The very fact that in modern industry more power lies with the skilled workers has given them a greater sense of responsibility to the whole community. It would be a natural development, therefore, if trade unionism, which began as small-scale democracy, should adopt a large-scale vision of policy for the advantage of all members of the community. This would be the right reply in practice to the attacks made by dictatorship—to prove that spontaneous association can promote public good, just as readily as the governmental command over workers. But this advance in Trade Union organization and policy has still to be made. When spontaneous association

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of groups within any community aims, not at sectional interest, but at a common good, then large-scale political and economic democracy is possible.

The democratic organization of industry, however, would also involve a new practice with regard to the use of goods and services. The workers in industry and agriculture are by far the majority of the consumers of most of the goods and services available. But as consumers or users this majority have, in general, only just enough to make them efficient as producers. Policy should be based upon treating them not merely as producers. Democracy in the economic system implies a redistribution of the power to use goods and services, such that each person may have some luxuries and amenities over and above his needs as a producer. Only so can the individual man or woman become more than an instrument for the advantage of others. And as we have seen above, the political democracy has led to public social services which do in fact distribute certain goods according to need beyond the need of bare existence.

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No one proposes to deny to the poor or the most subordinate "hand," the best water which the community supplies. Parks and playgrounds are not merely for the sake of future production. Similarly the leisure, which is one of the most valuable products of the new industrial system, might be distributed more equally among all.

But the crucial issue is not yet faced. The question whether any person has a right to services without rendering service is perhaps sometimes asked. The inheritance of wealth which gives a person the power to use services, even if he has never given any himself, is now severely criticized. The "leisured class," that is to say a social circle of persons who do no work at all, is now seen to be an impossibility in a democratic society, if equality is to be approached, because the leisure shared by all who have to work for a living becomes the natural basis for the consideration of public policy. But the escape from the limitations set upon the worker in industry by the needs of a traditional system of production is not the chief issue. The chief

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issue is the establishment of positive rights, based upon work done. Democracy involves not merely that all shall receive some benefits from public policy, but that all shall contribute to the maintenance of the community. The duty of service in war is sometimes said to be common to all citizens ; and honour is paid to those who serve in war. But that is a primitive form of communal service. It should be no less obvious that to run railways and to bake bread are services to the community deserving of honour, on which certain rights may depend. This conception, however, would displace the traditional conception of property-owning as a basis of rights. It would not, of course, destroy the rights of private property in personal goods ; but it would make all citizenship require some services for the common needs of the whole community. The will or opinion of the people would then be the expression of the experience of all in their maintenance of civilization. There would be no " lower " orders, for all would belong to the " working " class.

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Economic organization would have to promote this kind of equality and liberty—equality in service, although not necessarily in the value of the service, and liberty in the use of all one's capacities for social co-operation. But it is not possible here to describe in detail any of the various suggestions made nowadays for advance towards the democratic ideal in industry. It is enough to note that, first, some spontaneous organization of actual workers for influence over the policy of production would be necessary. Merely to make the workers into servants of a State instead of a private company might not secure democracy, if "the State" means the control of consumers over producers. On the other hand, it is not enough to aim at a wider distribution of personal property as the means of securing democracy, because the real problem is the large-scale organization of mass production, not the mediæval system of crafts. It is the modern world, not the mediæval, in which industrial democracy must exist: and the result of such democracy should be seen in the greater

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equality of influence among all citizens in all issues affecting public policy.

V

If it is supposed, however, that the "will" or opinion of the public is supreme, there would still be a question whether it is right or good. Democracy implies not merely that all should think but that such thinking is a means of doing what is right. How then can the second problem, the making of the right sort of "will," be solved? In the first place, the purpose of advance towards economic equality is to free the minds of the majority from the more limited forms of interest in their means of livelihood. For example, old-age pensions, workers' compensation and unemployment insurance have had important mental or "spiritual" effects. They have reduced the amount of fear and uncertainty in the community. But men and women, who are no longer obsessed with the danger of starvation, are more likely to have the right sort of "will" in reference to larger issues. Secondly, dependence

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upon public authorities and rights maintained by them, rather than upon benevolence of the few in power, creates a "will" or "opinion" which is far more personal, individual or original in its source, although it is more "social" in its content or purpose. Thus democratic institutions in industry would tend to improve the quality of the "will" to be expressed in any community.

It is fundamental, however, to the democratic ideal that freedom to think and the possibility of error are the most likely means of discovering what is good and true. The increase of economic independence among the great majority of those with low incomes would certainly give them more opportunity of making mistakes about public policy ; but it is an unwarranted assumption of superior persons that the opportunity will not also be one for new discovery in public policy. The so-called mass-mind or herd-mind is much more likely to be powerful in a slavish and oppressed society. Few men think as individuals ; but that does not involve that they

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should all think differently. If it is assumed that there is a right way and a wrong way in which public policy can be directed, the right way is more likely to be found if all are free to think about it and all are able to criticize any person who attempts to lead or to govern.

It may seem fantastic in a world organized under the control of a few financiers and agents of industrial capital-owners to imagine that the great majority could approach economic security and equality ; but it is not more fantastic than it was, in the days when a privileged aristocracy was in control, to imagine that government should depend upon the support of common folk. Or again it may seem to be unjustifiable to connect democracy with economic equality ; for those who have enough security and income from property-owning tend to believe that we have gone far enough. Democracy, for them, means what has already been achieved and the institutions which secure what they have. It does not, in their opinion, mean an ideal still to be pursued, nor institutions still to

be invented. But, as it was noted above, a political impulse cannot be suppressed when it has served the purpose of its original advocates. In a sense the political rights aimed at in the " bourgeois " Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century had their economic aspects. The owners of tools for production were then claiming the right to use these tools more fully : and therefore liberty of enterprise as against the restrictions of feudal or landed property. The right of the owner of tools to use them, however, has an entirely different meaning when " tools " are vast engines moved not by muscle but by " power," and ownership is a share in the indivisible machinery. The right of the owner is one kind of right. We are now concerned with the right of the user. Can the owner justly prevent the use of the means by which the supplies of civilized life are obtained ? The " use " of modern " tools " is partly the operation of power-supply (production) and partly the consumption of its products. Between these two, the ownership of the tools may represent some function ; but certainly it

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cannot be in exactly the same position as it was a century ago. Democracy, therefore, naturally is concerned with the use rather than the ownership of "tools." A new adjustment of rights is under discussion : and private property in industrial plant—if it survives at all—will have to fulfil social functions that it is not obliged to fulfil to-day.

But democracy implies a method of adjusting rights by other means than force. Therefore the new rights aimed at are all subordinate to the general right to use persuasion and decision of the majority as the basis of a new situation. However great the obstacle to readjustment, it does not warrant repudiation of the process by which, in the democratic tradition, any obstacle is overcome ; because we aim at a society whose members consent and are not compelled to accept the established rule. It follows that the application of democratic principles to new issues and the invention of new institutions will ultimately depend upon the strength of a democratic " spirit " or attitude, sufficiently

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powerful to operate in novel ways and sufficiently controlled to avoid any appeal to violence. To suppose that that spirit could not survive a dispute about fundamental rights, and especially property rights, is to lose faith in democracy before attempting to apply it.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT

ALL that has been called " democratic " in this book is new in the history of civilization. Both democratic institutions and democratic ideals have arisen in the midst of ancient habits and beliefs, many of which survive unnoticed until they obstruct further progress. Apart from politics and industrial practice, there are still very strong undercurrents of feeling which make the advance of democracy difficult. For example, certain forms of culture or educational training almost unconsciously resist the tendency towards equality in politics or freedom in industrial occupations. The most difficult problem for democracy, therefore, is the social " atmosphere " of the community within which democratic institutions or ideals are maintained. This " atmosphere " is expressed in manners of speech and action,

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in social distinctions, in differences of dress or occupation or place of dwelling. It affects both politics and industry and is, in turn, affected by them. The social atmosphere of any community is almost entirely the result of education. Indeed, some of the most difficult problems in modern democracy arise out of the system and methods of education which have been inherited from the pre-democratic state of society. And in all communities it is necessary, if democratic institutions are to be effectual, that a democratic social atmosphere should be established in the schools and the other educational institutions.✧

The increase of popular education was one of the first signs of democracy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The manual workers in the new industrial system felt that they needed more knowledge, just as the early Protestants had felt the need of knowing how to read the Bible, in the democratization of religion. The "charity" schools, supported by the benevolent rich for religious purposes, must be classed, therefore, with the Mechanics' Insti-

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tutes and popular educational periodicals as spontaneous forces working in the early nineteenth century towards democratic education. But the new ideal of a society, all of whose members were in some sense "educated," did not directly affect the political system until the 1860's and 1870's. The State then, in Prussia, France, England and the United States, undertook the function of providing schools for all the community. For the first time in history also, the public authorities in Western countries organized the education of all women as well as of men. This was a great step towards the creation of a society of equals. The school-system in a modern Western State, therefore, is an essential part of democratic institutions. It was intended, at any rate in the most general sense, to educate the whole community. It was to make men and women more equal at least in the opportunities for knowledge and civilized appreciation of what is good.

But whatever the intentions of the early advocates of education for all, the natural

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results must be criticized. The democratic spirit, the conception of social equality, of leisure for all, of devotion to a common good—seems hardly to be more powerful to-day in most countries than it was before general education was organized. Therefore some have said that the purpose of the new school system was merely to confirm the traditional subordination of the majority to the rich ; and others have said that, even if the purpose was democratic, the method was bad. This is not the place to describe in detail the educational system of to-day, nor to analyse all its effects. ✓ But in the first place it must not be forgotten that illiteracy has been reduced under democratic institutions. The percentage of those who cannot read or write in any language is still as high as 80 or 90 in Brazil and India. It was almost as high as that in Russia, before the dictatorship there adopted the results of the acquiescence of democracy in the school system. The percentage of illiterates in France, Great Britain, the smaller European States and the United States, excluding the South,

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that is to say under democratic government, is now very small. This is an effect of popular education which has no parallel in history.

It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that the ability of common folk to read and write frees them from local gossip and gives them power to criticize those who pretend to be leaders or experts. But the whole situation is new : and the results of what has so far been attempted in education are, no doubt, disappointing because of unnoticed defects in the actual process of education which has been used. Education, in the sense of schooling, arose in a slave-civilization. It developed in a civilization of castes and ecclesiastical dogmatism. It was originally intended to supply the needs of a small "specialist" class within the community and not the needs of ploughmen and craftsmen. The educational system, even when it was intended to cover all classes in the nineteenth century, carried with it the assumptions and the habits of an obsolete society. It preserved what it might have eradicated.

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It confirmed what it should have displaced. But that was not because "education" itself was a failure, but because the particular form of education which was used was quite unsuitable for creating that ability to criticize and that feeling for a common good secured by equals in co-operation, that are necessary to advance towards the democratic ideal. Not education, but the social atmosphere which education did not replace, is the cause of the failure of the schools to make democracy secure.

The social atmosphere which is to be observed in the manners and the moral ideals of any community are expressions of largely unconscious assumptions. Thus taking off one's hat to a lady or shaking hands as a greeting or at parting, is an expression of respect and of the social ideals of life in common, in the West. But no one thinks out what is implied in the forms of good manners. And more important than these forms are the phrases currently used without much thought, such as the classification of a community into "upper," "middle" and "lower" classes.

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In English it is also common to distinguish the "leisured" class from the "working" class, which implies an assumption fundamentally undemocratic. Class distinctions and the traditional standards of culture are not entirely due to economic differences of income, as some appear to believe: they may be due also to race, to ways of enjoyment or to religious belief. But clearly a democratic society would not have the class divisions of existing Western society as it would not have Indian caste.

The assumptions implied in traditional manners and phrases are those of earlier civilizations; and what has occurred tends to remain in the mind as if it were "the nature of things." Thus the earlier forms of civilization are taken for civilization itself; and it comes to be assumed that no civilization or culture is possible unless there is a distinction between "leisured" and "working" classes or unless an "upper" class of ladies and gentlemen sets the tone for all contacts in society. What was once true tends to be believed to be true of an entirely new situation;

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but worse still, what was once mainly a statement of facts tends to be regarded as the description of an ideal state of things and we accept almost unconsciously past habits as standards or criteria of modern civilization. ✓

But if that is so then democracy is opposed to "civilization," in the traditional sense of the word, as earlier writers have maintained. The democratic ideal implies at least a society of equals ; and no such society can exist where culture depends upon a distinction between classes as "upper" and "lower" or "leisured" and "working" : because these terms themselves imply the treatment of some members of the community as only or as mainly instruments of the culture of others. It is honest to maintain with Aristotle, Mr. Clive Bell in his *Civilization* and other earlier writers, that "civilization" requires the treatment of the majority as instruments or slaves. It is still more honest to confess that all such civilization is slave-civilization, where the majority are slaves. But it is not honest to say that any community

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is in fact " democratic," if the majority are in any sense slaves : and they certainly are in some sense slaves, if they are merely or mainly instruments of the culture of others.

Unfortunately, the word " democracy " was first connected with the régime in ancient Athens when a large number of male slave-owners held control over the women and the slaves on whom they depended for the basic services of civilization. And so even in later times communities have been called " democratic," if a large number of male voters have control over public policy, even when some other males and all women are without any share in such control. The " tone " or " atmosphere " of equality and liberty was first discovered to be good, in the small circles which secured equality and liberty among themselves and denied it to others. Athenian " democracy " was an experiment in a very restricted field, preserved for some few years on the surface of a slave-civilization. Mediæval town-democracies were also experiments in a world altogether alien to them. Even to-day, in France and other

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“ Latin ” or Catholic countries, women have no direct share, by vote, in political power ; and yet these countries are called “ democratic.” And in the United States, whose Constitution is supposed to be the quintessence of “ democracy,” in practice, the majority of negroes in the Southern States have no direct share in control of public policy. But all these examples of the survival of a non-democratic tone or atmosphere, under cover of the word “ democracy,” may be regarded as admitted failures to achieve the democratic ideal.

The more subtle survival of slave-civilization is to be found in countries such as Great Britain, where a direct share in political power is granted to all adults, men and women. The “ liberal ” tradition, on which the reforms of the nineteenth century depended, was almost entirely political. It is indeed still seriously believed by many that equality and liberty are secured for all, if each has a vote ! And it is sometimes argued that the “ working-man ” is living in a democratic system of society if he is

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free to cast a vote for anyone he chooses ! It is indeed true, as it has been argued above, that voting was a step forward. Some control was thus secured by ordinary folk over the direction of public policy. But another part of the " liberal " tradition of the nineteenth century is profoundly anti-democratic, because it preserves the assumptions of slave-civilization by a sort of trick. It assumes that the greater part of the community belong to a " lower " class and that that is in the nature of things.

Equal political rights may be only opportunities for preserving inequality in social status and function, in a community which *assumes* that culture and civilization require an " upper " class. Thus the famous " liberal " phrase—the " career open to talents "—in practice means that any individual in a " lower " class has the opportunity to leave his class and rise to a higher class. The phrase was originally intended to express that individual ability, and not family connections nor privileges, should be the basis for obtaining power or status. The phrase had no reference to distinction

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between social classes. But in practice the social classes were preserved, almost unconsciously, by offering to talented members of the lower or middle classes the status still preserved by an "upper" order. And when the most energetic among the "working" class were removed from that class and made members of a superior order, the "working" class was left more completely in the lurch. The result was a community made more securely undemocratic, by the use of an ambiguous phrase and a new custom to confirm the old social distinctions between men as "upper" and "lower." The rewards given to the "talented" in the liberal tradition were mainly economic. The members of an "upper" class had larger private incomes : and the children of poor parents naturally desired better food and clothing. Parents of the "lower" or "middle" classes were eager that their children should rise to economic security or affluence. But the chief reward to the talented was not economic : it was the admiration of other members of the community for the manners

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and customs of the superior person. And this admiration is the quite honest expression of a belief that civilization and culture is in the possession of gentlemen and ladies.

The clearest expression of this assumption is to be found in the traditional system and method of education in certain countries. Schools are means by which the community of to-day prepares the new generation for entry into the services and the enjoyments of life in community ; and by which consequently the community of to-morrow is formed. Teachers do not make social standards and ideals : they are exponents, consciously or unconsciously, of the assumptions of the community of adults in which they live. And both the system and the method of education prevailing to-day had their origin before democracy was thought of.

The system of education in some countries, for example, in England, is most obviously opposed to democracy. In England there are two distinct kinds of school, one for ladies and gentlemen, not controlled

by the State ; and the other for “ workers ” maintained chiefly by the State. From their earliest years one group of Englishmen and Englishwomen is separated from the other ; and the “ upper ” or “ richer ” group is taught to regard itself as having privileges and of course also the responsibilities connected mediævally with those privileges. The pupils at school as well as in their homes depend upon servants or menials for the ordinary services of civilized life. They and their teachers accept, almost unconsciously, the assumptions of the slave-culture of Greece and Rome. And the best results of this peculiar survival in the educational system are certainly worthy of admiration, as admiration is due to the products of ancient art. In the other schools in England—the schools controlled or partly directed by the State—the future manual and clerical “ workers ” are kept from their earliest years separate from their contemporaries of the “ upper ” class. Even their speech is different. The system was designed to give a smattering of “ clerk’s ” education to the lower orders

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and it has been very efficient in raising the general level of competence among the majority. But it has confirmed the separation of the community into two distinct social classes. Miserable and pathetic private schools for a middle class have been allowed to continue between the upper and nether world in imitation of "upper" class schools, to save the children of traders from contamination by contact with the children of the manual workers. And the society in which this educational system prevails is supposed to be "democratic"! It is clearly a society which is divided from generation to generation by its school system into separate classes, one of which is above the other.

In some countries of the democratic tradition the school-system does not divide the community. In France, for example, and in parts of the United States the children of richer and poorer parents, of merchants and of manual workers, attend the same State schools: and the result is a much more genuinely democratic society than in Great Britain. It is quite obvious,

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then, from experience and not only in theory that a single school system for all members of the community is essential for the maintenance of democracy. The reason has nothing to do with voting or other political powers and not much to do with differences of income : the reason is that only in a single school system can we escape from the moral standards and assumptions about civilized life implied in a slave-civilization. Only so can the manners and admired type of character be the same for a whole community : and therefore only so is every person equally a sharer and a maker of the established culture. ✓

But even a school system which provides on the same terms for all members of a community cannot promote democracy, if the *methods* of education continue to be traditional.* The prevailing methods of education, in France as well as in Great Britain, are the traditional methods for educating a caste in a non-democratic society. These methods are based fundamentally upon reading and writing. The French democracy, for example, is “ cleri-

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calized " by its educational methods ; and perhaps unconsciously, there too, as well as elsewhere, a subtle disdain, for manual labour is promoted by these educational methods. Schools are not supposed to teach how ploughing is done or machinery used ; and indeed few teachers would be competent for such teaching. Thus the children who are to be manual workers learn in school to despise manual work as slavish. It is assumed by the use of traditional educational methods that no one would do manual work except under compulsion—that is to say, as a slave. The latest and most fantastic version of this obsolete conception of culture is the attack upon machine-tending, by literary Utopians who have never been into a factory and cannot control a machine. We are supposed to have respect for spades and shovels, but not for steam-excavators or bottling-machines ! But this is simply a survival of the conceptions of slave-culture, which imply suspicion of what is useful. Clearly a man or woman can be enslaved by compulsory long hours at a machine ;

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but in that same way, men and women were enslaved by spades and shovels. It is mere fantasy to suppose that the simpler forms of tool were more noble. The real basis of the honour to be paid to manual work is the fact that it is a means of serving the community ; and literary methods of education which underestimate the actual work done to-day for the needs of civilized life are therefore undemocratic.

The methods for educating a whole community should be quite different from those used in educating a caste or class. But the traditional methods of education still used in schools are all based upon the requirements of a caste, either of superior persons who control others or of agents, secretaries and clerks. It follows that educational methods required for democracy must be based upon the whole life of the community in all its essential phases, that is to say, upon the normal basic occupations. This does not involve teaching children to plough or to bake bread ; but it does involve making them understand and pay honour to all such services rendered to the com-

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munity. It does involve a departure from a purely literary culture.✓ Only so can the future ploughmen and machine-drivers leave school with a democratic feeling for all honourable work and without the disdain of manual work which we have inherited from the literary culture of slave-owners : and only so will all the members of the community give equal honour to all who serve the community in any occupation.

The traditional caste division degrades the majority by accepting a low estimate of the value of their work to themselves and to others : but to substitute for these caste standards the true democratic atmosphere in society requires a new method in all education. In all the schools the new methods must use spades and needles as well as pens and paper. It must not be sentimentally romantic, but must include among its tools the most modern machinery. The aeroplane and radio can be used to teach arithmetic and geography or any other of the traditional abstractions, now called " subjects, in the curriculum." But the problems of educational method are

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discussed elsewhere. The only relevant point here is that all the methods used should have in view the creation of a community of equals, whose members share both the burdens and the benefits of civilized life.

If, however, a single system of schools and universities and even less "clerical" methods are required for producing a democratic society, it is equally necessary to give a sense of the unity of the common life through the educational system. That is to say a democratic education will be penetrated by the conception of a life in common to be lived by all. Traditional democracy has been too individualistic in its educational assumptions. It was right indeed to teach pupils that each must "go of himself,"—that spontaneity of action, imagination and thought was the most valuable result which any education could produce. This at least requires to be repeated in these days of education "to order" under dictatorships. But to "go of oneself" is not the contrary of "going well with others." ✓ The traditional demo-

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cracy underestimated the "going well with others." Its educational methods inherited the atomistic individualism of the eighteenth century. Against that doctrine or prejudice, it must now be asserted that human beings require one another—that "going together" can be learnt and that skill in social contacts, in co-operation and effectual sympathy, should be a result of education. Only so will a democracy be a living community and not a fortuitous concurrence of egoists. Only so will there be in any community a soil and an atmosphere in which the institutions of democracy, political and economic, can flourish. Thus the most difficult as well as the most important step in the improvement of democratic institutions, in the pursuit of the democratic ideal, is neither political nor economic, but educational. •

It follows finally that the traditional doctrine of the advocates of democracy—that education would save us from "mass" mentality—is in some ways right, but in other ways wrong. Education is all very well. But what kind of education? The

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traditional advocates of democracy never discussed that problem. They assumed that a little more of the old dose would prevent the election of fools and knaves as representatives and protect men and women from being deceived by a venal Press. And quite obviously they were wrong. The old education, given as it was given since the later nineteenth century, is not enough. It is defective, not because it left men and women unable to argue a case or to understand the clever people who write books, but because it did not pay honour to common work, nor give men and women skill in working together for the common good. The right education for a democracy is not one which protects against dangers but one which gives new powers. It is based not upon fear of the gullibility of common folk—a fundamentally undemocratic fear—but upon confidence in the abilities of common folk for living with their fellows more skilfully. Common folk are not “mostly fools” only to be protected from the consequences of folly by more book-learning. The great majority are

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willing to work for common goods in amity with others, if the institutions they have inherited will allow them. ✓

The traditional advocate of democracy is easily frightened by bogies—the mass mind, the average man, the trade unionist. When these words are used with condescension they are names for what is unknown. The scholar and the superior person looks out of his window and never meets the ordinary folk in the streets who bring him food and provide him with light. They are, it must be confessed, not scholars and by no means superior—indeed, quite plainly, “common.” But what appears to the superior person to be a “mass” is made up of many different kinds of men and women, where mental “sets” are even more various than their occupations. They, and not the rational animals of the textbooks, are the material and the mind of all society. And even the superior person is, as to 99 per cent. of him, a “common man”; because he eats and sleeps and dies. Therefore the conception that the advance towards a democratic society of

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equals is the creation of a mass of indistinguishable units is an illusion of superior persons. The basis of character or conduct in all men is common : but no man is so much the average man as to have no personality or distinctiveness of his own. Even under present conditions the majority of men and women who work too long and receive too little, differ greatly among themselves ; and in a society of equals, these differences would be still more various. It is not democracy, but the obstructions to democracy, especially in the industrial system, that force thousands of men and women into the same moulds. It is not work at machines nor specialization in the making of parts which destroys individuality, but the confinement of some far too long at such work, for a bare livelihood without adequate leisure and enjoyment. It is not modern conditions but the surviving habits of a slave-civilization which prevent some from understanding what a society of equals would be. It is not the industrial system of production nor the use of cheap goods which prevents a democratic civilization

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arising : it is the control of those who own the instruments of production and treat the rest as only instruments. If public authority were extended to abolish this kind of treatment, industrial production would be the basis of a new civilization.✓

Life in community, however, which should be made more skilful by education is not confined to the intercourse of neighbours. The democratic spirit of co-operation with equals in a common task should be the effect of education, also, in the relation between different nations or races. Thus the schools would assist in inspiring a new patriotism, not that of drums and guns, of "defence" and victory, but that of service and closer intercourse with other nations. Patriotism is love of one's country. But the reasons for love are many, some of them bad. A love of one's country may be genuine and powerful if one's country is conceived, not as having enemies, but as a company of men and women who are ready to help wherever help is needed. And in order to establish this 'civilized patriotism in place of the traditional bluster,

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history should be rewritten as a record of the common effort of all peoples and the chief work to be done by the new generation should be felt to be—not “defence” from dangers but closer co-operation with foreign peoples.

In actual experience this closer co-operation has produced the modern arts and modern science. It has caused the rapid advance in the applications of science to industry and the cure of disease. Music, the plastic arts and literature are all international, in so far as they depend upon the contact between those who have genius in many different lands. The sciences have advanced largely because American and English scientists have been able to use the results arrived at by Germans, Frenchmen, Italians and others. And more ordinary trade has improved the food and clothing of all, largely because it has been a trade across frontiers. The democratic spirit requires a recognition of all this.

Finally, it is not an accident that democratic institutions have arisen during the same years as those in which science was

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most strikingly applied to the service of daily needs. The increase of the franchise is contemporary, date by date, with the invention of the telegraph, the telephone and the radio. The more men and women had a share in public power, the easier communication became between all of them, at all distances. Similarly, the age of democracy has been the age of improved transport, by railway, steamship, motor-car and aeroplane. With the tendency towards social equality in sentiment and in political rights went the cheapening of production. As it has been well said—“Mass production is essentially production *for* the masses.” Thus the democratic movement is part of a tendency in human activities far more widespread than politics or industry would indicate. An entirely new kind of life in community is coming into existence ; and democracy, both as a name for actual institutions and as an ideal, is “natural” to that kind of life. The Spirit of the Age is the democratic spirit.

Such a statement seems to be disproved by the establishment and advocacy of

dictatorship. The most gravely advertised institutions of government to-day are those of old-fashioned tyranny, with new robes and new language. The statement that democracy is in the air may also seem to be disproved by the reaction towards persecution of political opponents and mediæval dogmatism.

But the momentary success of more primitive minds cannot prevent the advance of thought. To criticize authority and to discuss new truth and new forms of beauty and goodness is natural to men. Science and art are not accidents. But democracy is only the application in public affairs of the same principles—criticism of authority and discovery of new truth. Therefore even the dogmatism of dictatorships is likely to be undermined by the tendency to think among its advocates. The interpretations of dogma will vary, even if the text remains the same : and the suppression of opponents will once again be found impossible, as it was in the early days of toleration, when the opponents are more equal in number and ability. Thus the

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democratic spirit which rests upon a confidence in common folk is even now strong enough to inspire hope for the future. And it needs only to be stronger still in order to overcome the survival or restoration of barbarism.

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