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DEMOCRACY AT THE CROSSWAYS

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DEMOCRACY AT THE CROSSWAYS

A STUDY IN POLITICS AND HISTORY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GREAT BRITAIN

BY

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"THE MAIN CURRENTS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY, 1815-1915," ETC. ETC.

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TO MY WIFE

DOROTHEA MABEL SPENCER

MY DEAR COMPANION AND FAITHFUL FELLOW-WORKER

DURING FOURTEEN HAPPY YEARS

PREFACE

THIS book embodies an attempt to apply the lessons of history and the principles of political science to some of the urgent practical problems of the present day. Although it has been written in a university library, and with constant reference to familiar authorities, it is not intended to be primarily an academic work. While the author hopes that its brief discussion of democratic theory, and its rapid survey of the history of democracy, may be not without value to students, his dominant desire is that it may be of service to the practical politician, to the man-in-the-street, and above all to the new electorate prior to its fateful first entry into the polling-booth. He trusts that it may do something to render fundamental issues clear; to mark out the straight way of political progress; and to set up warning notices at the entrance of seductive but dangerous crossways.

It will be manifestly evident to readers of the book—if any such there be—that the writer holds no brief for either of the two political parties, or for any of the recently formed groups, into which the representatives of the British democracy are divided.

Nevertheless, he thinks it well to state explicitly that he is entirely free from any party or group attachment. Not that he is one of those who decry and condemn the party system. On the contrary, he believes that the organisation of active politicians into two compact and disciplined parties is an indispensable condition of successful and orderly representative government. But he believes equally strongly that the ordinary elector, like himself, who does not take an active part in the technical business of politics, should avoid party entanglements, and should hold himself free, and indeed by duty bound, to criticise party programmes, accept or reject party leaders, and do his utmost to compel party to serve the larger ends of patriotism and humanity.

He does not feel, however, that this attitude of impartiality and aloofness is at all incompatible with the formation of very definite opinions, or the unequivocal statement of entirely clear convictions. He holds, on the other hand, that fairness of judgment is quite consistent with the arrival at a conclusion; and that freedom from bias need not incapacitate any man from making up his mind. He will therefore be exceedingly sorry if he has failed to make plain what are his reasoned opinions concerning either democracy or its enemies.

In the interests of reviewers and other busy people who may not have time or inclination to read anything beyond a preface it may be a convenience if he briefly summarises his main positive conclusions. They are:

1. That democracy is the only form of state ultimately tolerable, and that in democracy, properly understood, fully accepted, and honestly applied, lies the one hope of the peaceful and prosperous development of the race; but, on the other hand, that not every people is as yet ripe for democracy, and that to establish it prematurely is to court disaster.

2. That the only type of democracy possible in the great state of modern times is representative democracy; and that representative democracy is incompatible with such devices as the initiative, referendum, and recall.

3. That the essence of representative democracy is the rule of the majority; and that the rule of the majority is impeded by attempts, through proportional representation or otherwise, to secure the representation of minorities.

4. That for the effective organisation of representative democracy, and for the satisfactory determination of the will of the majority, the two-party system is essential; but that the parties need to be checked and controlled by a strong, enlightened, and independent electorate.

5. That if democracy is to rise to the height of its great task of responsible self-determination there is need of a diligent education of public opinion, a thorough purification of the communal conscience, a vigorous strengthening of the general will.

6. That the ministers who govern in the name of democracy need on the one hand to show a much

greater courage than they have lately shown in telling democracy of its faults and correcting its errors; and need on the other hand to display a much more honourable fidelity in safeguarding its real interests than they have lately displayed.

During the course of the writing of this book the words with which Rousseau introduced his *Social Contract* have been much in the author's mind. He will therefore conclude this preface with them. "I shall be asked," says Rousseau, "if I am a prince or a legislator that I should write on politics. I answer that I am neither the one nor the other, and that that is the reason why I write. If I were a prince or a legislator I should not waste my time in saying what needs to be done: I should do it, or keep silence. As I was born a citizen of a free state, and a member of the sovereign people, I feel that however feeble may be the influence of my voice on public affairs, the right of voting on them makes it my duty to study them. And I am happy, when I reflect upon governments, to find that my reflections always supply me with new reasons for loving that of my own country."

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON,
KING'S COLLEGE,
24*th September* 1918.

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INTRODUCTION

"Je ne sache pas, à l'heure qu'il est, de tâche plus nécessaire que l'étude de cette transformation politique et sociale qui s'appelle la démocratie."—E. SCHÉRER, *La Démocratie et la France.*

"The working of government in democracy, and the vital problems which it puts before existing society, involve the whole future of our political civilisation."—LORD BRYCE, Preface to Ostrogorski's *Democracy and Political Parties.*

I BEGIN to write these reflections on democracy at the dawn of the New Year, 1918. As I write I can hear the distant booming of big guns—a dreadful though now familiar sound that brings home to the listener a vivid realisation of the continued raging of the great war which for over three years has wasted the world. It had been hoped that the twelve months just elapsed would see the termination of the struggle in the decisive victory of the Allies; but the hope has not been fulfilled. On the contrary, a series of disappointments and misfortunes has seemed to place the successful conclusion of the conflict farther off than ever. If, however, the war has not been brought appreciably nearer to its end, its issues have been clarified, and the principles at stake have been evidently revealed. This clarification and revelation have been effected partly by a number of notable pronouncements, and partly by a series of transfiguring and illuminating events. Among the pronouncements, those of President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd

George, M. Clémenceau, and Signor Orlando stand prominent. Their common burden is excellently summed up by Mr. G. N. Barnes in a fine New Year's appeal to Labour: "Democracy is at one and the same time on its trial, and in the crucible. If this war is lost by the Allies the cause of democracy is under eclipse for generations to come, and we leave to our children a heritage of trouble." Among the apocalyptic events four stand forth pre-eminent. They are (1) the Russian Revolution of March; (2) the entry of America into the war in April; (3) the Italian *débâcle* of October, and (4) the disintegration of Russia at the close of the year. The first two events made plain the same fundamental fact which was emphasised in the great speeches of the year, viz. the fact that the war is primarily a mortal combat between national democracy and imperial autocracy. The second two, in tragic disaster and suicidal fiasco, afforded painful demonstrations of the sad truth that democracy's worst enemies are to be found in the ranks of its own professed champions.

The fall of the Tsardom not only made apparent to the world the intensely democratic nature of the Russian genius; it also showed that in *mir*, in *zemstvo*, and in *duma* Russia had actually in existence the solid framework of a popular constitution. The war had been to the Russians from the first not merely a struggle to deliver their Serbian kinsmen from the Austro-Hungarian yoke, but also a titanic effort to emancipate themselves from a German thraldom which from the days of Peter the Great had been imposed upon them.[1] The crisis offered to the Tsar

[1] Cf. Wesselitsky, *Russia and Democracy*, especially pp. vii, 14, 76, 86, and 91-2.

Nicholas II. a golden opportunity to convert the hateful autocracy which he had inherited from his Teutonised ancestors into a strong and popular limited monarchy. In August 1914 the peoples of all the Russias rallied to him as never before to a Tsar, and begged him to deliver himself and them from the deeply-incised fetters of the alien bondage. A few months later, when the Tsar seemed to be responding to the national call, M. Wesselitsky, one of the greatest of the Russian Liberals of the dispersion, wrote with eager enthusiasm: "The sharp medicine of war is rapidly and thoroughly curing Russia of the German virus which for two centuries has poisoned the organism of the Empire. The Russian democracy is at last coming to its own again. Its union with monarchy is indissolubly cemented and consecrated by the wise leadership of the great Slavic Tsar."[1] Alas! M. Wesselitsky's glorious vision proved to be a mirage. Nicholas II. was not wise enough or strong enough to rise to the height of the splendid possibilities that rose before him. Even as M. Wesselitsky wrote, the unhappy man, weak and vacillating, was passing under the sinister influence of his German wife and his Teutonophile courtiers, and was preparing the great betrayal of the Slavic cause. In him the interests of dynastic autocracy triumphed over those of national democracy, and he abdicated the leadership of his people. Hence, when the Galician rout, the Polish collapse, and the Roumanian *débâcle* had demonstrated the incompetence and corruption of the imperial *régime*, the Revolution came. It was an emphatic re-affirmation of the "Slavic cause" of self-determination, as opposed to the alien control

[1] Wesselitsky, *op. cit.* p. 86.

by Germanic bureaucrats. Said Viscount Grey: "A liberated Russia is a splendid increase of freedom in the world, and whatever the immediate and passing effect upon the progress of the war, the future effect upon democracy in Europe . . . must be most favourable, and of incalculable value." [1]

Scarcely had Russia in this striking and conspicuous manner displayed herself as the champion of self-determination and national democracy, and so ranged herself by the side of Britain, France, and Italy, when America, driven from her long-cherished neutrality by a persistent series of intolerable German outrages, entered the war on the side of the Allies. In doing so she proclaimed in a number of notable utterances, prime among which were those of her president, the causes that had led her to intervene, and the principles for which she was about to fight. Foremost among her purposes she placed the vindication of democracy against militant despotism. Said President Wilson: "We are accepting this challenge [of the German Imperial Government] because we know that in such a Government, following such methods, we can never have a friend, and that in presence of its organised power, always lying in wait to accomplish we know not what purpose, there can be no security for the democratic governments of the world. . . . The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon trusted

[1] Preface to *America and Freedom*. See also p. 54 of the same pamphlet, where President Wilson in his speech to Congress, April 2, 1917, says: "Russia was known by those who knew her best to have been always, in fact, democratic at heart in all her vital habits, in her thought, and in all the intimate relations of her people that spoke of their natural instinct and their habitual attitude towards life. The autocracy that crowned the summit of her political structure was not in fact Russian in origin, character, or purpose."

foundations of political liberty." [1] Again: "The object of this war is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible Government." [2]

Thus in the spring of 1917 the issue was clearly joined. A league of free nations—British, French, Italian, Russian, and American—was arrayed against a confederacy of military autocrats—German, Austro-Hungarian, Turkish, Bulgarian. When Brusiloff in June began his fine offensive in Galicia, and the road lay open to Lemberg and Cracow, the speedy victory of the self-governing peoples over the servile hosts of the despots seemed to be assured. But just then, when the fruit of all the sacrifice and suffering of three years of unparalleled conflict was about to be gathered in, came the awful collapse, the most disgusting and disturbing feature of which was that it was due, not to any revival of the failing strength of the enemy, but to folly and fanaticism in the ranks of the Allies themselves. First came the breakdown of discipline in the Russian armies, fraternisations with the foe, abandonments of conquests, murders of officers, stampedes from the front. The splendid forces, which for three critical years had, in spite of treachery and futility in high places, held the Austro-German hordes in check, were speedily reduced to a chaotic mob of helpless anarchists, each individual of which was bent only on saving his skin, procuring his own sustenance, and grabbing his own plot of land. It was a pitiful and disgraceful catastrophe.

[1] Speech to Congress, April 2, 1917, *America and Freedom*, p. 56.
[2] Reply to the Pope, August 28 1917, *America and Freedom*, p. 72.

The infection of disorder spread to Italy, the economic condition of which, owing to the long continuance of the war, was very bad. Riots broke out in Milan. Troops summoned to quell them refused to obey commands. Sent as a disciplinary measure back to the fighting front they promptly deserted to the enemy, and left a gap in the Italian lines through which the Austro-German troops (heavily reinforced from Russia) poured to an easy victory. The defection of a few regiments ruined four armies. The Italian rot could not be stopped until 250,000 men had been lost, 2000 guns abandoned, and territory evacuated—part of the long desired *Italia irredenta*—which it had cost more than two years' campaigning to secure. It was a lesson, purchased at a terrible price, of what perversity, indiscipline, treachery, and the exaggerated individualism of a few, can do to destroy a great cause, and bring irretrievable calamity on a vast community.

It will thus be seen that from two sides at least the problems of democracy have during the past year forced themselves more pressingly than ever before upon the attention of thoughtful men. The fact that the war stands revealed as a struggle of democracy against autocracy makes it urgently necessary to ask what democracy is, and why it is worth fighting for. The fact that in two crucial tests—the first on the Russian front, the second on the Italian—democratic control has failed to produce an efficiency, a discipline, and a devotion comparable to that produced by the authoritarian command of the enemy, makes it necessary to enquire what are the inherent defects of democracy which it must purge from its system

if it is to survive; what are the dangers which it must avoid if it is to be saved.

Hence it is evident that the problems of democracy are among the most pressing of war problems. But they are much more than that. Even before the war they were becoming insistent. Questions of the franchise, questions of the reform of parliament, questions of the position and powers of trade unions, questions of the government of Ireland, questions of the federation of the Empire—these and other questions of radical importance were clamouring for solution. They all of them involved fundamental principles and demanded for their satisfactory determination extreme clarity of political ideas. So long ago as 1908 Mr. Graham Wallas said: "Perhaps there never has been a time in which the disinterested examination of political principles has been more urgently required." [1]

Every year which has elapsed since this profound truth was uttered has increased the urgency of the need to which Mr. Wallas drew attention. I feel, therefore, that no apology is necessary for any honest attempt, however humble, to treat of these grave problems relating to the very foundations of society and the state. I propose in this treatise to deal with them, as they present themselves to my mind, in a manner as complete and systematic as is possible within reasonable compass. I shall first of all discuss the general principle of democracy, and examine the chief historic attempts which have been made to embody it in institutions. Secondly, I shall treat of its present critical position, and describe the four broad crossways, viz. Sectionalism, Socialism, Syndi-

[1] Graham Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics*, p. 10.

calism, and Anarchism, along one or other of which it is being lured towards destruction. Thirdly, I shall attempt to indicate the course of the straight way which seems to me to lead progressively towards prosperity and peace. Finally, I shall venture to sketch my ideal of the goal which it should be the effort of democracy to attain.

PART I

DEMOCRACY IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE

CHAPTER I

THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE

"What is Democracy, this huge inevitable Product of the Destinies, which is everywhere the portion of our Europe in these latter days? There lies the question for us."—CARLYLE, *Latter Day Pamphlets.*

"It is commonly very hard to make out what modern writers mean by Democracy."—FREEMAN, *Comparative Politics.*

"Democracy to some persons means only what they happen to agree with."—*The Spectator, August* 11, 1917.

"It is my conviction, indeed, that a better understanding of fundamental principles would very greatly contribute to the more rational handling of practical problems."—B. BOSANQUET, *Philosophical Theory of the State.*

§ 1. *Democracy as a Form of Government.*

"DEMOCRACY," says (Sir Henry Maine) in a famous essay, "means properly a particular form of government. . . . It is simply and solely a form of government." [1] The same view is expressed by an eminent French political thinker, M. Edmond Schérer, in the words, "La démocratie . . . est tout simplement une forme de gouvernement semblable aux autres." [2] America seems to concur; for James Russell Lowell asserts that "Democracy is nothing more than an experiment in government," [3] and the same conception underlies the great pronouncement of Lincoln in the Gettysburg speech of 1863, wherein he said

[1] Maine, *Popular Government*, p. 59.

[2] Schérer, *La Démocratie et la France*, p. 3.

[3] Lowell, *Democracy*, p. 20. It should be noted, however, that Lowell in the same essay expresses a different opinion.

that democracy means "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." [1]

It may appear presumptuous to differ from authorities so numerous, so diverse, and so weighty. Nevertheless, it must be said clearly, at the outset, that the view which they express is wrong. Democracy is not merely a form of government. It is not even primarily a form of government. It is at least two other things, both of them logically anterior to, and practically more important than, that: it is a form of state, and it is also a form of society. A democratic government implies a democratic state, although—as I shall point out more fully in the next section of this chapter—a democratic state does not necessarily imply a democratic government. Further, as I hope to show at length in the third section of this chapter, a democratic society can exist without developing either a democratic state or a democratic government as a mode of political expression; while, on the other hand, it is conceivable that for a time, though hardly for long, a democratic form of state, and even a democratic form of government, could be maintained in an undemocratic society. It is the first essential of clear thinking concerning democracy that the conceptions of government, state, and society should be kept distinct.[2]

[1] Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 361. For the same opinion see also Dicey, *Law and Opinion in England*, p. 52; Spencer, *Social Statics*, p. 103; and Gettell, *Introduction to Political Science*, p. 170.

[2] "Democratic government is not the whole of democracy. It is but one, and among the later of its forms. For when democracy at last makes its way into the political constitution it is only because it has, it may be for long, existed elsewhere."—MacCunn, *Six Radical Thinkers*, p. 197.

"To say that democracy is only a form of government is like saying that home is a more or less geometrical arrangement of bricks and mortar, or that a church is a building with pews, pulpit, and spire."—Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 18. See also Barker, *Political Thought from Spencer to To-day*, p. 168.

A democratic form of government, in the strict sense of the term, is one in which the community-as-a-whole, directly and immediately, without agents or representatives, performs the functions of sovereignty. The citizens meet to legislate in a General Assembly; they execute their own decrees and administer their own affairs; for purposes of justice they convert themselves into a multitudinous court before which delinquents are called, and in which they are punished. Such is democratic government of the pure type. Some would regard this pure type as the only type deserving of the name. M. Victor Considérant, for example, says: "Si le peuple délègue sa souveraineté, il l'abdique: le peuple ne se gouverne plus lui-même, on le gouverne."[1] That, too, was Rousseau's view.[2] It will readily be seen that a democratic form of government of this direct order is possible only in very small compact states, and even in these only under conditions of unusual social equality and economic simplicity. It will also be recognised that only twice or thrice in the history of the world, at long intervals of time, has there been even an approximation to such a pure democratic form of government. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle beheld something resembling it in the Athens of Pericles. For a brief and troubled period the mediaeval city-state of Florence approached the ideal. More recently, and more enduringly, the pastoral communities of the Forest Cantons of Switzerland fulfilled in the main the necessary conditions. But so rare, so fragile, and generally so ephemeral, has democratic govern-

[1] Quoted, Michels, *Political Parties*, p. 42. M. Michels himself apparently agrees with this view; see pp. 43-4.

[2] Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, book iii. ch. iv.

ment in this its pure form been that Rousseau—a democrat, if there ever was one—had justification when he said respecting it: "S'il y avait un peuple de dieux, il se gouvernerait démocratiquement: un gouvernement si parfait convient pas à des hommes." He held, indeed, that it had never been fully realised among men: "A prendre le terme dans la rigueur de l'acception, il n'a jamais existé de véritable démocratie, et il n'en existera jamais." [1]

If, however, democratic government of this pure and direct type is a rare phenomenon, or even as Rousseau maintained, an absolutely unattainable ideal, there is another type of government of a more practicable order to which the appellation "democratic" is generally conceded, and to which, indeed, it cannot reasonably be denied. It is government by the sovereign democracy through the agency of delegates. The essence of the democratic "delegate" (as distinct from the "representative"), is that he is a mere medium by means of which the will of his electors is registered: he has no will of his own, no choice of opinions, no freedom of action. He simply, like a messenger, repeats what he has been told to say, and, like an automaton, does what he has been made to do. Any manifestation of individuality or independence is inconsistent with his character. He takes part in government not in virtue of any personality of his own, but solely as a substitute (always more or less unsatisfactory) for his electors who, because of their multitude, their remoteness, or their preoccupation, cannot conveniently act directly and

[1] Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, book iii. ch. iv.—in Professor Vaughan's fine edition, pp. 3-4, and Introduction, p. 34. Cf. also Mallock, *Limits of Pure Democracy*, pp. 44-6.

immediately. The electors retain, and do not surrender to him, their control of affairs; they furnish him continuously with detailed, and authoritative instructions; they require him to keep them regularly informed of all that is going on; they maintain their hold over him (in case he prove recalcitrant) by such devices as the "initiative, referendum, and recall" at present so much in vogue in America.[1]

This lumbering, rickety, and slow-moving administration by means of strictly controlled delegates is the only form of democratic government, in the proper sense of the term, possible in states of larger size than cities and cantons. Its defects are so obvious, its stability so slight, its tendency to transmute itself either into a number of direct democracies on the one side or into representative government on the other side so strong, that but few specimens exist, or have ever existed, to provide material for analysis. The American Electoral College, which meets every four years to choose the President of the United States, although it was intended by the Constitution that it should consist of free and independent representatives, has of course been reduced by the party conventions to an assembly of the most rigidly fettered delegates that it is possible to conceive: but the American Electoral College is not a governing body. A nearer approach to democratic government through the medium of delegates is to be found in several of the constituent states of the union, *e.g.* Oregon, where the operation of the "initiative, referendum, and recall" has deprived the state-legislatures of almost

[1] Cf. Godkin, *Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy*, p. 134: "The democratic theory of the representative has always been that he is a delegate sent to vote, not for what he thinks best, but for what his constituents think best, even if it controverts his own opinion."

all independent power.[1] In modern Switzerland, too, the abandonment of independence and direct democracy by the Forest Cantons was secured only by the consent on the part of the Federal Government that matters of fundamental importance should be regularly submitted to cantonal veto or referendum.[2] If, however, all the examples of delegated democracy were collected and were added to all the examples of direct democracy that the world's history has to show, it would be found that democracy as a form of government has played but a small part in the politics of mankind. Very different is the case of democracy as a form of state.

§ 2. *Democracy as a Form of State.*

Democracy as a form of state is consistent with any type of government—democratic, aristocratic, or monarchic. It may adopt, and in the rare instances which we have just noted has adopted, a democratic form of government, direct or delegational. Equally readily, however, it may adopt, and as a matter of fact has much more frequently adopted, an aristocratic form.[3] There is, moreover, no reason in the nature of things why it should not adopt a

[1] Cf. J. D. Barnett, *Initiative, Referendum, and Recall in Oregon*; Woodrow Wilson, *The State*, §§ 895-7; Holt, *Introduction to the Study of Government*, pp. 131 *sqq.*; Croly, *Progressive Democracy*, pp. 256 *sqq.*; Weyl, *The New Democracy*, pp. 304 *sqq.*

[2] Cf. Woodrow Wilson, *The State*, §§ 521 and 557; Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la démocratie*, vol. ii. pp. 146 *sqq.* Hobson, *Crisis of Liberalism*, pp. 71-86.

[3] Cf. Carlyle, *Latter Day Pamphlets*, No. 3: "All that democracy ever meant lies there—the attainment of a truer and truer Aristocracy or Government by the Best." This, of course, is an exaggeration. Democracy means much more than that. All that I am stating, however, at present, is that democracy as a form of state is not *incompatible* with aristocracy as a form of government.

monarchic form, and examples are not wanting of self-determining communities which of their own free-will, and after full and deliberate consideration, have—especially in periods of peril—placed the exercise of governing power in the hands of a dictator.[1]

A democratic state, in short, is simply one in which the community-as-a-whole possesses sovereign authority, maintains ultimate control over affairs, and determines what sort of governmental machinery shall be set up. It has free choice among all of the three main types of constitution—democratic, aristocratic, monarchic—and among the many varieties of each of these three. Which of the three it elects to have is determined by circumstances; for each of the three has merits which mark it out as suited for certain conditions, and each of the three has defects which may be deadly in other conditions. The difference between the three is not, what John Austin used to contend it is, merely, or even primarily, numerical;[2] it is not fundamentally the difference between the many, the few, and the one. It is a difference of principle, of spirit, of genius. It is, further, the difference between the amateur, the expert, and the dictator. The strength of the democratic form of government is the liberty and the

[1] Cf. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, pp. 148-50: "Democracy means, or may mean, two things which, though allied in idea, are not necessarily found together in practice, viz. (1) direct participation of the mass of ordinary citizens in the public life of the community; (2) ultimate popular sovereignty."

Similarly May, *Democracy in Europe*, p. vii, defines democracy as (1) "a form of government," and (2) "the political power or influence of the people under all forms of government." Cf. also Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, 2nd ed. p. 610.

[2] Cf. Austin, *Jurisprudence*, p. 239. So too, G. Cornewall Lewis, *Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, vol. ii. p. 67. For a powerful criticism of the merely numerical definition of democracy, see Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, pp. 5-7.

goodwill that flow from the identification of the rulers with the ruled; its weakness is its inefficiency. We have already seen [1] that Rousseau considered that for its perfect working it would require a community of gods. Similarly, Montesquieu, having remarked that "when the body of the people is possessed of the supreme power it is called a democracy," expresses the emphatic opinion that the people are "incapable of conducting the administration themselves": [2] that is to say, a democratic state is rarely capable of supporting a democratic government. So, too, a recent writer of profoundly liberal sympathies, Dr. J. B. Crozier, has given it as his considered judgment that democracy as a form of government "is cumbrous and unwieldy" and "unsuited to any condition of civilised society existing at the present time or likely to exist this side of the millennium." [3] So grave and so obvious is this defect—this amateurish lack of efficiency—that, as we have seen, very few democratic states have attempted to set up a democratic form of government. In other words, very rarely have self-determining communities attempted to keep the actual administration of affairs, either directly or indirectly, in their own hands. They have recognised—as at the peril of destruction they had to recognise—that the art of government is a technical and supremely difficult business, that it requires powers of mind and character of a high and rare order, and that it can safely be entrusted only to a limited body of the Best—an aristocracy in the original and true sense of the

[1] Above, p. 14.
[2] Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, book ii. ch. ii.
[3] Crozier, *History of Intellectual Development*, vol. iii. pp. 146-7.

word.[1] Just as the free and independent individual rarely elects to be his own doctor or lawyer, or even his own plumber or tailor, so the self-determining community seldom desires to do more than retain ultimate control over affairs for itself, and is content to commit the normal conduct of state-business to experts. "Do you," asks Mr. Frederic Harrison, "ever make your own boots and shoes, or become your own engine-driver on a railway, or cut off your own leg when an amputation is inevitable? If we all managed our own concerns for ourselves we should be reduced to a state of the merest savages."[2] Similarly that advanced democrat, Mr. J. A. Hobson, says: "It is plain that, when a rational democracy is formed, laws, like hats, will be made by persons specially trained to make them."[3] So too the French publicist, Laveleye: "Le gouvernement des démocraties doit être confié à l'aristocratie intellectuelle."[4]

A democratic state, then, may be, and indeed usually is, governed by an aristocracy of some sort or other. That is to say, just as it develops specialised bodies of doctors, lawyers, bankers, artisans, agriculturists, etc.; so it produces representative legislators, trained civil servants, and professional judges. Thus it endeavours to combine the two great factors which above all others need to be united

[1] Cf. N. M. Butler (President of Columbia University), *True and False Democracy*, p. 57: "America needs above all an aristocracy of intellect and character."

[2] Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p 228. Professor Ramsay Muir makes the same point in his *Peers and Bureaucrats*, p. 28: "The complex business of governing a modern state," he says, "can only be conducted by skilled professional administration."

[3] Hobson, *Crisis of Liberalism*, p. 85.

[4] Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la démocratie*, vol. ii. p. 53, where also will be found the remark of Cicero: "Tenuit igitur hoc . . . ut in populo libero pauca per populum, pleraque senatus auctoritate gererentur."

and reconciled in the state, viz. the rule of the best and the consent of all.[1] Mazzini himself defined democracy as "the progress of all, through all, under the leading of the best and wisest."[2] The precise nature of this aristocracy, and the modes by which it is appointed, controlled, and when needful, dismissed, vary infinitely. But broadly there are two great types of "representative government," to one or other of which it generally belongs. These are (1) the cabinet type; (2) the presidential type. In the cabinet type the democracy elects a legislature, and that legislature exercises, during the period of its existence, sovereign control over both executive and judiciary: this type is exemplified in the present English and French constitutions. In the presidential type, of which the United States of America provides the great model, there is a separation of powers—legislative, executive, and judicial—each of the three depending directly upon popular appointment, and each remaining immediately subject to democratic control.[3] There is no need for us here and now to examine and compare the two types in detail; for they both possess in common the feature on which we are at present concentrating our attention, viz. that the actual exercise of governing powers is entrusted—under whatever conditions and for whatever period of time—by the sovereign many to the expert few. The English member of parliament and the American congress-man resemble one another in this, that they are representatives and not delegates.

[1] Cf. Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p. 349.
[2] C. W. Stubbs, *Mazzini*, p. 126.
[3] For a careful and penetrating comparison of the two types see Bagehot's *English Constitution*, and compare Appendix II. of Dicey's *Law of the Constitution*, and Bryce's *American Commonwealth*.

Their constituents, when they have elected them, have for the term of their appointment divested themselves of their sovereignty and bestowed it upon a deputy. The deputy — whether English member of parliament or American congress-man—is clothed with the sovereignty not only of the majority to whom he owes his selection, but of the whole of his constituents: he represents them all. But he is independent of them all, and neither his supporters nor his opponents can dictate to him how he shall vote, or what he shall say. Nevertheless before him looms that day of judgment, the next general election, preordained and inevitable, when his constituents will resume their power, and will call him, on pain of political perdition, to give an account of his stewardship. Such is representative government, wherein the ultimate authority of the community as a whole is combined and harmonised with the actual administration of the expert.

In the modern democratic state this is the normal type of government. But now and again, especially on occasions of critical emergency, when dangers threaten, and when exceptional promptitude of decision and vigour of action seem to be necessary, a democratic community may take the extreme step of placing its powers and its destinies in the hands of a despot. Without raising the moot question whether Rome was ever in any strict sense a democracy, we may say that something like this occurred in her history, both in the early days when, from time to time, she resigned all authority into the control of a dictator, and again in the later days when, by a cumulation of many republican offices upon one man, she established the principate of Augustus

Caesar. Something like this occurred, too, when the English Commonwealth was transmuted into the Protectorate of Cromwell; and once more when the Revolutionary Republic of France was converted into the Consulate and Empire of Napoleon I. But the most striking example is that of 1852, when the French proletariat, in dread of the Red Peril and eager for military glory, by a plebiscitary vote of 7,824,189 versus 253,145, surrendered its fortunes and its fate into the hands of that "man of destiny," Louis Napoleon. "The nature of democracy," said the newly established emperor, "is to embody itself in one man." This dictum is no more true generally than is Carlyle's dictum that the whole meaning of democracy is the attainment of aristocracy.[1] But, taken together, they serve to emphasise the important fact, which has been the theme of this section, that democracy as a form of state is not a mode of government, but is merely a mode of appointing, controlling, and dismissing a government.[2]

§ 3. *Democracy as a Form of Society.*

But if democracy is a form of state as well as a form of government, it is also something more—something older, vaster, deeper—than either, or than both. It is a form of society. Both government and state belong to the sphere of politics; and, though politics covers a large part of communal life—and in early days covered more than it does now—it does

[1] See above, p. 16 note 3.

[2] Cf. Frederic Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p. 149. "Electors have not got to govern the country. They have only to find a set of men who will see that the government is just and active": see also Mallock, "Current Theories of Democracy" in *Nineteenth Century* for August 1916, since reprinted in *The Limits of Pure Democracy*.

not cover, and never has covered, all. There are other forms of human association — religious, industrial, commercial, intellectual; and in particular there is that aggregate of all associations, both political and non-political, to which we give the large generic title of "society." In this sense "society" is, both logically and historically, anterior to the state: the state indeed, when it arises naturally in the due process of human evolution, comes into existence—and that usually as a late development—merely as its political organisation. Moreover, even when the state is constituted, "society" continues to exist alongside and independent of it, living its own life and performing its own functions. Further, the limits of the two do not by any means necessarily coincide. It may be true that, since the state is by nature society politically organised, the boundaries of the two are originally the same; but many things tend to cause them to diverge. On the one hand, the state is apt to subjugate and annex territories and peoples beyond the bounds of its own proper constituent society. On the other hand, society is much less rigid than the state, much more amenable to the influence of both expansive and restrictive forces. Thus, to give one example, the Christian and cosmopolitan society of the Middle Ages produced the Holy Roman Empire as its appropriate political organ; but that Christian and cosmopolitan society was disintegrated by the principles of secularism and nationality; and the widely-extended political sway of the Catholic Emperor became an incongruity beyond the possibility of adjustment to social facts. Society in Western Europe became secular and national—so strongly secular and national that it was able to

destroy the mediaeval Empire and, having done so, to produce the modern national state as its own proper organ. The national state remains to the present day; but society has once again been profoundly modified by cosmopolitan influences, and it is now much wider than the limits of any political unit.

Further, not only can, and often does, society differ from the state in respect of its geographical and racial boundaries; it also can, and often does, differ from it not less widely in the matter of genius, character, and form. It is quite possible for a society to be, or to become, democratic, while the state which exercises political control over it is oligarchic or despotic. Perhaps the modern German Empire is a case in point: the spread of social democracy is undoubtedly one of the causes which frightened the military bureaucracy into war. This discrepancy between state and society is of course most clearly evident when the state has not developed naturally and organically with the society, but has imposed itself by force upon it. Russia under the Tsars may be taken as a typical example. Few governments were more despotic than that of the Romanoffs; few states were more bureaucratic in their organisation; yet it was with perfect justification that a careful observer and philosophic historian said in 1914: "Russia is probably the most democratic of all European countries." [1] It was Russian society; it was the Slavonic spirit as it was manifested in its local institutions, its voluntary associations, its spontaneous religious organisations, that

[1] J. W. Allen, *Germany and Europe*, p. 111. Cf. also *Hibbert Journal*, July 1916: "We in England have the forms of democracy; in Russia they have the spirit."

was democratic—that was so profoundly alien from the political system by which it was held in tutelage. But the discrepancy between society and state so glaringly displayed in the case of Russia—and in countless other cases where the state stands for force imposed from without, and not for the general will operating from within—may equally come to display itself in the case of organic states where complete harmony between the two originally prevailed. Society tends to become democratised more readily and rapidly than the state; and it frequently happens that constitutional changes lag far behind silent social revolutions. Hence there may be, and often are, intervals—restless and troubled periods of transition—during which society and state are discordant and antagonistic, alien the one from the other, struggling painfully toward readjustment and reconciliation.

We have seen that a democratic state is one in which the community-as-a-whole is in possession of ultimate political power. What, as distinct from this, is a democratic society? The answer to this question is not a difficult one to find or formulate. A democratic society is merely one in which the spirit of equality is strong, and in which the principle of equality prevails.[1] The presence of both the features here indicated is necessary, viz. the dominant equalitarian idea, and, where it is free to operate, its realisation in manners, conditions, and institutions. Says Dr. J. B. Crozier: "The essence of democracy is the equality of men's material and social con-

[1] Cf. Schérer, *La Démocratie et la France*, p. 52: "L'essence de la démocratie c'est l'égalité." Sir Frederick Pollock cites the case of Iceland as an example of the most perfect democratic or equalitarian society existent to-day: see *Introduction to Political Science*, new edition, 1911, p. 28.

ditions." [1] Similarly, M. Laveleye: "On entend par démocratie . . . un état social où les conditions sont très égales." [2] Professor A. V. Dicey more fully defines a democratic society as one in which "there exists a general equality of rights, and a similarity of conditions, of thoughts, of sentiments, and of ideals." [3] All these definitions, it is true, seem to lay excessive stress on externals—on man's conditions, his rights, his views concerning things in general—to the neglect of the all-important factor of man's estimate of himself and his neighbour, and his consequent relation to his neighbour; but all alike agree that the mark of a democratic society is equality.[4] These two things, viz. this sense of fundamental human equality, and this actual realisation of equality in legal rights, social conditions, and economic opportunities, are, both of them, however, whether singly or in combination, consistent with any form of state and any type of government; although, no doubt, a tendency will always exist to harmonise the natures of the three. Thus, for example, under many and various polities, early Christian society was uniformly and profoundly democratic. So completely was it dominated and inspired by the great equalising doctrine of the Fatherhood of God that all human distinctions which differentiated man from man vanished into insignificance. Within the church, Jew and Greek,

[1] Crozier, *Civilisation and Progress*, p. 7.

[2] Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la démocratie*, vol. i. Introduction, p. viii.

[3] Dicey, *Law and Opinion in England*, p. 50.

[4] That the principle of democracy is equality is the central idea of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville treats democracy as primarily a form of society; but he fails adequately to distinguish between society, state, and government. Hence his work is confused and unsatisfactory.

bond and free, rich and poor, master and slave, met as brethren of one divine household, as equal members of the indivisible communion of the redeemed. So deep was this sense of equality—this consciousness of a common human heritage in the only things that really mattered—that forms of state and modes of government seemed to the primitive saints to be concerns of entire indifference. They readily accepted episcopal authority in the church, and recognised imperial control over the state. But in neither bishops nor emperors did they see men in any essential respect different in nature from themselves. They reverenced and obeyed them merely as officials, divinely appointed and ordained, exercising for a transient though all-important hour a delegated and vicarious authority.

This same fundamental social democracy; this sense of the common humanity and the common divinity of all mankind; this underlying conviction of every man's equal implication in the guilt of Adam, and his equal interest in the salvation of Christ; this prevailing belief in the supreme importance and significance of the things which all men share, as compared with the triviality and unimportance of those which differentiate one man, or one class, or one nation from another—this fundamental social democracy of the primitive Church, projected itself into the Middle Ages. It explains one of the standing paradoxes of mediaeval Christendom, viz. that together with a rigid feudal system in which men were graded with minutest subtlety in an ascending and descending scale, and together with a political constitution closely oligarchic, and an ecclesiastical organisation strictly sacerdotal, there should have

existed intercourse so familiar, manners so free, irreverence so startling, impudence so shocking. The mediaeval mind was intensely realistic. It tended to see everything in a twofold character. Just as in the sacrament of the mass it beheld the form of bread, but realised the presence of God: so in every individual, high or low, it beheld, on the one hand, the common form of sinful man, the equal fellow-creature with whom it was possible and proper to jest or to squabble, but, on the other hand and at the same time, the dignitary, the representative in some degree or other, and for some purpose or other, of that supreme Majesty before which every man must bow himself down to the dust and worship.

The break-up of mediaeval Christendom saw the end of that cosmopolitan and democratic society which had come into existence as an embodiment of the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and in modern times (as earlier in the times of Plato and Aristotle) the distinction between society and state has not been so evidently clear as it was in the Middle Ages. But it has been none the less real, and none the less important.

NOTE

DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOCIETY AND STATE

It is necessary to lay stress upon the distinction between society and state because the tendency among political thinkers has been to confuse, or even to identify, the two.

In Aristotle's works society seems to be completely merged and lost in the state, and man appears as by nature a *political* animal when clearly he should appear, and in modern treatises on community does appear, as primarily *social*. Thomas Aquinas, devoted though he was to the doctrine of the Master, detected the excessively large connotation which Aristotle gave to the word "political"; for in his *De Regimine Principum* he translated Aristotle's πολιτικὸν ζῷον by

"animal sociale et politicum." (Cf. Ritchie, *Principles of State Interference*, p. 157.) The influence of Aristotle, however, upon political thought—ancient, mediaeval, and modern—was, as is well known, profound, and it is no doubt largely due to his prevailing and enduring authority that the same idea of the dominance of the state over society and even the absorption of society in the state, which marks his system, also characterises the systems of such distinguished modern philosophers as Rousseau, Hegel, T. H. Green, and Bernard Bosanquet. In the case of Aristotle the failure to distinguish between state and society is explicable and even excusable. For he had before his eyes the small and compact city-states of Hellas, wherein politics could—and as a matter of fact did—comprehend almost the whole range of human interest and activity. In Athens, where he himself lived and taught, religion, education, industry, commerce, manners and morals—all were subjects of state control. In the cases of Rousseau and the rest, explanation is possible, although excuse is not so easy. Rousseau was a citizen of Geneva, a city-state whose Calvinistic polity, however Philistine in its intolerance, was Hellenic in the range and variety of its functions; and Rousseau's passion was for small states such as Geneva, wherein the "general will" was a social as well as a political fact. Hegel, in spite of a formal recognition of a *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* distinguishable from the state, was so much the creature of the omni-competent Prussian bureaucracy that he tended to elevate Prussianism into an ideal type. The English Neo-Hegelians, for the most part enthusiastic social reformers, concentrated their attention upon the state because they saw in it the great deliverer of the down-trodden and oppressed.

One of the capital advances in recent political theory has been the reassertion of the distinction between state and society. Mr. Ernest Barker, in his masterly work on the *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (p. 11), insists not only on its theoretical necessity, but also on its practical importance. Professor Maciver, in his comprehensive study of *Community* (pp. 28-44 and Appendix A), carefully analyses the distinction between the two. Some less balanced thinkers, such as Mr. G. D. H. Cole, Mr. Delisle Burns, Mr. Richard Roberts, and Mr. Bertrand Russell, over-emphasise the distinction, and use it unwarrantably as an instrument to degrade the state and exalt some rival association of their own. On the whole question read an able lecture by Mr. A. D. Lindsay in *Bedford College Lectures* on "The Theory of the State" (Oxford University Press, 1916).

§ 4. *The Essence of Social Democracy.*

"L'essence de la démocratie c'est l'égalité," says M. Edmond Schérer, and we have seen how in seeking

to analyse that essence we are taken beyond forms of government, behind forms of state, even beneath forms of society to realms of mind and spirit. The essence of democracy has to be sought not amid any external phenomena of human community, but in the inner world of human nature.

In what respect are men equal? It is obvious, even glaringly obvious, that in many respects they are extremely unequal. One of the most striking features of nature is its infinite variety. No two creatures however minute, among multitudes however vast, are alike. In the case of men, the variations of face and form, of character and intellect, of power of body and will, are incalculably many and inestimably important. This fact is so patent that it not only forms the substance of the most powerful arguments of the anti-democrats, but it has to be confessed, however regretfully, by all honest supporters of the popular cause. The German militarist Treitschke, arch-advocate of Prussian autocracy, descants with unction and delight on the natural and, to him, fundamental inequality of the members of the human species.[1] To him it seems to render a true democracy impossible, and to make a monarchic bureaucracy necessary. The French syndicalist, Étienne Antonelli, in similar vein, denounces the doctrine of equality as untenable. "Le rève égalitaire," says he, "est un leurre décevant et déprimant. Il ne répond à aucune réalité. L'égalité n'est nulle part dans le monde." [2] To him evident inequality seems to justify the tyranny of the illuminated and progressive minority. In England, Mr. Ramsay

[1] Cf. Davis, *The Political Thought of H. von Treitschke*, p. 181.
[2] Antonelli, *Démocratie sociale*, p. 26.

Macdonald voices the same sentiment when he asserts that "it is *not* the idea of equality" which he sees "underlying the democratic franchise," although what it is (if anything) that he *does* see underlying it he is not successful in making clear.[1] Even that stalwart and brilliant champion of the democratic principle, Professor John MacCunn of Liverpool, seems to agree with Burke that equality is a "monstrous fiction"; with Bentham that it is an "anarchic fallacy"; with Coleridge that it is an "indefensible proposition"; and with Carlyle that it is a "palpable incredibility and delirious absurdity." Giving his own opinion, he concludes: "Controversialists can do much, but the best of them can no more prove men to be equal than they can show that spirits are triangular."[2] All this is true, no doubt. The more minutely men are studied, whether physiologically or psychologically, the wider appear the differences that divide them from one another, the more numerous their inequalities. To the modern man of science it seems even more ridiculous than it did to Carlyle to equate "Quashee Nigger to Socrates or Shakespeare; Judas Iscariot to Jesus Christ."[3]

True: and yet, if we turn to the other side of the picture, we shall, I think, see reason to maintain the view that, however many and important are the differences of body, intellect, and character which display men to a superficial scrutiny as unequal, these differences are inconspicuous and insignificant when compared with the great and dominating features which all men have in common. Carlyle—who in

[1] Macdonald, *Socialism and Government*, vol. i. p. 50.

[2] MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 3. Cf. also MacCunn, *Political Philosophy of Burke*, p. 200.

[3] Carlyle, *Shooting Niagara*.

spite of many inconsistencies of utterance was as strong a social democrat as he was a political anti-democrat—himself supplies the decisive answer to that inequalitarian argument which is based on the degradation of the Quashee and the depravity of Judas, as contrasted with the exaltation and the excellence of the sages and the saints. "All men," he says, "were made by God, and have immortal souls in them. The Sanspotato [starving Irishman of the potato famine] is of the selfsame stuff as the superfinest Lord Lieutenant. Not an individual Sanspotato human scarecrow but had a life given him out of Heaven, with Eternities depending on it; for once and no second time. With Immensities in him, over him, and round him; with feelings which a Shakespeare's speech could not utter; with desires as illimitable as the Autocrat's of all the Russias!"[1] "Shakespeare's speech," as it happens, anticipated that of Carlyle in attempts to utter the truth respecting the magnitude and all-importance of the common factors of humanity, as contrasted with the smallness and triviality of the features which distinguish individuals from one another. To Shakespeare's eye, however, the significant equalising elements were of a more mundane order than those which struck the gaze of the modern seer. As he delineated Shylock the Jew—who to the mediaeval Christian community of Venice had been an alien, an outcast, a dog—he asked: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and

[1] Carlyle, *Chartism*, chap. iv.

summer as a Christian is ? " [1] In face of the supreme realities of birth and death, in possession of a common human nature, in relation to the universal lot of joy and sorrow, in conflict with the same corporeal and spiritual foes, in contemplation of the same enigmas of life and destiny, all men are equal; and the differences that distinguish man from man, class from class, nation from nation, and race from race, dwindle into imperceptibility. Take an analogy. If one walks the surface of the earth one is struck by marked inequalities that by innumerable grades differentiate mountain from valley, sea from land. But if one sees a relief-model of the earth constructed accurately to scale [2] one is profoundly impressed by the insignificance of these superficial unevennesses as compared with the massive symmetry of the whole; while, if one gazes at the shadow of the earth thrown on the moon in an eclipse, no inequalities whatsoever are visible. So is it if one withdraws one's self from those busy haunts of men where the surface features of one's fellows can alone be noted, and if one takes one's place on those heights whence mankind can be viewed as a whole in true perspective and correct proportion according to the larger standards. Then is it seen and realised that, beneath all apparent differences, human nature is essentially one and the same; that the weakest and wickedest of men is, in virtue of his possibilities, but a little lower than the angels; and that the noblest and most powerful of men is, by reason of his limitations, but a little higher than the brutes. This was the profound truth that

[1] *Merchant of Venice*, Act iii. Scene 1.

[2] Most relief maps multiply heights and depths by ten in order to render them visible.

was revealed alike to Hebrew prophets, Stoic philosophers, and Christian preachers.[1] All of them were enabled by some divine illumination to cease contrasting man with man at close quarters in a comparison which emphasised divergencies, and were empowered to form a truer estimate of him in a view which comprehended his infinite environment, which saw him *sub specie aeternitatis*, which contemplated him in relation to such dominating verities as the sublimity of Nature and the majesty of Heaven. Thus viewed, all men appear, and indeed are, equal. Just as "merit lives from man to man, and not from man, O Lord, to Thee," so in relation to "the Immensities and the Eternities" human distinctions vanish away.

Thus the democratic principle is essentially religious in its character. As such it was always regarded by Mazzini. "If anything ever profoundly surprised me," he said, speaking of democracy, "it is that so many persons have hitherto been blind to the eminently religious character of the movement."[2] He was impressed by the inestimable spiritual dignity and incalculable moral worth of each individual member of the human race. It was the same truth of ethical value that Kant expressed when he contended that each man was an end in himself, and not a mere means to some other end, however exalted.[3] Professor MacCunn similarly takes as the basis of

[1] An early utterance of Lord Bryce is interesting. In an essay on "The Historical Aspect of Democracy," published in 1867 as a contribution to a volume of *Essays on Reform*, he writes, p. 273: "Democracy in its true sense is the product of Christianity whose principle, asserted from the first and asserted until now, has been the spiritual equality of all men before God."

[2] Mazzini, *Thoughts on Democracy*, edited by E. A. Venturi, p. 174. Cf. also MacCunn on Mazzini in *Six Radical Thinkers*, p. 198.

[3] Kant, *Metaphysic of Ethics*, § 1.

his eloquent plea for democracy "the truth that all men have worth—worth that effectually parts man from the chattel, and even from the highest animal"; the truth that "we discern in man a principle of moral and spiritual life which enjoys the unique distinction that, whereas nothing else in the world —gifts, or power, or wealth—can be pronounced absolutely good, this always can." [1] Here, then, we have the true meaning of that essential equality which is the fundamental principle of social democracy. It is an assertion of the supreme spiritual dignity and moral worth of each individual member of the human race, irrespective of accidents of birth and place, irrespective even of differences of character and ability. It is the truth summed up in the great apothegm of Burns, that in spite of lack of rank and wealth, in spite of intellectual feebleness and moral delinquency, "A man's a man for a' that." [2]

§ 5. *The Postulates of Political Democracy.*

Wherever there is—and just so far as there is—a recognition of this fundamental equality of men, and an acknowledgment of this essential uniformity of human nature, *social* democracy exists. When, moreover, this equality is regarded as connoting primarily the possession by each and all of a per-

[1] MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, pp. 4-5.

[2] Cf. Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 23: "Democracy means that personality is the first and final reality. . . . Personal responsibility, individual initiation, these are the notes of democracy. . . . From this central position of personality result the other notes of democracy, viz. liberty, equality, fraternity—words that are not mere words to catch the mob, but symbols of the highest ethical idea that humanity has yet reached, the idea that personality is the one thing of permanent and abiding worth, and that in every human individual there lies personality." Again, p. 25: "In every individual there lives an infinite and universal possibility—that of being a king and a priest."

sonality of infinite value; when its recognition is an admission of the supreme spiritual dignity and the inestimable moral worth of every individual, irrespective of the external accidents of his lot, and in spite of his numerous idiosyncrasies—then the principle of social democracy demands, as Kant long ago pointed out, that all men alike should be treated with respect and courtesy, that all alike should receive an equitable and undiscriminating justice, and that all alike should participate in the same civil rights.[1] That is to say, it demands the elimination both of a privileged nobility or a benefited clergy on the one side, and of an oppressed industrial proletariat or an enslaved peasantry on the other; it demands that in a court of law no irrelevant questions shall be asked as to the status of either accuser or accused;[2] it demands equality of opportunity, and *la carrière ouverte à tous*. But it does *not* necessarily demand for all an equal share, or indeed any share whatsoever, of political power. For the exercise of political power is not, like the enjoyment of civil right, a matter that relates primarily to the self-realisation of the individual; it concerns, in the first place, the well-being of the community-as-a-whole. It is true, of course, that the exercise of political power has its personal aspect. Man is a political animal, and he can attain to his full development as an individual

[1] Cf. Kant, *Metaphysic of Ethics*, § 2. Professor MacCunn well defines a civil right as "first a certain minimum of opportunity, in which at all events a man must be secured if that principle of moral life that gives him worth is to find its demanded expression in act" (*Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 7).

[2] Cf. Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 33: "Jefferson when he said that all men are created equal . . . did not suppose all men to be of equal height or weight, or equally wise or equally good. He did, however, contend for a principle of which one elementary application is the law which makes murder the same crime whatever be the relative positions of the murderer and the murdered man."

only in the state. The reverence, therefore, which recognises his claim to civil rights, also requires that his claim to political rights shall not be lightly denied. For without them he cannot reach the full stature of his humanity: only in the active performance of the functions of citizenship can he attain to complete self-realisation.[1] This is true; but it is not all the truth, or even the major part of the truth. Other and more important considerations have to be taken into account. The exercise of political power is not so much a personal right as a public trust; and it is not every one who has the qualities and capacities necessary for its adequate performance. Granted that the highest life and the fullest self-realisation are possible only to those to whom the rights and duties of citizenship are open; it is equally true that no good life at all, and no self-determination whatsoever, are possible in a community wherein political power is in the control of unworthy and incapable hands, where law and order are not maintained, where justice fails through the feebleness or folly of its executors.

The postulates of political democracy are therefore much more numerous than those of social democracy. It is quite possible for one to possess an ardent faith in the essential equality of men, and to be a zealous advocate of all the reforms that are entailed by the acceptance of this principle, and yet at the same time

[1] This thesis is developed, as all students of political ideas are aware, in Mill's *Representative Government*, in Hegel's *Philosophie des Rechts*, in T. H. Green's *Principles of Political Obligation*, and in Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*. Cf. also MacCunn, *Six Radical Thinkers*, p. 152: "It is of the essence of all sound national life not only that the state should count on the subject's loyalty, but that the citizen should find his life—as he never can find it in the circumscribed round of private interests—in and through the duties which are also the responsibilities of civic status." So, too, McKechnie, *The State and the Individual*, p. 74: "The ideal polity is that in which men can fully realise the perfection of their individual lives."

to have so low an opinion of the character and capacity of the masses of mankind at large, or of the members of some particular community, as to believe them to be totally unfitted to possess political power. This, indeed, was in general the attitude of Thomas Carlyle, who combined to a quite curious extent the social-democratic faith that "through every living soul the glory of a present God still beams" with the politically anti-democratic creed that men in community are "mostly fools," that they are a "rotten canaille," incapable of either governing themselves or choosing leaders to govern them. This, too, was the attitude of the Calvinistic Church, on whose stern theology Carlyle was brought up: it regarded all men as equal in the sight of the transcendent Deity, but it also comprehended all men in the curse of a primeval Fall, and it attributed to all men a natural depravity which rendered them of themselves incapable of any good. This combined doctrine of equality and depravity, however, was not original in Calvin. He derived it from the dominant Augustinianism of the Catholic Church; and Saint Augustine took it from the Apostle Paul. The Christian Church generally, indeed, has powerfully fostered a social democracy based on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and at the same time has equally strongly supported some form or other of anti-democratic political organisation—whether an oligarchic administration of the ordained, or the autocratic *régime* of the anointed.[1]

Believers in political democracy postulate con-

[1] The argument that natural equality is not by itself a valid ground for claim to political rights is well stated by Schérer, *La Démocratie et la France*, p. 38.

cerning humanity—or at any rate concerning such portions of humanity as they think ripe for representative government—four things besides social equality. They are all of them of the nature of articles of faith, not readily susceptible of direct demonstration. Two of them relate to the individual; two to the community. Concerning the individual the believer in political democracy postulates, first, his fundamental honesty; secondly, his normal common sense. Concerning the community he postulates, first, its quasi-organic unity; secondly, its possession of a general will. A few words respecting each of these big themes must here suffice.

First Postulate: the Fundamental Honesty of Men in general.—This is a large postulate. It is one not easy to reconcile with such religious doctrines as those of original sin and total depravity, except on the assumption that human standards are lower than divine. Nor is it one easy to harmonise with the long and black record of human violence and fraud. Yet it is one that must be granted if the idea of the democratic state is to be maintained. And, in spite of all, it is a faith which our knowledge of our own hearts assures us is rational. The worst of us in his worst moments strives to find, and never rests till he does find, some ethical justification—satisfactory to himself, however unsatisfactory to others—of his worst acts. "No man at bottom," even Carlyle with all his deep-seated Calvinistic pessimism admits, "means injustice; it is always for some obscure distorted image of a right that he contends." [1] Our

[1] Carlyle, *Chartism*, chap. i. Cf. Clayton, *Rise of Democracy*, p. 246: "On the whole it seems indisputable that the common people of the great nations do cleave to honesty and good-will."

knowledge of our own hearts assures us that the heart of the world is sound. If it does not do so, we cannot be democrats in politics. For, as Professor Ramsay Muir well says, the very basis of faith in democracy as a form of state "is to be found in the fundamental honesty of the mass of the people, and in their fundamental love of justice." [1] No person who proclaims the "class-war" on moral grounds, who denounces any group of his fellows as irremediably evil, who would exclude any order of society from power on the ground of its inherent corruption, is a democrat, whatever else he may be, or whatever he may call himself. A low view of human character is the natural concomitant of autocracy. Pessimists, like Schopenhauer, who see little but "bestiality" in the average member of "the brute multitude"; misanthropes, like Nietzsche, with their loathing and contempt for common men as "frogs and weaklings"; syndicalists, like Sorel, with their profound disbelief in natural justice—all these, and such as these, necessarily repudiate democracy and advocate a *régime* of despots—Supermen or Bolsheviks—a government not by consent but by suppression. On the other hand, optimists, like Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, who believe in the radical integrity and ultimate perfectibility of man, inevitably tend to regard the democratic state as the only form of politics finally and permanently tolerable.[2]

Second Postulate: the Practical Common Sense of

[1] Muir, *Peers and Bureaucrats*, p. 154.

[2] Concerning Rousseau see G. D. H. Cole's Introduction to the *Social Contract* (Everyman's Library), p. xli.: "The fundamental dogma of the natural goodness of man finds no place directly in the *Social Contract*, but it lurks behind the whole of his political theory, and is indeed throughout his master-conception." Concerning Mill's optimism and its bases see Professor MacCunn's brilliant essay in *Six Radical Thinkers*, pp. 39-87.

Men in general.—It is not, however, enough, to justify the democratic ideal of the state, that one should have faith in the fundamental honesty of one's fellows. The state demands wisdom as well as honesty, qualities of mind as well as qualities of heart.[1] Among the most appalling catastrophes in the world's history are those which have been precipitated by the incapacity of honest fools. It is not, for instance, necessary to impugn the good intentions of those blind leaders of the blind who are at the present moment hurrying Russia to ruin, in order to demonstrate their unfitness for any sort of authority outside Pandemonium. Those who believe in the democratic state must have faith in the fundamental good sense of the masses of their fellows. It is not necessary to hold—what is in fact untrue—that the majority of men, or even any considerable minority, have either the knowledge or the power of will required for the actual work of government. Democratic government, as we have seen, is no essential characteristic of the democratic state. All that is necessary is that the community-as-a-whole shall possess a general common sense sufficient to enable it, first, to choose prudently a representative government, secondly, to determine wisely the broad lines of policy, when the alternatives are laid before it in the simplest possible form. Until a community can do this, however democratic it may be socially, it is incapable of forming a democratic state.[2] That

[1] Cf. C. D. Burns, *Political Ideals*, p. 290, where a *régime* of "intelligent villains" is preferred to one of "well-intentioned fools."

[2] It is, of course, generally recognised that political democracy is not universally applicable. Cf. R. W. Sellars, *The Next Step in Democracy*, p. 248: "We are realising that democracy has its conditions, and we are asking ourselves whether these conditions can always and everywhere be fulfilled."

most communities of white men *are* capable of doing this, is a necessary article of the democratic creed. It must be maintained in face of the evidence of much popular folly,[1] and against the arguments of anti-democrats from Plato and Aristotle to Carlyle, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold and Sir Henry Maine. Like our faith in human honesty, it is ultimately based on our conviction of our own common sense and soundness of judgment. It was because he was so sure of himself that Lincoln was able to assert so confidently that though "you can fool part of the people all the time, and all the people part of the time, you cannot fool all the people all the time." Even Macchiavelli, with all his distrust of men in general, and all his faith in the super-wisdom of princes, made the remark "distinguished by his usual acuteness and depth, that although in matters of general discussion the people were often mistaken, yet in matters reduced to particulars they are most sensible and judicious."[2] One of the most conspicuous marks of their wisdom is that they rarely try to govern directly, and that they as a rule take precautions against their own liability to premature or passionate action by setting up some sort of constitutional machinery which cannot be made to work too fast. To sum up in the words of Mr. E. L. Godkin: "Democracy really means a profound belief in the wisdom as well as the power of the majority."[3]

[1] See particularly the evidence accumulated in that fascinating and illuminating study of crowd-psychology, Graham Wallas's *Human Nature in Politics*.

[2] Lord Brougham, *Historical Dissertations*, p. 23.

[3] Godkin, *Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy*, p. 132. Cf. also Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle* (popular edition), p. 111, and G. Lowes Dickinson, *Development of Parliament*, p. 180: "Their (the people's) fundamental reasonableness is the presupposition of democracy."

Third Postulate: the Solidarity of the Community.— Those who grant the fundamental honesty and the normal good sense of the average man have gone a long way on the road whose end is the democratic state; but they have not yet reached that end. For no amount of individual virtue, in combination with no matter how much individual ability, manifested in no matter how many isolated persons, is sufficient to form the basis of a political organisation. There must be, further, a sense of solidarity, a consciousness of community, a vital bond of union among these scattered individuals, before they can become a society or found a state. The life of a community is something more than the sum of the lives of its present constituent members. It inherits a being bequeathed to it by the generations of the dead, and it draws a quickening inspiration from the yet unrealised influence of the generations still to come. Its ghostly and permanent fellowship, past and future, far outnumbers in multitude, and far outweighs in importance, the ephemeral company of its citizens at any given stage of its career. It has a personality of its own, and if it be not organic in any exact physical sense of the term, it is organic on the psychic plane.[1] It is not always easy to say what are, still less to say what ideally ought to be, the *limits* of political community. Perhaps some day it may be possible for a " Parliament of Man, a Federa-

[1] Cf. J. A. Hobson, *Crisis of Liberalism*, p. 73: " Whatever view we hold about society on the physical plane as a collection of individual bodies living in some sort of union, it can, I think, be made quite clear that society is rightly regarded as a moral rational organism in the sense that it has a common psychic life, character, and purpose which are not to be resolved into the life, character, and purpose of its individual members." See also Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee*, where there are many suggestive remarks on the communal existence.

tion of the World" to be brought into being. At present it is not so. Apparently at present the *nation* is the largest—and probably (as I hope to show in a later section) the best—form of society which can be taken as the basis of the state.[1] Be this, however, as it may, some sort of homogeneous society there must be, and it is a matter of vital importance what sort of society it is.[2] Moreover, any kind of internecine class war, such as the Syndicalists advocate, any manner of irreconcilable racial conflict (such as exists in Ireland), any variety of uncompromising religious antagonism (such as that which divides Hindoo from Mahomedan in India)—in short, any source of schism so serious as to prevent a body of men thrown together geographically from becoming an organic community psychologically, is fatal to the development of a true democratic unitary state.

Fourth Postulate: the Existence of a general Will.—Not only does the democratic state assume the quasi-organic unity of the community from which it is constituted, it also assumes that in spite of all the divergent opinions of its multitudinous citizens, it is able to speak with a single voice; and that, in spite of the discordant volitions of its many members, it is possessed of a general will.[3] The first clear exposition of this doctrine of the general will was due to Rousseau. He set it forth in his *Discourse on Political*

[1] Cf. C. H. Pearson, *National Life and Character*, p. 198: "Patriotism seems to be based on the reasonable acknowledgment of two facts in our nature: that we owe a duty to our fellow-men and that we cannot adequately perform it to the race at large."

[2] Among types of society capable of forming the basis of a political organisation the most distinctive are: (*a*) tribal, feudal, and national; (2) economic, religious, and cosmopolitan.

[3] "By the general will I understand the will of a people directed towards those ends for which it acts as a whole" (Miss H. D. Oakeley, in *Bedford College Lectures*, p. 145).

Economy, published in the Encyclopaedia of 1755, wherein he said: "The body politic is a moral being possessed of a will; and this general will—which tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and is the source of the laws—constitutes for all the members of the state, in their relations to one another and to it, the rule of what is just or unjust." He further expounded it, with frequent iteration, in his *Social Contract*, wherein he carefully distinguished it from "the will of all," and proclaimed it to be very good. Says Professor Vaughan: "By the general will Rousseau is careful to explain that he does not mean the sum of the individual wills taken separately, but the corporate will which, from the nature of the case, belongs to a body having a common life, an organised being of its own. . . . It implies a collective consciousness—more than that, a public spirit—leavening and giving unity to the whole mass." [1] This idea of the general will—the most fruitful of all Rousseau's contributions to political science—was adopted and developed by Hegel in Germany, and in this country was made prominent in the philosophical theories of the state associated with the honoured names of T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet. In America, Professor John Dewey, most lofty and stimulating of writers on statecraft, has incorporated it into his system. "If democracy," he writes, "be a form of state, it not only does have, but must have, a common will; for it is this unity of will which makes it an organism." [2] How this general will can be ascertained, and how when ascer-

[1] C. E. Vaughan, *Political Writings of Rousseau*, vol. i. pp. 27-28.
[2] Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 7.

tained it can be made effective, are other questions on which it would be irrelevant to enter here. I shall have to revert to them in a later section of this study, where I shall hope to show that in a homogeneous community such as is here postulated the best method of ascertaining it is by means of a simple majority vote, rather than by any more complicated contrivance. For the present it is enough to insist that the democratic principle implies the existence of this dominant and authoritative general will.

§ 6. *Conclusion.*

It is hoped that the analytical study to which this chapter has been devoted has made it clear that the term democracy is popularly used in three quite distinct senses, viz. (1) that as applied to society it connotes equality; (2) that as applied to the state it means the ultimate sovereignty of the community-as-a-whole: and (3) that as applied to government it implies the actual administration of affairs by the people, either directly, or else mediately through delegates. In defining the term "democracy" it has not been possible for the writer wholly to refrain from expressing—particularly through the medium of quotations—critical opinions concerning the three types as above defined. He has not, indeed, attempted to conceal his view, first, that democracy as a form of society is founded on an eternal truth, and is a universally applicable ideal: secondly, that democracy as a form of government is, on the contrary, a mere matter of machinery, and that as such it is in practice rarely possible, and still more rarely desirable, to employ it; thirdly that democracy as a

form of state occupies an intermediate position. On the one hand, the claim of the subject to have a share in political power is not, like his claim to equality before the law, a simple question of personal right; it is a claim which has to be considered in the light of the interests of the community-as-a-whole, and has to be conceded or rejected mainly on grounds of public policy. On the other hand, it is not a mere matter of administrative machinery: it makes an immense difference to a subject whether he (or she) has or has not a share in the supreme control of the state: to every person, therefore, to whom the democratic franchise can with advantage to the community be granted, it ought to be granted. Round these problems of the interlacing advantages of the community and rights of the individual the democratic and anti-democratic controversy has for the most part raged. To these problems we must now turn.

CHAPTER II

MERITS AND DEFECTS OF DEMOCRACY

"La démocratie fera le tour du monde. Qu'elles le craignent ou le désirent, toutes les nations civilisées s'y acheminent."—E. SCHÉRER, *La Démocratie et la France.*

"After giving full weight to all that appeared to me well grounded in the arguments against democracy, I unhesitatingly decided in its favour."—J. S. MILL, *Autobiography.*

"O disrespectable Democracy! I love you."—E. CARPENTER, *Towards Democracy.*

"Certes, un tel régime est trop conforme aux données de la raison pour ne pas devoir être considéré comme celui que l'avenir réserve à toutes les sociétés qui avanceront en civilisation."—H. PASSY, *Des Formes de gouvernement.*

§ 7. *The Practical Problem.*

WE have seen that the fundamental principle of democracy is equality, and that (1) as applied to society it means the abolition of privileges, and the placing of every one on a level before the law; (2) as applied to the state it means the ultimate control of political affairs by the community-as-a-whole; and (3) as applied to government it means the actual administration of the state by the multitude.

We have further seen that there is in the modern world a very general acceptance of social democracy, and an almost equally general repudiation of democratic government; but that in respect of democracy as a form of state a considerable controversy has

arisen and still continues. It behoves us then to weigh the merits and defects of the democratic state as compared with those of its authoritarian rivals, bearing in mind the fact that they have to be weighed in the scales both of communal and of individual advantage—the standards of which are by no means identical the one with the other. Before proceeding to this task, however, it is necessary to say a few words respecting one or two problems which present themselves even in the spheres of society and government. For, though the equalitarian principle of social democracy is generally accepted in theory, it is not always applied in practice; and though the practical inefficiency of democratic government is so patent as to secure a general agreement for its rejection, it is not always easy to detect and defeat specious attempts to introduce it indirectly.

1. *The Application of the Principle of Equality.*—The principle of universal human equality is true, as we have seen, only in respect of the profound underlying essentials of man's common nature. It is not true of the countless secondary qualities—physical, mental, and moral—that are the main determinants of the functions which he can perform, and therefore of the place which he should hold, in a democratic society. A man's a man, it is true; and consequently it would be intolerable that when, for example, a murder has been committed the penalty inflicted on the murderer should in any degree be determined by the answer to the question whether the victim was white or black, rich or poor, native or foreign, good or bad. But, just as truly, Quashee Nigger is not Socrates, nor yet Alexander, nor Croesus; and it would be absurd in the service of the community to

equate wisdom with folly, power with feebleness, capacity with incompetence. In short, the application of the principle of equality to practical affairs is attended by two dangers: the first is lest it should not be enforced in essentials; the second is lest it should be unduly pressed into non-essentials. It is essential that there should be equality in civil rights and equity in law; that all should have the same economic opportunities and access to the same educational advantages; that to none should be denied the fullest freedom of self-realisation. It is *not* essential—indeed it is incompatible with the freedom of self-realisation just insisted on—that every one should wield the same power, attain the same honour, reap the same reward. Any effort to repress energy by abolishing prizes, to maintain equality by preventing the rise of merit, to level down instead of levelling up, will have serious and possibly fatal results. Well does Montesquieu say: "The principle of democracy is corrupted not only when the spirit of equality is extinct, but likewise when the citizens fall into a spirit of extreme equality, and when each of them would fain be upon a level with those whom he has chosen to command him. . . . Democracy has, therefore, two excesses to avoid, viz. the spirit of inequality which leads to aristocracy or monarchy, and the spirit of extreme equality which leads to despotism." [1] Despotism, indeed, is the strange culmination and anti-climax to extreme equalitarianism. For if it is true that equality of civil rights, of educational advantages, and of economic opportunities is essential to genuine and general liberty; not less true is it that the same levelling principle, pushed into regions where it does

[1] Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, bk. viii. chap. ii.

not properly apply, is fatal to freedom. "The deepest cause," said Lord Acton, "which made the French Revolution so disastrous to liberty was its theory of equality," thus pressed to extremes.[1] Further, not only is excessive egalitarism destructive of liberty, it is also obstructive to progress. For progress is consequent upon freedom. Equality of opportunity is meaningless, if opportunity when seized and used is to be deprived of its achievements and rewards. The best interests both of the individual and the community are advanced when, on the one hand, all are made to start level, but, on the other hand, each is encouraged to go as fast and as far as he can.

2. *The Application of the Principle of Democratic Control.*—There is general agreement—based on numerous lessons of history and on careful study of crowd-psychology—that democracy as a form of government is impossible. Lord Bryce expresses this view and defines the limits of democratic control when he says: "The masses cannot have either the leisure or the capacity for investigating the underlying principles of policy, or for mastering the details of legislation. Yet they may—so our optimist must hope—attain to a sound perception of the main and broad issues of national and international policy, especially in their moral aspects—a perception sufficient to enable them to keep the nation's action

[1] Lord Acton, *Essays on Freedom*, quoted and discussed by N. M. Butler, *True and False Democracy*, p. 7. The real or apparent antagonism between liberty and equality is treated by D. Parali, *Traditionalisme et démocratie*, pp. 255-9; G. W. Hosmer, *People and Politics*, pp. 101-109; and A. Christensen, *Politics and Crowd Morality*, pp. 50 and 184. Eduard von Hartmann in his *Tagesfragen*, p. 35, writes: "Die Demokratie versteht die Gleichheit nicht als die Gleichheit des Rechts aller zum Emporsteigen in höhere soziale Kulturschichten, sondern als das allgemeine Nivellement, als die Pflicht der kulturtragenden Minderheit ihren Vorsprung aufzugeben und zu dem Niveau der Masse herabzusteigen."

upon right lines." [1] In similar strain Professor Henry Sidgwick contends that "the democratic principle must practically be limited by confining the authoritative decisions of the people to certain matters and certain periodically recurring times; and committing the great majority of governmental decisions to bodies or individuals who must have the power—and the duty—of deciding according to their own judgment without the active consent of the majority." [2] The same plea for representative democracy, as opposed to both direct and delegational democracy, is the theme of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's *Socialism and Government*.[3]

But, though there is this general agreement on the broad principle that the proper functions of the sovereign democracy are limited to two, viz. first the choice of administrators, and secondly the fixing of the main lines of policy, and consequently that in its own interest it should refrain from meddling with practical affairs in detail—in spite of this general agreement, there are some advisers of the people who—apparently because they are not able to get their own way quite so easily as they would like—urge it to assume a more direct control of government by means of the specific mandate, or the referendum, or the initiative, or the recall. All that I wish to point out at this place is that these devices are all expedients for the reintroduction in one veiled form or another of that direct democracy which in its more overt forms has been so thoroughly discredited. One and

[1] Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, vol. ii. p. 31.

[2] Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, p. 613. The limitation, of course, must be a self-limitation adopted by the people themselves, not one imposed upon them.

[3] Cf. also Sidney Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, for a statement of the same case as applied to the government of trade unions.

all, they are inconsistent with that representative democracy to the consideration of whose merits and defects we must now turn.[1]

§ 8. *Defects of Democracy.*

We have seen that in the democratic state the normal functions of the sovereign people are two, viz. (1) to elect the government, and (2) to determine the main lines of policy. The questions thus arise: Does it perform these functions well? Does it as a rule set up a good government? Does it lay down the lines of sound policy? Further, does it tend to exceed these two normal functions, either in the direction of excessive subjection of its representatives, or in the direction of excessive interference in details of administration? Again, what are the effects of the exercise of its sovereignty upon the efficiency of the government on the one hand, and upon the character of the democratic society on the other? The answers to these questions given by a number of competent observers disclose defects in the democratic state so serious as to make it a matter of no surprise that some critics reject it altogether, and deny that it can ever be a satisfactory form of political organisation. Let us briefly review the chief counts of the critics.

(1.) *Failure to secure a good Government.*—The supreme test of the worth and validity of any form of state is its success in securing a good government, that is to say, an administration at once strong and capable, stable and enduring, consonant alike with the common weal and the common will. Democracy,

[1] For fuller consideration of these points see below, Part III.

like aristocracy and monarchy, will ultimately stand or fall according as it fulfils or fails to fulfil this comprehensive test of efficiency. "Democracy," says Professor Ramsay Muir, "can justify itself only by sorting out the best brains of the nation, and by setting them to work for which they are fittest." [1] Still more emphatically does Professor York Powell assert that "a democracy, of all governments, is least able to afford to listen to lies, or to grow corrupt, or to remain self-indulgent or ignorant," and that "its stability depends upon the persons it trusts." "If," he concludes, "it trusts the wrong persons, it falls sooner or later—generally sooner." [2]

Now there is, unfortunately, a general agreement among competent and impartial students of modern politics that democracy, new to its task of choosing representatives and appointing executives and judiciaries, has not yet learned to perform its elective function well. Either it has not yet discerned the qualities of mind and character that make the sound legislator, the effective administrator, and the just judge, or, for some sinister reason, it deliberately prefers the man of mediocre capacity and doubtful integrity. The chief burden of Carlyle's condemnation of political democracy is that it ignores or rejects the "noble silent men" who best could serve it, and places power in the hands of windbags and charlatans. Ruskin and Matthew Arnold join him in his denunciations. John Stuart Blackie argues, with the support of copious historical examples, that "even when left free from the spur of the ambitious demagogue, the

[1] Muir, *Peers and Bureaucrats*, p. 57.

[2] Powell, in Introduction to C. Beard's *Industrial Revolution*, p. 35. Cf. also for an American statement of the same view, F. H. Giddings, *Democracy and Empire*, p. 213.

magic oil of the flatterer, and the glamour of the political dreamer, the people have for the most part neither the will nor the power to find out the best men to lead them," [1] and his view is shared by Sir James Stephen, Sir Henry Maine, and Mr. Lecky. Sir Sidney Low, writing a generation later, laments that "modern representative institutions have not brought into the national service the highest skilled talent of the community," [2] and so strong a democrat as Professor L. T. Hobhouse is forced to concur with his opinion.[3] From America comes the same lamentation. Many writers, prominent among whom is Mr. E. L. Godkin, have noted with profound alarm that democracies "have not shown that desire to employ leading men in the management of their affairs which they were expected to show," but that they have delegated their sovereignty to the demagogue, the grafter, and the "boss." [4] In the Latin democracies of both the Old and the New World the same voice is heard, and with even juster cause. It would be tedious, however, even to enumerate the names of the Latin writers who have uttered their plaints and their warnings. In France alone they are legion; for in that country a long series of ministerial scandals has veritably shaken the faith of the nation in democracy itself, and has given a powerful impetus to syndicalism.[5] In other Latin democracies

[1] Blackie, *Democracy*, p. 35. [2] Low, *Governance of England*, p. 199.

[3] Cf. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, pp. 184-5, especially a notable paragraph beginning: "Every form of government must be held responsible for the type of man whom it tends to bring to the front, and he who would weigh the merits and defects of democracy must take into account the character of the democratic leader."

[4] Godkin, *Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy*, p. iv. Cf. also chap. ii. on "Equality."

[5] Particularly notable are: C. Deschamps, *Malaise de la démocratie*; E. Faguet, *Le Culte d'incompétence*; Y. Guyot, *La Démocratie individua-*

—Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the American Republics —the corruption and incompetence of the leading politicians are so notorious that they are taken for granted in any discussion of public affairs.

Who are the men to whom, all the world over, the democracies tend to entrust legislative power, administrative control, judicial authority? They are the men of mediocre intelligence, not men of light and leading, but men who give expression to the confused and nebulous sentiments of the crowd. They are orators, men of words, lawyer-politicians, logic-choppers who are able to hypnotise the multitude by eloquence, and to make the worse cause seem the better.[1] They are flatterers who tell the democracy that it cannot err, and panderers who minister to its vices and its lusts. They are demagogues who gain power over it by evil means and use the power thus gained for their own vile ends.[2] Well may a German apostle of autocracy cry as he contemplates the type of politician invested with power by the people: "Die Demokratie ist Paradies der Schreier, Schwätzer, Phraseure, Schmeichler, und Schmarotzer."[3] Well may a British preacher of thoroughness ejaculate: "How the democracy does hate a man who

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liste; H. Passy, *Formes des gouvernement*; A. Prins, *Le Régime parlementaire*; E. Schérer, *La Démocratie et la France*. M. Faguet (p. 92) quotes an epigram of Beaumarchais which, he says, is much more applicable to a democracy than to an absolute monarchy: "The post required a mathematician; it was given to a dancing-master."

[1] Socrates classes public speaking with confectionery as part of the art of flattery—τέχνη κολακική (Plato, *Gorgias*, 463). Adam Smith calls the politician "that insidious and crafty animal."

[2] Cf. Michels, *Political Parties*, p. 175: "Demagogues are the courtesans of the popular will. Instead of raising the masses, they debase themselves to the level of the masses."

[3] "Democracy is the paradise of the shrieker, babbler, word-spinner, flatterer, and tuft-hunter" (Hartmann, *Tagesfragen*, p. 36). Cf. also Treitschke, *Politik*, ii. p. 265.

is a rebuke to it, because he takes pains, and is a lover of efficiency, perfection, and production at its finest best! . . . Left to itself democracy gravitates to mediocracy." [1] Well may Mr. Bernard Shaw utter the warning: "Sooner or later, unless democracy is to be discarded in a reaction of disgust such as killed it in ancient Athens, democracy itself will demand that only such men shall be presented to its choice as have proved themselves qualified for more serious and disinterested work than stoking-up election meetings to momentary and foolish excitement." [2] To self-seeking and incapable politicians, who win the suffrages of the inexperienced democracy by deceit, the words of Bolingbroke—spoken nearly two centuries ago—may be applied: "He who undertakes to govern a free people by corruption, and to lead them by a false interest against their true interest cannot boast the honours of the invention. The expedient is as old as the world, and he can pretend to no other honour than that of being the humble imitator of the Devil." [3]

2. *Failure to lay down sound Lines of Policy.*—If, in the general opinion of both its foes and its friends, democracy has, so far, failed in the main to establish strong and efficient governments in the states where it prevails, it is equally, and not less regrettably, true that it has on the whole failed to give a right direction to national policies. Let us enumerate some of the aspects of its failure.

[1] P. T. Forsyth, *Socialism, the Church, and the Poor*, p. 21. Cf. also Baumann, *Persons and Politics of the Transition*, p. 213: "History testifies unmistakably and unanimously to the passion of democracies for incompetence. There is nothing democracy dislikes and suspects so heartily as technical efficiency, particularly when it is independent of the popular vote."

[2] Shaw, Appendix II. to E. R. Pease, *History of the Fabian Society*, p. 268.

[3] Bolingbroke, *Dissertation on Parties.*

(1) The first disability from which it suffers is *indifference* or apathy. It does not take its sovereignty seriously; it does not feel sufficient interest in the vast majority of the problems for whose solution it is ultimately responsible. It lets things drift. It leaves its representatives without any guidance at all.[1]

(2) Its second disability is *ignorance*. It is devoid of the knowledge indispensably necessary to the formulation of even the most general and unparticularised policy on many of the questions of the day.[2]

(3) Hence, thirdly, it is characterised by hopeless *immaturity* or amateurishness. It tends to try rash experiments with costly materials, and to deal empirically with the wealth of nations and with the bodies and the souls of men.[3]

(4) For, fourthly, it is given to *idealism*, that is to say, to the worship of abstract theory. It is a ready victim to shibboleths and catchwords. It is the willing devotee of the doctrinaire. He who wants to lead it has but to find a fascinating formula—*e.g.* "self-determination," "conscription of wealth," "no annexations and no indemnities," "no profiteering," "no popery"—the democracy will tend to

[1] Cf. Ingersoll, *Fears for Democracy*, p. 138: "No precaution avails if the people are indifferent," and p. 297: "It is the neglect of the duties of citizenship that we find to be the difficulty."

[2] Brougham, *Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 122, speaks of the people's "ignorance of their real good," and of their "readiness to take up from that ignorance any wild fancies which crafty men may draw up in plausible colours." Cf. J. A. Hobson, *Crisis of Liberalism*, p. 72: "The great mass of the people do no more real thinking, exercise no more real initiative, than the separate cells of the individual human body."

[3] Cf. Low, *Governance of England*, pp. 209-16: "If the elected is a political amateur, so assuredly is the elector. . . . The great majority have neither the time nor the mental concentration to study politics in a systematic fashion. . . . Political power is vested in the mass of citizens, but the mass of citizens in most countries are too busy or too indifferent to obtain political knowledge." Cf. also Spencer, *Social Statics*, p. 333: "The mischiefs wrought by uninstructed law-making . . . are conspicuous to all who do but glance over its history."

apply it universally, indiscriminately, and unintelligently, regardless of circumstances.[1]

(5) Closely connected with idealism is *idolatry*, or the blind following of the demagogue who by some means has secured hypnotic power over the multitude. Infinitely pathetic is the devotion of the democracy to the "crowd-compeller," and not without its element of hope; for sometimes the "crowd-compeller" is a John the Baptist or a Christ. But whether the master of the masses be good or bad, it is he, and not the mesmerised myriad, who determines the policy of the moment.[2]

(6) But often only for the moment; for if the people is idealistic and idolatrous, it is also *inconstant* in its attachments both to principles and persons unstable, incalculable. It stones its prophets if their predictions do not please it; it abandons policies which do not produce immediate and gratifying fruit. Hence such control as it exercises over the conduct of affairs is marked by lack of continuity, by incoherence, by a general absence of consistent and unifying ideas.[3]

[1] Professor Bernard Pares asked a Russian revolutionary who was crying out "no annexation," what he meant by "annexia." The man replied that she was the fifth daughter of Tsar Nicholas! Cf. Schérer, *La Démocratie et la France*, p. 24: "L'idée abstraite n'est-elle pas l'aliment naturel de la rhétorique populaire? N'est-elle pas la forme fatale de la pensée qui, faute de connaissances solides, opère dans le vide?" also p. 50, "L'un des vices de la démocratie, comme de toute demi-culture, est la passion des idées simples et par suite des principes absolus. Elle est simpliste"; again, p. 65, "La démocratie est profondément idéaliste. Elle dédaigne de tenir compte de la nature des choses." Hartmann, *Tagesfragen*, p. 39, expresses similar sentiments. Mr. A. L. Smith, Master of Balliol College, says in a lecture published in *The Empire and the Future*, p. 81: "Another danger about democracy is its tendency to a sort of idealism, a readiness to take dreams for realities, and to believe in the efficacy of good intentions. . . . The mass of men are always in ignorance. . . . This ignorance makes them easy victims to shibboleths."

[2] Cf. Conway, *The Crowd in Peace and War*, especially chap. x.

[3] Brougham, *Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 120, remarks that "the proneness of the people to violent and unreflecting courses, and the fickleness of their resolutions, are to be classed among the vices of democracy." The

(7) This defect is accentuated and made more serious by reason of a feeling of *irresponsibility* which diffuses itself among large bodies of men acting corporately. If disastrous experiments are tried, if foolish deeds are done, if gross betrayals of good causes occur, if flagrant disloyalty to leaders, no one in particular is to blame, on no one can special responsibility be fixed. Hence democracy tends to display in public affairs an imprudence, a recklessness, an insanity which no member of it would dream of displaying in his private affairs. Examples from the past ten years crowd upon one's memory; but space fails for their record here.[1]

(8) This irresponsibility, moreover, extends from the sphere of wise and otherwise into the sphere of right and wrong. The crowd tends to be either a good deal better or a good deal worse than its average member. If in time of war it can rise to heights of corporate heroism which amaze us by their unsuspected revelation of sublimity, in time of politics it can, and commonly does, sink to depths of *immorality* that make us all but despair of human nature itself. It can, and sometimes does, accept bribes, repudiate contracts, perpetrate iniquities, inflict injustices, exercise tyrannies, with a shamelessness equal to that with which the worst of despots and oligarchs are charged.[2]

(9) Closely akin to this deficiency in moral sense

fragility and impermanence of democratic politics is the theme of Lieber's *Civil Liberty and Self-Government*, p. 2, where it is said that the first half of the nineteenth century saw the production and general disappearance of more than 300 popular constitutions. The muddleheadedness of the multitude is emphasised by Mill, who in his *Autobiography* (p. 24) speaks of "the facility with which mankind believes at one and the same time things inconsistent with one another."

[1] The subject is dealt with by MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 74, and by Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 181.

[2] Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 168, laments "the corruption of

is an *irreverence* which inclines it wantonly to desecrate sanctities, flout traditions, abolish venerable customs, break the continuity of national life, destroy the organic development of the body politic.[1]

(10) In its passion for innovation, too, it frequently shows an *immoderation* and *intolerance* that make it the most formidable of oppressors. The possible "tyranny of the majority" was a subject of anxious solicitude to John Stuart Mill; in the mind of Lord Acton it excited an even deeper dread.

(11) And yet, at the same time, where its interests and its emotions are not touched, it can display an *immovability* which renders it the most insuperable obstacle to progress. It is curious how, like a child, a democracy can combine the most destructive iconoclasm with the most obstructive iconoduly—the worst elements of radicalism with the worst elements of conservatism.[2]

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opinion and the lowering of the moral standard in public affairs which has so profoundly depressed all thoughtful observers," and he adds (p. 180), "It is well to be under no illusions about democracy. Free government has not produced general demoralisation, but neither has it, as was hoped, prevented it." Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*, pp. 312 *et seq.*, dwells on the forms of bribery to which the electorate tends to yield, and by which it is liable to be seduced.

[1] Cf. Hartmann, *Tagesfragen*, p. 39: "Von irgend welcher Ehrfurcht für Traditionen, von Verständnis für die allmähliche politische Entwickelung, von geschichtlichem Sinn und einer Pflege geschichtlicher Kontinuität ist in den demokratischen Kreisen nichts zu merken."

[2] It is one of the cardinal points of Maine's indictment of *Popular Government* that it is unprogressive. Cf. Barker, *Political Thought*, p. 168: "Maine argues that democracy, whatever its love of change during its militant phase, will in its triumphant phase pass into a Chinese stationary state." Sismondi in his day contended that "the ignorant populace, given up almost everywhere to retrograde prejudices, will refuse to favour its own progress" (quoted Blackie, *Democracy*, p. 17). Treitschke asserts that, "democracies naturally incline to conservatism," and that "the people cling to old things from sheer force of habit" (Davis, *Political Thought of Treitschke*, p. 210). Professor Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 2, laments that the democratic state has itself become an obstruction to progress." Mr. G. D. H. Cole, *Conflicting Social Obligations*, p. 10, says: "However firmly we may retain our belief in political democracy, most of us have at least lost the illusion of an inevitable democratic political progress."

(12) Finally—to end this catalogue at the round dozen, rather than to complete it—the democracy tends to determine its policy more by consideration of its own selfish and momentary *interest*, than by consideration of the general and permanent advantage of the nation. It takes short-sighted views. It cannot, or does not, see far. It lives from hand to mouth. It is content to snatch an immediate advantage, even though it be at the price of distant disaster. It is recklessly destructive of geese that lay golden eggs. It diffuses a sense of insecurity fatal to progress and prosperity. Says M. Schérer: "Je le demande, comment espérer que la démocratie ne sacrifiera pas les intérêts durables du pays à l'avantage immédiat du proletaire." Thus, owing to the co-operative working of many sinister causes, the democracy does not as a rule well perform its proper function of laying down for the guidance of its representatives and their agents sound general lines of policy.

3. *Tendency to excessive Interference in Detail.*—As though in compensation for failure to provide safe and sound general guidance in matters of policy, the democracy tends to indulge in excessive interference in the technical details of government. It inclines to insist on specific "mandates" to legislators; on direct "democratic control" of administrative departments; on popular retrial of cases adjudged. Thus members of parliament and congressmen are harassed and diverted from their proper work by constant instructions from local committees, petitions from constituents, protests from caucuses, demands for explanations from the disappointed, incessant meddlings from all quarters. Similarly

ministers and other executive officers are constrained by clamour to do things which they know to be both silly and sinful; they are compelled to cultivate popularity at the expense of both their own character and the interests of the community; they are forced to secure a "good press" and a complacent public opinion by no matter what concessions of principle, no matter what surrenders to pressure. So, too, magistrates are subjected to a violent and prejudiced criticism which makes it hard indeed for them to pursue the straight path of justice in preference to the easy side-tracks marked out by popular passion.[1]

The penalty which democracy pays for this excessive interference, this insistence on detailed control, this extra-judicial pressure, is the appropriate but none the less appalling penalty of a weak, inefficient, and corrupt government. Men of power and judgment simply cannot work under a system of minute and incessant mandates.[2] Why should they? An automaton would do as well. No minister can conduct the difficult and complicated business of a great department of state if at every stage of his activity he is liable to interpellation and

[1] *The Times* for Thursday, May 24, 1917, contained a noteworthy example of justice influenced by pressure, and therefore applied with flagrant inequality. In parallel columns appeared reports of "sugar sellers fined" and "strike leaders released." The former paid the full penalty of their misdeeds because no body of outside opinion maintained them. The latter, who were stated to have committed offences for which "the maximum penalty was penal servitude for life," got off scot-free because they were members of a powerful organisation which was able to bring immense weight to bear on the government. One is reminded of the bad days of the weak Henry VI. when "livery and maintenance" flourished.

[2] Cf. Burke's famous *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, 1777. Less familiar is James Platt's excellent pamphlet entitled *Democracy* (1888), in which (p. 26) occurs the passage: "No man of intellect will be a mere delegate, unless he has his own ends to serve. We want a system that will induce the best men fitted to govern to come forward to volunteer their services, not for the benefit of a borough or a county, not for this party or that, but for the nation."

interruption. No magistrate of integrity or self-respect can possibly hold office if he is required to accommodate his decisions to the fluctuating indications of the political barometer.

Excessive interference in the details of government introduces into the administration the evils of direct democracy, and, just so far as it develops, it degrades the representative to the status of the delegate. Paralysis seizes the state. The legislature becomes timid and time-serving; the executive feeble and afraid; the judiciary double-minded and unjust. The result is disaster. Mr. J. Ellis Barker, who thinks that Britain is suffering from this excessive popular interference, says: "Democracy, after having destroyed the power of the king, has gradually undermined that of the ministers as well. Thus the nation is left without a guide. It has become a gigantic business with a large body of squabbling amateur directors, but without a general manager. No one is there to command. Amateurs—men without knowledge, without practical experience, without authority, without power, without initiative—nominally govern the country; but in reality they merely occupy office, pose as administrators, and allow things to drift." [1]

4. *Tendency to Insubordination and Anarchy.*—The fact that in a representative democracy the electors occupy the double position of master and servant, sovereign and subject, explains not only how it is that government in a democracy tends to be weak and cowardly, but also how it is that the community tends to be insubordinate and anarchic. That this is its tendency is unhappily patent to all at the

[1] J. E. Barker, *Foundations of Germany*, p. 40.

present day: it is indeed one of the most glaring of all the defects of modern democracies. But there is no mystery about it. It is easy to understand that politicians whose position and power depend wholly on popular suffrage dare not govern strongly, dare not enforce discipline, dare not run the risk of offending large bodies of constituents however unreasonable and lawless they may be. "No one can really govern who cannot afford to be unpopular," says Mr. G. G. Coulton.[1] The modern minister, and still more the modern member of parliament, cannot, or at any rate thinks he cannot, afford to be unpopular. He is like a schoolmaster—if such can be imagined—elected by his pupils and liable to be punished and dismissed by them. He feels it necessary to court favour by complacence, to gain influence by flattery, to outdistance rivals by condonation of turbulence, to attain security of tenure in leadership by conniving at outrages committed by his followers. If he is a legislator, his eye is always fixed on the next general election; he thinks of the use which his opponent might make of any injudicious rigour on his part. If he is an administrator or a judge he finds that it is painful and dangerous to resist the pressure of the politicians, to defy lawless interests, to incur the wrath of the anarchic press.

Sections of the democracy, discovering the seductive fact that their rulers—in pre-democratic days so independent and authoritative—are now entirely subservient and obsequious, and not yet realising that their own true interests are ultimately dependent on the maintenance of strong and orderly government, take advantage of the situation. They perceive that

[1] Coulton, *Pacificist Illusions*, p. 32.

any numerous and well-organised body of men or women—*e.g.* Sinn Feiners, shop stewards, female suffragists, conscientious objectors—can defy the law with impunity. Thence they come to despise the law, to flout the common will, to take short and violent cuts to the attainment of their political ends. Thus the community drifts into chaos and Bolshevism. Democracy perishes by disintegration. Forty years ago Sir T. E. May, in his history of *Democracy in Europe*, lamented the tendency, which he saw everywhere on the Continent, towards irreverence and disorder. Later writers have noted the same deplorable trend both in our own country and in America. "We shall never," says President N. M. Butler, "get back to a true democracy until the majesty of the law excites reverence and respect on its own account."[1] Of this return to true democracy there are at present but few signs.

5. *Tendency to Venality and Corruption.*—An even graver defect than lack of discipline and self-control is a tendency, widely evident both in old times and to-day, to venality and corruption. A vote is not only an instrument of power which enables organised bodies of its possessors, if they feel so disposed, to defy the law: it is also a commodity of value which self-seeking politicians are prepared to buy at a high price. In some countries the open sale and purchase of the vote is still possible. In our own country, owing to the growing stringency of the Corrupt Practices Acts, this is no longer so. But in countless indirect and insidious ways the evil trade goes on. Under the subtle guise of "improvement of economic conditions" demands for doles at the

[1] Butler, *True and False Democracy*, p. 38.

public expense are made by powerful sections of the community. Under the camouflage of "social reform" demagogues hold out enormous bribes to large groups of the electorate. Both party programmes and legislative enactments are formulated ultimately on a cash basis; sometimes the voters are frankly invited to place power in the hands of the men who will give them "9d. for 4d.," or are expressly warned not to entrust the government of the empire to those whose policy involves the possibility that the voters' beer will cost them more.[1] The very fact that economic conditions need improving, and that social reform is urgently called for, makes these appeals to selfish interest or predatory lust all the more dangerous, and all the more difficult to meet. For they often succeed not only in attracting the venal corrupt, but also in deceiving the emotional elect. Whenever they prevail, however—whether it be through the unscrupulous violence of the degraded bad, or through the mistaken advocacy of the deluded good—they speedily reduce politics to the level of an evil profession. Mr. Ernest Barker deplores "the tendency of certain classes of electors to use their voting power to put pressure on the government or municipality which is their employer."[2] Professor MacCunn, more generally, laments "the tendency to contract politics, with all its diversified and glorious ends, into a concentrated materialistic struggle for property."[3] M. Schérer gives a long and detailed

[1] Robert Lowe said fifty years ago: "We have no longer a party of attack and a party of resistance. We have instead two parties of competition, who, like Cleon and the sausage-seller of Aristophanes, are both bidding for the support of Demos" (quoted Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties*, p. 98).

[2] Barker, *Political Thought*, p. 231.

[3] MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 73.

exposure of electoral corruption in France, concluding with the words: "L'élection devient ainsi un marché, un marché dont l'électeur se croit authorisé à réclamer le prix sous forme de menues complaisances, et le député devient l'homme d'affaires de l'arrondissement, j'allais dire son homme à tout faire." [1] A similar damnatory revelation of the debasement of American democratic institutions is provided by Mr. E. L. Godkin, under the heading "Criminal Politics," in his book on the *Problems of Modern Democracy*. He attributes the degradation in the main to the evil influence of Irish immigrants who "enter on the game of politics in what may be called a predatory state of mind, without any sense of public duty." [2] Whether he is right or wrong in his diagnosis of the causes of the moral disease of the American body politic, of its existence in a virulent form there can be no doubt. From every other modern democracy the same story of venality comes. In the face of such disclosures—such cumulative evidences of incapacity and corruption—is it of any use to ask if there are countervailing merits in democracy? Can any merits, even if demonstrated, serve to outweigh evils so gross?

§ 9. *The Supreme Merit of Democracy.*

The defects of democracy enumerated in the preceding section are so many and so grave that one is

[1] Schérer, *La Démocratie et la France*, p. 34. Cf. also Deschamps, *Le Malaise de la démocratie*, especially p. 94: "L'amour excessif du bien-être est un des caractères de la démocratie"; and p. 125, "Notre vie fiévreuse devint, peu à peu, une véritable course aux scandales."

[2] Godkin, *Problems of Modern Democracy*, p. 131. In this view Mr. Godkin accords with Mr. Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, vol. i. p. 138: "No one who has carefully followed Irish politics during the period of the Land League can doubt that appeals to the cupidity of the electors formed the mainspring of the whole machine."

not surprised that in view of them some political thinkers despair of democracy altogether. German condemnation of popular government is, of course, general. Democracy is despised and rejected by devotees of the efficient Hohenzollern autocracy as "infirm of purpose, jealous, grudging, timid, changeable, unthorough, unready, without foresight, obscure in its aims, blundering along in an age of lucidity, guided only by a faltering and confused instinct." [1] The French author of *The Cult of Incompetence* remarks ironically that universal suffrage "is an excellent thing. It is a source of information. When it recommends a certain course of action, it shows us that it is a thing which we must *not* do." [2] Professor John Stuart Blackie, in much the same vein, comes to the conclusion that the majority "is pretty sure to be either wrong altogether, or wrong in the excess of what it passionately feels to be right." [3] Even Professor MacCunn admits that "democracy, still raw to its work, whether in politics or industry, may blunder. It may blunder fatally. Believers in democracy," he adds, "must face this fact." [4]

It may be argued, of course, in reply, that some of the charges brought against democracy are wholly false, and others grossly exaggerated. It may well be so. I am fain to believe, or at any rate to hope, that such is the case. I do not, however, feel in the least degree concerned to rebut these charges. I should, indeed, despair of making an effective defence of democracy merely by attempting to repel the

[1] Freiherr von Hexenküchen, quoted by F. S. Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle*, Part II. chap. v. Treitschke has many passages in the same strain.
[2] E. Faguet, *Cult of Incompetence*, English Translation, p. 21.
[3] Blackie, *Democracy*, p. 16.
[4] MacCunn, *Six Radical Thinkers*, p. 69.

assaults of its enemies, or of its still more formidable candid friends. Much that they say seems to me to admit of no denial or refutation. The effective defence of democracy appears to me to rest on quite other grounds, and I prefer to maintain the cause of popular sovereignty by contending (1) that, if democracy has grave defects, so also have all other forms of state; all other forms of human organisation of all sorts whatsoever; and also all forms of anarchy; (2) that the specific defects of democracy are those of youth, that (in Professor MacCunn's words) democracy is "raw to its work," and hence that its worst failings are due to immaturity and are likely to be overcome by experience; and (3) that, even in its present imperfect state of development, democracy has a supreme ethical and educational value which places it far above all other forms of state or no-state whatsoever.

Of these three contentions the first two require but little elaboration. (1) The defects of both autocracy and oligarchy as forms of state are writ large on the pages of history. Record after record has come down to us of monarchs who have failed—monarchs whose intellects have proved to be too feeble for their tasks; monarchs whose morals have been unable to sustain the temptations of unlimited power; monarchs infirm of will who have lost control of affairs; monarchs whose sense of public duty has collapsed in the presence of boundless opportunity of private indulgence; monarchs cruel, lustful, treacherous, diabolical. Similarly, examples innumerable exist of oligarchies, corrupt, incapable, self-seeking, unpatriotic, secretive, intolerant, degraded. So general, indeed, has been the moral decline of close

corporations possessed of sovereign authority—however pure they may have been in their origin—that Professor Dewey lays it down as a general rule that "the practical consequence of giving power to the few wise and good is that they cease to remain wise and good." [1] What is true of the state is true also of other forms of human organisation in which some dreamers think they see substitutes for the state. No church is free from frailties; no syndicate from blemishes; no trade union or federation of trade unions from administrative flaws; no national guild from grave defects. Human nature, in short, remains the same into whatever mould it may be poured; and the same incapacities of mind, lapses of character, and infirmities of will manifest themselves indifferently in all forms of mortal community. Whatever differences there may be between the respective merits and defects of different forms of political or non-political association, they are differences of degree and not of kind. Differences of degree, however, do undoubtedly exist, and it is possible to argue (as Plato, indeed, did argue), that the defects of democracy are peculiarly gross as compared with those of the normal type of either autocracy or aristocracy.

(2) In reply to this contention, the proper line of argument appears to me, as I have already indicated, to be: Granted in substance all that is said concerning the ignorance, the apathy, the instability, the irresponsibility, the irreverence, the immorality, the meddlesomeness, and the insubordination of democracy; these are the faults of youth—the natural, however deplorable, failings of a young giant but newly released from tutelage, and only just become

[1] Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 20.

conscious of his power. They are precisely the faults that will soonest be cured by experience. The sovereign people will learn—though, probably, alas, only through much tribulation and after many tragic disasters—that folly and corruption do not pay, that flatterers and demagogues are their worst enemies, that reverence, self-control, and obedience to law alone constitute true freedom. This is the line of argument that Mazzini used to pursue when opponents taunted him with the excesses and the stupidities of the Young Italians and the other young ideologues of the mid-nineteenth century.[1] This is the contention of Mr. Edward Carpenter. He actually employs the figure of the nascent giant, with the additional feature that he regards the giant as sprung from a debased and barbaric stock. "O disrespectable Democracy, I love you," he sings, or says. "No white angelic spirit are you now, but a black and horrid Ethiopian. Your great grinning lips and teeth and powerful brow and huge limbs please me well."[2] No deviation from this line of argument is possible to those who cling to that faith in the fundamental reasonableness and essential honesty of man which is, as we have seen, the ultimate postulate of the democratic creed. To doubt that democracy will be cured of its vices, and will be cured of them by the triumph of its own better qualities, is to despair of human nature itself, and to yield to a pessimism that must finally involve the abandonment of hope for the whole human race in whatever form of state and under whatever form of government it may be disciplined.

[1] Cf. C. W. Stubbs, *God and the People: Selections from Mazzini*, p. 125. Professor Ramsay Muir admirably develops this theme in his *National Self-Government*, *e.g.* pp. 197 and 282.

[2] Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, p. 19.

(3) The optimist who thus takes a cheerful view of the prospects of democracy, in spite of its many and manifest defects, is liable to be confronted with the argument that the same favourable estimate of human nature, if applied to monarchy and aristocracy, would lead to the same consoling conclusions, viz. that despots and oligarchs will learn by experience, and that being rational and moral creatures, they will in time evolve a good and efficient form of state. The argument is sound, and it is supported (as the argument for democracy is not) by an impressive array of historic examples. Modern kings have learned much from such experiences as those of Charles I.; the nobilities of to-day are greatly restrained by memories of the French Revolution. If, therefore, the plea based on the perfectibility of human nature stood alone, it would not be conclusive in favour of democracy as against its two rivals. The prophetic view of the possibilities and potentialities of popular sovereignty might well be paralleled by Platonic pictures of the paradise to be developed under the rule of the philosopher king, or by Utopian visions of the prosperity and peace to be secured by the unlimited ascendancy of the minority of the eminently wise and good. A more positive plea is needed; and that can be furnished only by the contention—which I believe goes to the root of the whole matter—that democracy has certain pre-eminent ethical and educational merits that render it inherently superior to all other forms of state whatsoever—and still more decisively superior to all suggested substitutes for the state. What then are these positive and pre-eminent merits of democracy?

Even the opponents of democracy admit that it

has some good qualities. It stimulates *interest*, allows Sir Henry Maine: "One great advantage of popular government over government of the older type," he says, "is that it is so intensely interesting." [1] That is no small advantage in a world that tends to boredom and "sad satiety." It is *informative*, concedes M. Faguet: "A democratic element is required in the government of a people because it is very dangerous that the people should be an enigma. It is necessary to know what it thinks, what it feels, what it suffers, what it desires, what it fears, what it hopes, and all this can be learnt only from the people itself." [2]

The friends of democracy are able to discover, without much labour in search, a goodly array of other minor merits of the same sort. Professor Gettell commends it for much the same reason as does M. Faguet, viz. that "it provides the means through which the wishes of the people may be known, with the probability that these wishes will be considered by the state." [3] On this latter ground, Professor Sidgwick prefers it to its rivals, since "it is likely to be better obeyed," with the consequence that "it reduces the danger of revolution." [4] Closely akin to this is M. Laveleye's contention that "la démocratie fortifie l'amour de la patrie parce que la république est leur chose propre . . . les citoyens ils y sont les maîtres." [5] The "love of country" which M. Laveleye here speaks of as stimulated and sustained by the consciousness of control is essentially the same as that

[1] Maine, *Popular Government*, p. 147.
[2] Faguet, *Cult of Incompetence*, p. 195.
[3] Gettell, *Introduction to Political Science*, p. 101.
[4] Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, p. 615.
[5] Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la démocratie*, vol. i. p. 274.

subtle quality of "vertu" which both Montesquieu and Rousseau single out as the distinguishing characteristic of democracy.[1] To the English "Philosophical Radicals," on the other hand, the virtue in democracy which makes the strongest appeal is that it presents itself "as the most essential of securities for good government."[2] To their confederate, the versatile but unbalanced Lord Brougham, democracy displays a galaxy of visionary merits which, were they but substantial, would more than justify his concluding ejaculation: "Such are the virtues of the democratic system. Let no one undervalue them; for they are the greatest that any scheme of polity can possess."[3]

All these admissions or claims, viz. that democracy is interesting, informative, sedative, patriotic, virtuous, and so on—are valid and worth mentioning. But they are not specially impressive. Corresponding lists could be made up on behalf of almost anything. Something much more emphatic and distinctive is wanted. Fortunately it is forthcoming. John Stuart Mill strikes a new and an incomparably stronger note when he insists on the educative worth of representative government. His main reason for contending that "the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power

[1] Cf. Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, book iii. chap. iii. and also book v. chap. ii. In the latter chapter occurs the passage—I quote from an English edition of 1787 which is all that I have within reach at the moment—"Virtue in a republic is a most simple thing; it is a love for the republic." Cf. also C. E. Vaughan, *Political Writings of Rousseau*, vol. ii. p. 93. M. Saint-Hilaire Barthélemy, in his *Démocratie française*, chap. i., takes a wider view of "la vertu, le principe de la démocratie." He identifies it with Plato's "justice," and analyses it into the five constituent elements: (1) prudence, (2) temperance, (3) courage, (4) equity, (5) holiness.

[2] Mill, *Autobiography*, chap. iv.

[3] Brougham, *Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. pp. 109-15.

in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community" is that it "promotes a better and higher form of national character than any other polity whatsoever." [1] He admits that the benevolent despot or the oligarchy of the wise and good, if discovered and established, may provide an excellent administration; but he argues with great force and effect that the influence of such an authoritarian *régime* upon the subject multitudes—even granting the doubtful postulate that it can be secured and maintained—will be to produce a passive type of character, narrow in interest, dwarfed in sympathy, dull in intellect, devoid of energy and vitality. On the other hand he contends that a participation in public affairs, however small, and a share in popular sovereignty, however minute, tend to develop active qualities of mind and heart infinitely worthier of the individual, and inestimably more valuable to the community. Hence, after an exhaustive comparison of the two varieties of polity, authoritarian and democratic, and the two types of character which they foster, he concludes that "the only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state is one in which the whole people participate," and that "nothing less can be ultimately desirable than the admission of all to a share in the sovereign power of the state."

Mill's noble and inspiring idea that only in the democratic state can the community obtain permanent security for good government, and the individual an opportunity for full development, is adopted and carried onto a higher plane by the school of political philosophers who acknowledge Thomas

[1] Mill, *Representative Government*, chap. iii.

Hill Green as their leader and guide. Mill never succeeded in emancipating himself from belief in the supposed antagonism between Man and the State. The English "Neo-Hegelians," as they are not very happily called—as though England were merely a place to which bad German philosophies go when they die—perceived and taught that this antagonism exists only in the world of appearance and not in the world of reality; that the superficial antithesis between individual and society is reconciled in the deeper unity; that man is by nature a political animal who can attain to the fulness of life only in the state, and that the state is an organism which can reach perfection only when all its citizens completely and consciously share its vitality. Hence they contend with fine enthusiasm and impressive intensity of conviction that democracy has transcendant claims, since "under no other form of government is self-realisation possible," so that "it scarcely seems an exaggeration to say that democracy may really be regarded as an end in itself, and something to be valued with an almost religious fervour." [1] Few have expressed this view more eloquently than Professor John Dewey of America. "In conception at least," he says, "democracy approaches most nearly to the ideal of all social organisation, viz. that in which the individual and society are organic to each other. . . . The individual embodies and realises within himself the spirit and will of the whole organism. . . . The individual is society concentrated; he is the localised manifestation of its life. . . . Thus every citizen is a sovereign: a doctrine which in grandeur has but one equal in

[1] J. S. Mackenzie, in *International Journal of Ethics*, January 1906, p. 131. Cf. also the same writer's *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, p. 263.

history, viz. that every man is a priest of God." [1] We are here touching the borders of mysticism, and approaching the regions of incarnations and Mahatmas. Hence we must move with suspicion and with caution. We do not want to be fooled with phantoms of our imagination. Yet the fact remains that it is only in the realms of spirit that the true interpretation of human phenomena can be found. The higher unification, in these realms, of Man and the State, of the individual and the community, of the microcosm and the macrocosm, is one of the most profound of the truths revealed to latter-day prophets. In the light of it we are able to see that Will and not Force is the basis of the state; that the true ground of political obligation is the identification of Law with the Real Will of the individual; and that, however necessary monarchy and aristocracy may be in rudimentary stages of political development, in democracy alone is to be found a form of state suited to man in his full and final stage of complete self-realisation.[2]

[1] Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, pp. 13-14.

[2] Cf. M'Kechnie, *The State and the Individual*, p. 30: "The higher nature of mankind, in all its grandeur and complexity, can only be realised through the medium of the State"; and p. 74: "The ideal polity is that in which men can fully realise the perfection of their individual lives." The same idea is developed in Zimmern's *Nationality and Government*, *e.g.* p. 355: "Since the spirit of man was framed for wisdom and judgment, for responsibility, initiative and self-control; since a man without liberty is a being bereft of half his manhood; the perfect commonwealth, the ideal towards which all social and political endeavour moves forward, is a society of free men and women, each at once ruling and being ruled, each consciously giving his service for the benefit of all."

CHAPTER III

DEMOCRACY IN HISTORY

"Les leçons de la sagesse antique sont toujours bonnes à méditer. Elles se résumeraient peut-être assez bien ainsi : combattre l'existence de la démocratie là où les circonstances l'ont rendue inévitable est une chimère ; chercher à l'éclairer et à la corriger de ses défauts est le devoir de tout homme qui pense et qui a le sentiment de sa tâche sociale. L'ordre étant le besoin vital des sociétés, si les lois ne suffisent pas à réprimer l'anarchie, la tyrannie survient nécessairement. La démocratie n'a pas d'ennemi plus redoutable que la démagogie."—CROISET, *Les Démocraties antiques.*

"No political question of the present time excites more profound interest than the progress of democracy, or popular power, in European states."—MAY, *Democracy in Europe.*

"Democracy is a form of government which works up the faculties of man to a higher pitch than any other ; it is the form of government which gives the freest scope to the inborn genius of the whole community and every member of it."—FREEMAN, *Comparative Politics.*

§ 10. *The "Lessons of History."*

WE have now discussed the democratic principle, and have considered some of the obvious defects and some of the conspicuous counterbalancing merits of democracy in practice. We might appropriately at this stage proceed to examine various supplementary problems which inevitably arise when representative institutions are brought into operation, as, for example, the question of the democratic unit—should it be the nation or some other organic group ? the scope of the franchise ; the principle under-

lying the rule of the majority; the party system; the nature and limits of political obligation. But it seems better to postpone a treatment of these important themes to a later stage of this work, and to turn now for a short time from the realm of theory to the realm of recorded precedent. Hitherto we have travelled mainly in the airy regions of political ideas, though with occasional descents into the fields of fact in order to gather illustrative examples. Let us now come down upon the solid earth, and for a brief period traverse the main road of history, so that we may see what can be discerned therefrom of the doings and the sufferings of the democracies of the past. For there is danger in treating politics as an abstract science, or as a mere branch of philosophy, whose problems can be solved by *a priori* methods, that is to say, by general principles derived deductively from the study of the psychology of the individual or the crowd. In order to preserve balance and sanity it is necessary to have constant recourse to the "lessons of history," to keep in touch with fact, and to correct errant theory by reference to the standard of accomplished events.

In turning, however, to study the "lessons of history," we must guard ourselves against another and different source of danger, viz. the danger of false analogy. History never repeats itself. The mere fact that an event has happened once is itself an insuperable preventive of its ever happening again; for every event becomes a part of the causation of all subsequent historic phenomena. Moreover, conditions and circumstances change so rapidly and radically from age to age that the greatest caution has to be observed in arguing from the history of the

past to the politics of the present. With respect to this very question of democracy which we are now treating, Dr. J. B. Crozier is so much impressed by these considerations that he says: "All general conclusions as to the fate of modern democracies drawn from the course and termination of democracies in other ages and other intellectual and social periods of the world's history are ridiculous, illusory, and irrelevant; and may once for all be thrown out to the stump orator, the demagogue, and the belated practical politician." [1]

If, however, we must beware of arguing directly from ancient precedents to modern problems, we must not suppose—as perhaps Dr. Crozier's very emphatic words might lead us to—that there are no such things as "lessons of history." For if it is true in public life that history does not repeat itself, it is equally true in private life that no individual man ever finds himself twice in precisely the same circumstances. Nevertheless the prudent man learns from experience, and his memory becomes stored with data for his future guidance. Conditions constantly recur throughout his career sufficiently like those in which he has already found himself to make the knowledge and the habits acquired from the past decisive factors in determining his mode of action in the present. The same is true of the community. History is its memory; [2] by means of it the body politic is able to profit by the experiences of bygone generations; is made aware of the peril of many old and plausible errors, is guided along the paths of prudence and common sense.

[1] Crozier, *Civilisation and Progress*, p. 509.

[2] Cf. Droysen, *Grundriss der Historik*, § 74: "Die Geschichte ist das γνῶθι σαυτὸν der Menschheit, ihr Gewissen."

In studying, then, the "lessons of history," in so far as they relate to democracy, we have to remember two things. On the one hand, we have to remember that ancient democracy was strikingly different from modern democracy; that representative government is a new thing, and that it has to face unprecedented problems of unparalleled magnitude and complexity.[1] On the other hand, we have to remember that human nature remains substantially unchanged from age to age; that the popular forces which operated in the democracy of ancient Athens or of mediaeval Florence were essentially the same as those which work in our own midst to-day; that Cleon and the sausage-seller have their counterparts in many a present-day demagogue.

§ 11. *The Athenian Democracy.*

The first of the democracies of the old days which claims our attention — and the one which, above all others of all time, demands most detailed study — is the Athenian democracy that flourished (with intervals of tyranny) during the period 594–338 B.C. There may, indeed, have been other early democratic experiments. Herodotus, for instance, writing about 430 B.C. describes how in the year 521 B.C. at the Persian Court, on the occasion of the death of Cambyses in the midst of a rebellion, a discussion took place among the conspirators, who found themselves compelled to frame a constitution, concerning the merits of the three types of government—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The discussion, how-

[1] On the novelty of modern democracy see Passy, *Des Formes de gouvernement*, pp. 407-8; and Giddings, *Democracy and Empire*, p. 211.

ever much it may owe to the writer's imagination, suggests that at least the political principle of democracy was familiar to oriental thinkers in the sixth century before the Christian era.[1] Herodotus, however, probably attributed to sixth-century Persia a good deal that was peculiar to the fifth-century Hellas in which he lived. It was in Athens in particular that the democratic ideas which he puts into the mind of the oriental Otanes were current and dominant.

Athens, like other ancient city-states, entered the historic period as a heroic monarchy of the type familiar to readers of Homer. According to tradition its last king, Codrus, sacrificed himself to save his people, and out of reverence for his memory his office was immortalised, and its actual governing powers divided among an oligarchy of nobles (1069 B.C.). This sovereignty of the well-born continued, with several important internal changes, for some five centuries, until the growth of commerce, the rise of a wealthy middle-class, and the discontent of a poor proletariat liable to enslavement for debt, caused a social revolution that ended in the introduction of a democratic element into the constitution. The man who carried through the transition was Solon, an eminently wise and cautious, yet bold and far-sighted statesman (594 B.C.). His ideal was a mixed polity, compounded of aristocratic and popular factors.[2] With quite surprising ease—having disburdened the debtors and relieved the economic crisis—he abolished the privileges of the nobles,

[1] Herodotus, *History*, book iii. §§ 80-82. Cf. Barker, *Plato and Aristotle*, p. 173, and May, *Democracy*, vol. i. chap. i.

[2] Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, ii. 12: Σόλωνα μίξαντα καλῶς τὴν πολιτείαν.

reclassified the people on the basis of wealth, established an elective Council of Four Hundred, and summoned all adult citizens to a new popular assembly called the Ecclesia. In addition, he set up, what in practice proved to be even more important than the Ecclesia, a popular and supreme court of justice, the Heliaea, membership of which was open to all citizens of good character and thirty years of age: at one time it consisted of some 6000 persons. The chief executive offices of the state, however, the Archonships, remained as an exclusive preserve for the wealthiest of the new social orders. About eighty years later Cleisthenes converted the mixed constitution of Solon into a pure democracy. He swept away the Solonian classes; established new and purely local divisions; admitted masses of domiciled aliens and emancipated slaves to the citizenship; deprived the Archons of most of their power; enlarged and popularised the Council, the Ecclesia (divided into ten Prytanies), and the Heliaea (divided into ten Dikasteries); introduced ostracism. Direct control of affairs passed into the hands of some 100,000 citizens, who devoted their main energies to politics and law, and among whom offices were divided—each person holding his place for a very short time, so that the supply might speedily go the round of all.[1] Further extensions of the democratic principle, all of them tending to the direction of "extreme equality," were made by Aristides, Ephialtes, and Pericles. The most important were

[1] For example, the Council which met daily, and in times of crisis sat continuously, had a new president every twenty-four hours. Mr. W. Warde Fowler calculates that there were "nineteen hundred places of office" which "would circulate among the whole body of citizens about once in sixteen years" (*City State of the Greeks and Romans*, p. 168).

(1) the adoption of the method of appointment to office by lot; (2) the introduction of payment for services in the Heliaea and Ecclesia, which meant that the majority of the poorer citizens passed into the employ of the state, *i.e.* of themselves, and received from it salaries or wages sufficient to maintain them; (3) the reduction to impotence of all the older authorities—such as the venerable Senate of the Areopagus—which imposed any check upon popular impulse. Before the death of Pericles in 429 B.C. the process was complete. The result of this rapid and logical evolution was the creation of the most remarkable direct democracy that the world has ever known. Never before or since has society been so entirely identified with the state, or the individual so fully merged in the citizen. At the same time, never before or since has personal capacity had so large a scope, or has opportunity for self-realisation been so abundant. At the height of Athenian glory—that is, during the age of Pericles, 461–429 B.C.—the harmonisation of Man and Community was almost ideally perfect. Pericles himself celebrated this striking fact in the famous funeral oration which he pronounced over those who had fallen for their city in the opening struggle of the Peloponnesian war.[1] It was emphasised by Isocrates and Demosthenes. In these favouring circumstances civic activity attained to an unprecedented richness and fruitfulness; the city was adorned with temples and works of art, education was extended, social reforms of the most far-reaching nature were carried

[1] Thucydides ii. §§ 37-41. There is an excellent translation of the speech of Pericles in Zimmern's *Greek Commonwealth*, chap. viii. This has been reprinted as a separate booklet by the Medici Society.

through; everywhere was life and the promise of life. And not only did the city flourish, but within its fostering walls individual genius of the highest order was developed: it was the age of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; of Thucydides, Pheidias, and Socrates; every one of whom has left a permanent impress upon the whole subsequent history of mankind. Democracy began its course on earth in a blaze of immortal splendour, in the light of which humanity has been able to walk securely from that day down to this.[1]

But, alas, for Athens itself the splendour was short-lived; and even at its brightest it had dark shadows behind it. The Periclean glory was rendered possible only by the ceaseless toil of myriads of slaves,[2] and by extorted contributions from many subject cities. If the Athenian citizen was free to give his time and energies to affairs of state, it was because he was fed and clothed by the forced labours of an unenfranchised multitude: if the state had money with which to pay him for his services, it was because it drew it with despotic severity from the coffers of dependent allies. Well might Rousseau say that Athens was not a democracy at all, but a tyrannical oligarchy.[3] However tolerable this *régime* of slavery and empire might be when it was administered under the enlightened guidance of Pericles, and with that moderation and reasonableness

[1] Croiset, *Les Démocraties antiques*, p. 257, says: "La démocratie athénienne a été une des plus grandes créations du génie grec." For a fine eulogy of Athenian democracy by an English writer see Freeman, *Comparative Politics*, pp. 210 *sqq.*, and also *Historical Essays*, Second Series, No. 4.

[2] The number of slaves in Attica used to be estimated at about 400,000. Beloch, *Bevölkerung*, p. 99, thinks that 100,000 would be nearer the mark.

[3] Rousseau, *Économie politique*: "Athènes n'était point en effet une démocratie, mais une aristocratie très tyrannique, gouvernée par des savants et des orateurs."

which were the characteristics of Athens at its best, it ceased to be tolerable when Pericles was dead, and when, under the operation of the Periclean "reforms," power passed into the hands of demagogues and extremists. The citizens were corrupted by their doles; the lazy and unthrifty—under the influence of plausible but pernicious economic theories which roused their predatory instincts—began to plunder the laborious and careful;[1] unscrupulous orators secured sway over the assembly and stirred it to rash and wicked deeds; the law courts became sinks of iniquity.[2] Hence all the better of its later citizens with one accord agreed to condemn the Athenian democracy and to warn it of impending disaster. Socrates rebuked it to its face as the rule of ignorance and incompetence; Plato again and again chastised it for its corruption, its selfishness, its meddlesomeness, its tyranny, its evil choice of leaders, its flagrant perversions of justice; Aristotle, though less severe than Plato, classified it as a degenerate type of government, as the rule not of all for the good of all, but the rule of the poor in the exclusive interest of the poor; Aristophanes poured upon it the vials of his unmitigated hatred and contempt, investing with immortal infamy the demagogue and his art of popular seduction. The opinion of these contemporaries is supported by the calm judgment of such later writers as Pausanias, Polybius, and Plutarch. The verdict of history seals the judgment;

[1] Isocrates tells us that life became intolerable for the well-to-do at Athens, and that they were reduced to the expedient of concealing their riches.

[2] Among the evil deeds of the degenerate democracy of Athens, Schömann, *Athenian Constitutional History*, p. 104, specially singles out: (1) its acceptance of Cleon; (2) its execution of the generals after Arginusae; (3) its condemnation of Miltiades; (4) its murder of Socrates.

for within a century of the death of Pericles the Athenian democracy had perished of its vices, and had become absorbed into the empire of the Macedonian conqueror. "For her hundred years of unfettered democracy," says Professor Blackie, "Athens paid dearly with more than two thousand years of political servitude." [1]

§ 12. *Democracy in Rome.*

The Athenian democracy was by no means the only one which Greece produced. There were few Greek cities of note which did not pass through a democratic phase during the two centuries which preceded the conquest of Alexander the Great (338 B.C.). Sparta is the one striking exception to the rule: the constant military peril in which she stood did not allow her to indulge in constitutional experiments. Thebes and Argos are the cities about whose democratic experiences we know most; but that unfortunately is not a great deal. The Arcadian canton of Mantinea for one stormy generation adopted democracy, and paid for it in irretrievable catastrophe in 385 B.C. The islands of the Athenian empire, *e.g.* Samos and Lesbos, were compelled to mould their polities according to the Attic model; but their zeal for democracy tended to be in inverse ratio to their desire for independence. The Greek settlements in the West, such as Corcyra, Syracuse, and Massilia (Marseilles), with greater spontaneity made the democratic venture, and in turn met the democratic doom.

[1] Blackie, *Democracy*, p. 24. That Athens deserved her doom is the opinion of Professor G. W. Hosmer, forcibly expressed in his *People and Politics*, p. 95. Even Schömann concludes that democracy was to Athens "a dangerous gift which ended by enfeebling and undermining the virtues of the citizens" (*op. cit.* p. 105).

However widely the experience of democratic organisation differed in these various cases, a few common features marked them all, and a single common fate brought them all to an end. All these ancient Greek democracies were characterised by faction and disorder, by lack of discipline and weakness of executive power, by meddlesomeness and inconstancy, by impulsiveness and levity, by jealousy of eminent merit and by lust for lucre, by submission to demagogues and ostracism of true leaders, by treachery, ingratitude, ignorance, inefficiency. One and all, after a comparatively brief period of riotous folly, passed, helpless and forlorn, into the beneficent but stern tutelage of Macedon or Rome. Few of them, moreover, had any of those counterbalancing merits which serve to make Athens for ever glorious, in spite of its speedy decline and fall.

The defects of Greek democracy thus stare us in the face from the pages of history. But, lest they should make us despair of democracy of all sorts, we must remind ourselves once more that Greek democracy differed widely from the representative democracy of modern times. First, it was direct and not indirect; that is to say it was a democratic form of government and not merely a democratic form of state. Secondly, it was based on slavery and exploitation, and so missed the modern association of liberty with equality and brotherhood. Thirdly, it cut across the principle of nationality (which was a beneficent and unifying force in Greece), and limited itself to small city republics whose mutual antagonisms it accentuated and inflamed. Fourthly, it committed itself to a fatal "class-war," and became a predatory organisation of the poor for the spoliation of the rich.

Hence its lessons have to be read with caution into present-day problems. Nevertheless, it is not without lessons. It provides an impressive and almost conclusive warning against direct democracy (*i.e.* democratic government) of all sorts; for what the brilliant Athenians could not accomplish in most favourable circumstances no modern people can hope to achieve in incalculably harder conditions. Further, it emphasises the tendency of all sorts of democracy to executive feebleness, lack of governance, disorder, administrative inefficiency. Finally, it makes clear the suicidal folly of the "class-war." The splendid heritage which Greek democracy squandered and surrendered passed into the stronger and safer keeping of Rome.

Rome, when she began her marvellous career, was a city-state not dissimilar to the city-states of Greece. She had her early *régime* of heroic kings. From royalty she passed—not peacefully, however, but by revolution—to aristocracy (509 B.C.). Then, almost immediately—not as at Athens after an interval of centuries—and once again violently, she was agitated by the demands of her plebeian subjects that they should be admitted to a share of her sovereignty. They were not to be denied; although the Roman patricians—unlike the Athenian eupatrids—made a long and stern struggle to retain their ascendancy. The process by which the plebs slowly and painfully climbed to influence is one which it is both interesting and instructive to study.[1] At the

[1] The history of the rise of the plebs to power is not without its problems and uncertainties. I follow in the main the lucid and intelligible account given by Professor Muirhead in his *History of Roman Law*, Part II. chap. i. A discussion of the doubtful details is unnecessary for the purpose of this essay.

time of their first revolt and secession (494 B.C.), the grievances that most inflamed them were economic and social, viz. their exclusion from the public lands, their liability to enslavement for debt, their marriage disabilities. But they had also political grievances, viz. their lack of the franchise, their ineligibility for office, their subjection to judicial tribunals wholly patrician in constitution and administering a traditional and aristocratic law of which no written record existed. By their first revolt and secession they secured little more than a release of debt-slaves, a cancellation of liabilities, and the appointment of tribunes invested with power to prevent judicial oppression. This, however, was but a first step, and others were speedily taken. A series of enactments extending over two centuries, and culminating in the Lex Hortensia of 286 B.C., removed all their serious disabilities and admitted them to co-ordinate power with the patricians in the state. Their social grievances were relieved by the Lex Canuleia (445 B.C.): their economic disadvantages by the Licinian Rogations (367 B.C.). One group of laws admitted them in turn to the consulship, the praetorship, the censorship, the pontificate, and the senate; another group gradually raised their council to the rank of a governing body, and gave to their *plebiscita* the force of *leges*. Thus the plebeians became co-ordinate with the patricians in power, and began to share with them the sovereignty on equal terms. But beyond that point they did not go. On the contrary, from that third century B.C. which saw the enactment of the Lex Hortensia, the Roman Republic rather declined towards oligarchy and ultimate Caesarism. For that same third century saw the great Punic Wars, and the

beginnings of the building of the Roman Empire. The Roman people turned themselves from the paths of constitutional progress to the ways of conquest and world-dominion. More and more, as the empire extended itself, did they grow content to leave administration in the hands of the senate, or to invest successful generals with dictatorial authority, while they themselves waxed wealthy on the spoils of subjugated provinces, and lived at ease on tribute drawn from half the earth. In vain did reformers struggle to maintain the ancient Roman virtues of simplicity, hardness, vigour, and integrity. The populace, intoxicated by the immense power which Roman citizenship conferred upon them in that subject world, used their nascent democracy for their own base ends, and became luxurious, effeminate, self-indulgent, and corrupt. "They were therefore," says David Hume in an impressive essay, "most cajoled by every one that affected popularity: they were supported in idleness by the general distribution of corn, and by particular bribes which they received from every candidate: by this means they became every day more licentious, and the Campus Martius was a perpetual scene of tumult and sedition: armed slaves were introduced among these rascally citizens, so that the whole government fell into anarchy, and the greatest happiness which the Romans could look for was the despotic power of the Caesars." To this vivid description Hume adds the comment: "Such are the effects of democracy without a representative."[1] Hume's description is accurate enough; but his comment is not wholly just. It is true that the Roman Republic had failed to discover or invent the method

[1] Hume, *Essays*, No. 3.

of representative government—an amazing failure when one remembers that the Roman genius was pre-eminently legal and administrative—so that the city tribes, which exercised a direct sovereignty, and in whose ranks all new citizens were enrolled, became congested with myriads of unassimilable aliens. But it is not true that the power of the tribes was ever so dominant as to warrant the application of the term "democracy" to the Roman polity. The movement towards democracy in Rome was arrested halfway, and the Roman constitution as developed under the later Republic was "neither a democracy, nor a mixed constitution, nor a government of the best men in the state, but an *oligarchy*—the most compact and powerful oligarchy that the world has ever yet seen." [1]

If, therefore, we have to be cautious in deducing lessons from ancient Athens for the benefit of the democracies of the modern world, much more cautious have we to be in doing the same from Rome. For the democratic element in Rome never became the controlling element as it did in the Greek city-state. Such lessons as its abortive existence, miserable decline, and premature demise teach are merely the obvious truths that democracy is incompatible with militarism, that it is not readily associated with empire, that it is speedily corrupted by irresponsible power, that it is easily lured from high ideals by prospects of plunder and repose, that when once thoroughly degraded and debauched it passes almost

[1] Warde Fowler, *City-State*, p. 220. Cf. Bryce, *Historical Aspect of Democracy*, p. 255: "Rome was never, in any sense of the word, a democracy"; and also Croiset, *Les Démocraties antiques*, p. 2: "Quant à Rome, la démocratie n'y est pas parvenue à son entier achèvement. Le progrès démocratique, après avoir rempli les premiers siècles de son histoire, a brusquement avorté par l'effet du développement de la puissance romaine."

beyond hope of human redemption. These, indeed, are grave lessons, and they are not wholly obsolete to-day.

§ 13. *Mediaeval Democracies.*

In the later Roman constitution the democratic element entirely died out; even the senatorial oligarchy lost its hold over affairs; and the empire ultimately became, under Diocletian, an undisguised despotism of the oriental type. Nevertheless, although democratic institutions (such as the independent tribunate, the *concilium plebis*, and the *comitia tributa*) perished, the democratic tradition did not die out. Rome, like modern Britain, was remarkably flexible in adapting her working constitution to changed conditions, but strikingly rigid in her adhesion to venerable political theory. Beneath the tremendous autocracy of the principate there lay the strangely incongruous doctrine of the popular republic. In the eye of the lawyer the emperor was but a composite official of the commonwealth, in whose hands were concentrated for the moment the powers which in earlier days had been distributed among consuls, censors, praetors, tribunes, generals, and priests. On his death they were once more disintegrated, and it was (in theory) entirely at the option of the senate whether or not they should again be conferred upon one man. Hence (in theory) the ultimate source of the imperial sovereignty was the people. When one considers how completely impotent the people were in fact, there are few passages in Roman legal literature more remarkable than that at the beginning of the *Institutes* of Justinian (A.D. 533) which runs:

"The will of the emperor has the force of law; for the people by an enactment called the *lex regia* grants to him all its authority and power." [1] It was a matter of inestimable importance for both mediaeval and modern times that the legal theory of the despotic Roman empire should have thus remained persistently democratic. For the study of the Roman law, which never died out in Europe, kept alive the idea that monarchical power, no matter how unlimited and autocratic, was merely derived from the primitive and inherent sovereignty of the people.

This was all the more significant because the Christian church, which in Justinian's time was dominant in the Roman empire, taught an entirely different doctrine concerning the source of political authority. Deriving its conceptions from the theocracy portrayed in the Old Testament, it proclaimed the view that "the powers that be are ordained of God," [2] that the ruler is *vicarius Dei*, that he exercises his delegated authority *Dei gratia*, and that he is responsible for his mode of government, not to his subjects at all, but to the spiritual powers whose agent he is. This was the political theory of the apostles, the fathers, and the popes. Out of it grew the enormous claims of the mediaeval pontiffs to crown kings, to control them, to depose them, and to absolve their subjects from all oaths of allegiance. "It is the business of the pope," said Innocent III., "to look after the interest of the Roman empire, since the empire derives its origin and its final

[1] Justinian, *Institutes*, lib. i. tit. 6: "Quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem: cum lege regia quae de ejus imperio lata est, populus ei et in eum omne imperium suum et potestatem concedat." This passage is a quotation, with a few merely verbal differences, from Ulpian.

[2] Romans xiii. 1-7.

authority from the papacy," [1] and generally "as the moon gets her light from the sun, and is inferior to the sun in quality, quantity, position, and effect; so the royal power gets the splendour of its dignity from the papal authority." [2] The church, in short, during the period of its highest authority, was in the *political* sphere theocratic and most emphatically anti-democratic. Nevertheless in its own proper spiritual sphere, and within the all-embracing limits of the Respublica Christiana, it proclaimed truths which form the foundation of modern *social* democracy. It proclaimed the truths that before the throne of God all men are equal; that beneath the law of Nature sovereigns and subjects are as one; that within the church human distinctions of rank have no meaning; that in virtue of his spiritual prerogatives the lowliest priest can claim precedence of the most mighty monarch.

Thus throughout the Middle Ages two separate, distinct, and even antagonistic, democratic traditions —both derived from the ancient world—maintained themselves: the one the tradition of *political* democracy embedded in Roman law; the other the tradition of *social* democracy embodying the equalitarian principles of the Stoic philosophy and the Christian religion. They were supplemented and reinforced in the sphere of practical administration by those relics of tribal self-government which managed to survive among the Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic peoples out of whom the modern nations of Europe have

[1] Doeberl, *Monumenta Germaniae Selecta*, vol. v. Document No. 8. The pope, of course, refers here to the revived Roman empire, of Charlemagne and his successors. Even when the mediaeval emperors repudiated the papal claims their counter-assertions were equally anti-democratic. Cf. *Declaration of Rense*, A.D. 1338: "The emperor holds his authority and position from God alone."

[2] Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 214, col. 377.

been built. Among all these peoples there remained, right through the dark feudal days, traces of popular assemblies once dominant in times of peace; memories of folkmoots and *landsgemeinden* possessed of sovereign power; models of village communities and *mirs* wholly self-determinant. Hence, taking all things into account, it is not surprising that, when the barbarians who overrun the Roman empire had become civilised and evangelised; when security and order had been generally restored; when feudalism, having achieved its purpose, had begun to pass away; and when industry, commerce, wealth, learning, all were reviving—democracy, after a millennium of eclipse, once more manifested itself to the world.

Mediaeval democracy displayed itself in four main directions: first, in the ecclesiastical sphere, in councils, synods, and chapters; secondly, in the economic sphere, in guilds, fraternities, and companies; thirdly, in the social sphere, in all kinds of brotherhoods, associations, and groups;[1] fourthly, in the political sphere, with which alone we are here concerned, in pastoral cantons, in mercantile cities, in nascent national states.

Most remarkable, undoubtedly, of mediaeval democracies were the Forest Cantons of Switzerland. They manifested that quality of permanence which was conspicuously lacking in all the rest. Age after age they endured—primitive, pastoral, simple, immobile, direct. Professor Freeman's enthusiastic eulogy of them at the beginning of his book on *The English Constitution* is well known. The following is the

[1] Cf. Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages* (Maitland's translation), p. 37: "It is a distinctive trait of mediaeval doctrine that within every human group it decisively recognises an aboriginal and active right of the group taken as a whole."

shorter and less rhetorical description given by one of their own historians. "In the interior cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, and Glarus, and partially also in Zug, the chief power rested in the *landsgemeinde*, which was derived from the ancient *markgemeinde* in the thirteenth century. To this every man from the age of sixteen had access. It assembled every year, elected the magistrates, determined taxes, and decided as to proposed laws; it also exercised judicial powers. At the same time, according to ancient German custom, there was no difference as to right of voting between the meanest peasant and the highest burgher, and the attainment of political manhood was signified as among the old Germans by the bearing of weapons in the assembly." [1] There is great fascination in the story of the life and the achievements of these free Swiss shepherd-communities; it is a story which reveals the existence of many and heroic virtues. The chief countervailing defect is their extreme conservatism and unprogressiveness. They were marked, as their admirer Sismondi himself admits, "by a general will that was constantly retrograde," and "by a spirit persistently hostile to both progress and liberty." [2]

Very different indeed were the civic democracies which sprang up in the greater towns of Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and France, during the later period of the Middle Ages. On the one hand they — particularly those of Italy — displayed a brilliance of civilisation second only to that of the ancient city-states of Greece. On the other hand

[1] Dändliker, *History of Switzerland* (Salisbury's translation), p. 70. Cf. also May, *Democracy in Europe*, chaps. viii.-ix.

[2] Sismondi, *Political Essays*, p. 297.

their factiousness, their fickleness, their political folly, involved them generally in speedy ruin, and brought about a rapid extinction of both their glory and their freedom. The Italian cities—among whom Florence, Milan, Padua, Venice, were eminent—could for the most part trace a continuous existence back to Roman times, and all of them had considerable experience of local autonomy. For there had been no effective central government in Italy since the destruction of the Ostrogothic kingdom in the sixth century of the Christian era, and even the visionary authority of the Germanic emperor had vanished in the thirteenth. Hence some couple of hundred of civic republics established themselves, and, revelling in limitless freedom, displayed a flourishing life that culminated in the splendours of the Renaissance. Their political experiments were numberless; they are, indeed, bewildering to modern students by reason of their complexity and impermanence. Many of these experiments were democratic; but, as Professor Freeman points out, they were democratic in a non-Athenian way. "The form which the democratic principle took in Italy," he says, "was rather that of making all citizens eligible for office, perhaps of giving all citizens a share in the great offices in turn, rather than the Athenian principle of giving the people as a body the general direction of the affairs of the commonwealth." [1] But, however much the Italian democracies varied in their internal constitutions, they all manifested the same characteristic of unappeasable combativeness. Within them there were endless strifes of parties (*e.g.* Guelfs and Ghibellines), and wars of classes: externally there were struggles of

[1] Freeman, *Comparative Politics*, p. 237.

city with city, group with group, league with league. Finally the French, the Spaniards, and the Austrians descended upon them and enslaved them all.[1]

The history of the democratic communes and free cities north of the Alps was neither so brilliant on the one hand, nor so tragic on the other, as that of the Italian republics. A few towns situated in what had once been the Roman province of Gaul could perhaps trace continuity of existence to classical times, and derive traditions of local autonomy from those large measures of self-government which Rome allowed to her municipalities. But the majority were new towns which grew up within the feudal domains of kings, nobles, bishops, or abbots. Slowly they struggled towards independence. Some of them ultimately secured charters which raised them to the rank of self-governing communities; others had to be content with privileges of more limited scope. Very few, however, of either class adopted institutions which can in any strict sense be called democratic. The town-charters were usually procured, at a great price, by a restricted oligarchy of wealthy burgesses; and the purchasers of the charters generally claimed the monopoly of the enjoyment of the liberties which their sacrifices had obtained. They were not, however, often left for long in undisturbed possession; they were assailed by feudal magnates from above,

[1] Blackie draws the moral of the fate of the mediaeval Italian city-states in his *Democracy*, p. 25. May gives a sketch of their history in his *Democracy in Europe*, chap. vii. Detailed narratives are to be found in Sismondi's great *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge*. But most valuable for the present purpose is the brilliant review provided by Laveleye in *Le Gouvernement dans la démocratie*, vol. ii. pp. 311-24. The following is a quotation from p. 322: "A la fin du xiv^e^ siècle la démocratie est profonde dans toutes les cités italiennes; les moyens employés par toutes les factions pour conquérir le pouvoir ont achevé d'énerver tout sentiment de moralité; ce ne sont que crimes, trahisons, empoisonnements, assassinats."

and by unenfranchised proletariats from below. The results of the conflict varied almost infinitely; but the sequel was generally the same. Weakened by internal disunion, imperilled by external menace, they passed, wherever it was possible to do so, under the protective tyranny of the rising national monarchies. Where, as in Germany, national monarchy did not develop, they were compelled to organise themselves into militant and oligarchic leagues for the maintenance of order and the attainment of security: of these the Hanseatic League was the most notable.

The third type of mediaeval democracy that calls for notice is that which manifested itself in the nascent national states. That national democracy, however, was of a new and remarkable kind which had no antetype in the ancient world: it was representative democracy. It was the forerunner of modern democracy, and with that therefore it had better be treated.

§ 14. *Modern Democracies.*

The characteristic feature of modern democracy, which marks it off by a wide gulf from the small civic and cantonal democracies of ancient and mediaeval times, is that it is representative and not direct. It is astonishing—as has already been remarked—that neither the Athenians nor the Romans, with all their political genius, should have developed, or apparently even discovered, the representative principle as an adjunct to democracy—that is to say, as a means by which democracy can be made applicable to large states, and as a means by which the advantages of popular control can be combined with the advantages of expert administration. Aristotle, because of his

failure to recognise the resources of representation, was led to declare that no self-governing state could possibly exceed the limit of 10,000 citizens. The Romans, because of the necessity under which they felt themselves placed of enrolling the newly enfranchised citizens of their world-empire in the direct democracy of the city tribes, saw the whole fabric of their republican polity crumble under its own unwieldiness. To modern political thinkers nothing would seem to be more obvious than the application of the representative solution to the otherwise insoluble problem of the reconciliation of democracy with the growing Athenian empire, or with the expanding dominion of Rome. Yet neither Athens nor Rome applied that solution.

The representative principle is a product of the Christian era. It entered the mediaeval world from two distinct sources; the one was the Catholic church; the other the Teutonic invaders. (1) The idea of representation was deeply embedded in the Christian system: it was part of the heritage which the new dispensation took over from the old. Orthodox theology centred round the dogma of a vicarious sacrifice; a representative priesthood continually offered prayers and oblations on behalf of the congregation of the faithful; saints and martyrs by their works of supererogation laid up a treasure of merit on which the poor in virtue could draw; monks in their seclusion lived not for themselves alone but in order that their life of devotion might bring down blessings upon the whole community of believers; bishops attended councils as delegates of the dioceses; cardinals elected popes as agents of the Christian world at large. The sense of community

was indeed dominant in the mediaeval church, and every Christian man was regarded as in some degree a representative of his fellows. Not only was he an isolated individual lost through the sin of Adam, redeemed by the death of Christ; he was also a "servus servorum Dei" who—as worker, prayer, or fighter—was called upon to perform some function on behalf of the Christian commonwealth as a whole. The coupling of this general idea of representation with the particular mode of its application by means of *election* was achieved but slowly and gradually. More and more, however, it became customary for diocesan and cathedral clergy to elect delegates to represent them in ecclesiastical synods. But there seems to have been no formal statement of the theory of representation in proportion to numbers until such a statement was made by Marsiglio of Padua in his *Defensor Pacis*, and by William of Ockham in his *Dialogus*, in the fourteenth century.[1] (2) Meantime representative institutions had entered the countries of Western Europe from Teutonic sources. Even in the earliest recorded times the *vici* and *pagi* of the primitive folk had sent a certain specified number of wise men to the assembly, and strong men to the host. Later on, the representative principle was applied in inquisitions made through sworn recognitors, and in juries pledged to present faithful verdicts. Finally, in Sicily, in Spain, in France, in England, and elsewhere, kings began to summon representatives from local communities to attend the national councils.

[1] *Marsiglio of Padua* says: "The effective cause of the law is the people, the whole body of the citizens, or the majority of that body, expressing its will and choice in a general meeting of the citizens, and commanding or deciding that certain things shall be done or left undone" (Thatcher and M'Neal, *Source Book of Mediaeval History*, p. 323).

In the next chapter I shall have to trace in some detail the development of representative democracy in this country. In the present place it must suffice to note that in Europe generally the nascent popular element introduced into the central administrations by means of representation was not a success. Where, as in Aragon, it secured a considerable share of power, it tended to faction, to excessive interference with the executive, to disorder, and to the enfeeblement of the state. Where, as in France, it remained impotent, it was allowed to die out as a loquacious nuisance. By the seventeenth century representative institutions—in which alone were to be found the rudiments of a democratic polity—seemed to be everywhere moribund. The future appeared to be assured for absolute monarchies.

Four revolutions, however, completely transformed the western world, and inaugurated the *régime* of modern (as distinct from ancient and mediaeval) democracy. The first was the English Revolution which overthrew the monarchy of Charles I.; the second was the American Revolution; the third, the French Revolution; the fourth, the Industrial Revolution. Of these four the first was in many ways the most important. For not only did it check advancing autocracy, which was everywhere else victorious, and save from extinction the last effective relic of the once goodly company of mediaeval parliaments; but it liberated an immense volume and variety of new and explosive democratic ideas which in the long run did more than anything else to shatter the fabric of despotism—whether kingship by divine right or tyranny by devilish wrong.[1] Seventeenth-

[1] The student is recommended to read G. P. Gooch's *English Democratic*

century democratic ideas achieved their first permanent realisation in institutions, however, not in England, the home of their origin, but in the New English Colonies of America. There, away from the militarist and authoritarian traditions of the Old World, the principles of self-government were worked out in constitutional practice. The difference of spirit between such a self-determining colony as Massachusetts and such an oligarchically determined country as Georgian England became so marked that—wholly apart from specific causes of dissension—conflict and separation were inevitable. The American Revolution not only confirmed the newly United States in their autonomy and their representative democracy; it also, through the agency of the French and Spanish volunteers who had crossed the ocean to aid the colonists in their struggle with Britain, disseminated democratic principles widely on the Continent, and powerfully prepared the way for the French Revolution of 1789, and the Spanish "Constitution of 1812."

It is from the French Revolution that modern Continental democracy dates its rise. France in the eighteenth century, although it stood easily first among European states, was one of the most reactionary of powers. Her monarchy was not only absolute in fact; it was also based on that anti-democratic theory of the divine source of political sovereignty which the mediaeval papacy had adopted and developed. Her church was intolerant, inquisitorial, and obscurantist. Her universities still

Ideas in the Seventeenth Century, a masterly and comprehensive survey. By comparing this with the same writer's essay in *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. viii., on "Europe and the French Revolution," he will see how great was the debt of French Revolutionary thinkers to their English forerunners.

taught the scholasticism of Aquinas, and ignored both the philosophy of Descartes and the physics of Newton. Her nobility continued to enjoy the privileges of feudalism, although they had been relieved of the duties which feudalism had formerly imposed. Her system of government and organisation was, in short, essentially mediaeval; it was a gross anachronism. It was, however, being undermined by two trains of dynamic ideas, one derived from modern England, the other from antique Rome. Voltaire visited England in 1726; Montesquieu in 1729. Both of them were profoundly influenced by English thought and English institutions.[1] The one went back to France a convinced free-thinker to attack the sacrosanctity of the Gallican Church; the other returned a political philosopher thoroughly imbued with the conception of the relativity of forms of state and modes of government. The thinker to whom each of them owed most was John Locke, the theorist of the English Revolution. The same great Englishman also, no doubt, had considerable influence upon the third of the leading social philosophers of pre-revolutionary France, viz. Rousseau: for the conception of contract looms large in the political speculations of both. But contract is a fundamental idea of Roman Law, and it was to the Roman original rather than to any secondary source that Rousseau went for his inspiration. His *Contrat Social* marks a clear return to the political principles of the ancient city-state; a leap backward across the millennium of the Christian

[1] Cf. J. C. Collins, *Voltaire and Montesquieu in England.* Concerning Voltaire see also Morley's *Voltaire*, chap. ii. ("English Influences"), which opens: "Voltairism may be said to have begun from the flight of its founder from Paris to London. . . . Voltaire left France a poet, he returned to it a sage." Concerning Montesquieu's debt to England see J. Dedien, *Montesquieu et la tradition anglaise en France.*

Middle Ages, and across the still earlier quincentenium of the Pagan empire, to the Rome of the early lawyers, and the Athens of the primitive philosophers. This most disruptive of revolutionary classics did little more than proclaim anew that fundamental dogma of *social* democracy which the Stoic thinkers had learned from Zeno in the painted colonnade at the beginning of the third century B.C.—the dogma that by nature all men are free and equal; together with that fundamental dogma of *political* democracy which even the imperial jurists had not attempted to obscure in the legal system of Rome—the dogma that the origin and source of all sovereignty is the people. The French Revolution, in so far as it was inspired by Rousseau, was the revolt of Pagan Antiquity against Mediaeval Christendom; the rising of the democratic spirit of the old city-republics against the authoritarian alliance established in the dark ages between barbarian kings, feudal nobles, and Catholic priests; the reassertion of the optimistic Greek view of human nature and the rightness of the "general will," against the pessimistic orthodox dogma of man's total depravity and the wrongness of all the secular motions of society.[1]

Rousseau's doctrines of social equality and popular sovereignty, his proclamations concerning natural rights and the infallibility of the "general will," spread like wildfire through Europe, as the result of the triumph of the French Revolution. The story

[1] It is to be remembered that Rousseau was a native of Geneva, a modern self-governing city-state which in the eighteenth century manifested some striking resemblances to the city-states of the ancient world. He was proud of his birthplace: "I was born a citizen of a free state," he says at the beginning of the *Contrat Social*, "and I am happy, when I reflect upon governments, to find my inquiries always furnish me with new reasons for loving that of my own country."

of how they were adopted and disseminated by radicals in England, poets and preachers in Scotland, professors in Germany, nationalists in Italy, anti-clericals in the Peninsula, antagonists of the existing order everywhere, has been admirably told by Mr. G. P. Gooch in the *Cambridge Modern History* (vol. viii. chap. xxv.). It cannot be even summarised here. Suffice it to say that the result of a quarter-century's agitation was to establish the democratic idea as one of the great guiding and motive principles of the era which followed the close of the Revolutionary Wars in 1815.[1] Everywhere democratic experiments of infinite variety and boldness were made. In France herself effort after effort was made to attain to the ideal polity. In Britain an agitation commenced which culminated in the passing of large measures of parliamentary and other reform. In Spain was formulated the famous "Constitution of 1812" which was destined to become the standard of democratic advance in Portugal, Naples, Piedmont, and many another Latin state in both the Old World and the New. Even in feudalised Germany and in the downtrodden dependencies of the Hapsburg emperors the banner of democratic revolt was raised, and was carried a long way towards victory. The period between the two French upheavals of 1830 and 1848 was in particular an epoch of rapid and general popular progress. Its results, unfortunately, were such as seriously to damage the reputation of democracy as an efficient form of state-organisation.[2]

[1] So early as 1821 M. de Serre exclaimed: "La démocratie coule à pleins bords." A sketch of the great movements of this era has been provided by the present writer under the title, *Main Currents in European History 1815–1915* (Macmillan, 1917).

[2] Concerning the spread of democracy in the nineteenth century Dr. W. Jethro Brown, *Underlying Principles of Modern Legislation* (1912), says,

§ 15. *Conclusion.*

Democracy in the nineteenth century manifested itself mainly as a destructive force. Destruction is, indeed, a work for which democracy is well fitted. No easier or more congenial task can present itself to an aspiring multitude than to form itself into a mob and attack something or other. A good deal of destructive work, it is true, needed to be done before it could become possible for democracy to essay the more onerous duty of construction. There were mediaeval autocracies to be overthrown, feudal nobilities to be dispossessed of privilege, firmly-established clergy to be deprived of immunities. This work was largely accomplished during the first half of the century. But long before the end of this period democracy had revealed two of its capital defects, viz. (1) its tendency to carry its destructive powers too far, and even ultimately to turn them upon itself, and (2) its incapacity for construction.

The fragility of democratic constitutions and the impermanence of governments set up by democracies were—as they still are—marked and damnatory characteristics of the new *régime*. "Since the century during which Roman emperors were at the mercy of Praetorian soldiery," says Sir Henry Maine, "there has been no such insecurity of government as the world has seen since rulers became delegates of the community." [1] He illustrates his thesis by pointing

p. 314: "In the early nineteenth century the democratic form of government was practically confined to a few communities on the eastern shores of the United States of America. In the early twentieth century more than one-fourth of the population of the globe possess constitutional governments in which taxation and legislation are controlled by the people or their representatives." A useful table of modern states, classified according to methods of government, is given by Duchesne, *Democracy and Empire*, p. 109.

[1] Maine, *Popular Government* (1885), p. 21.

out that France since the Revolution had has nine separate and distinct constitutions, all of them overthrown by violence of some sort or other; that in Spain there have been since 1812 "forty military risings of a serious nature, in most of which the mob took part"; and that in South America democratic upheavals have been so frequent as to baffle computation. He quotes Lieber (who wrote in 1853) to the effect that "the first half of our century has produced more than three hundred political constitutions." The extreme instability of popular government, to which Maine drew attention in 1885, has not since that date been materially remedied. Bodley records the many and kaleidoscopic changes in French ministries since the founding of the Third Republic.[1] Minghetti emphasises the discontinuity of Italian policy and the insecurity of ministerial tenure since the constitutional monarchy was established in Rome.[2] The correspondence of Castelar is eloquent of the stormy transience of Spanish administrations.[3] The able pen of M. Garcia-Caldéron, a young Peruvian diplomat, has portrayed with vivid detail the anarchic turbulence of the Latin democracies of America, where changes of ministry are effected by means of sanguinary revolutions of incessant recurrence.[4] Only in the two Anglo-Saxon democracies, with their old common tradition of "freedom slowly broadening

[1] Bodley, *France*, book iv.

[2] Minghetti, *I partiti politici e la loro ingerenza nella justizia e nell' amministrazione.*

[3] E. Castelar, *Correspondencia*, 1908.

[4] F. Garcia-Caldéron, *Les Démocraties Latines de l'Amérique.* It appears (p. 346) that Venezuela alone has had fifty-two important revolutions in the course of the century terminating 1912. Cf. also Gustave le Bon, *Psychologie du Socialisme*, p. 339: "Le terrible exemple des républiques latines de l'Amérique est là pour montrer le sort qui attend les démocraties chez les peuples sans volonté, sans moralité, et sans énergie," etc. etc.

down from precedent to precedent," has there been tolerable stability, continuity, and permanence; and even in these there have not been wanting disquieting symptoms of that unprincipled, opportunist, hand-to-mouth conduct of affairs which is characteristic of ministers who feel themselves at the mercy of incalculable caprice.

The instability of democratic constitutions, the changefulness of democratic ministries, the factious fickleness of democratic parties, the unscrupulous log-rollings of democratic groups, have inevitably militated against the constructive efficiency of democratic states. It would be a lengthy task, and one wholly beyond the scope of the present essay, to examine in detail the efforts of modern democracies to formulate modes of government, frame policies, meet emergencies, solve practical problems. The examination would in the main reveal a record of conspicuous failure. Its most lurid and convincing examples would be drawn from the central years of the nineteenth century, 1848–52, during which brief period democracy in Europe achieved a momentary triumph, and used it to involve itself in hopeless ridicule and ruin. The year 1848 saw the culmination of a long process of democratic advance: during its course no less than fifteen separate revolutions shook the autocratic thrones of the Continent (including those of Prussia and Austria) to their very foundations. Democracy seemed to be everywhere in the ascendant throughout Western Europe: it had secured its great opportunity. Within four years it destroyed itself. In France the wild excesses of Louis Blanc and his Committee of Public Safety led to the establishment of Louis Napoleon in power; in

Germany the incredible garrulities and inanities of the National Parliament ended in the restoration of Austro-Prussian duocracy; in the Hapsburg dominions mutual animosities handed back emancipated Slavs and Magyars into the grip of the oppressor; in Italy the irrational and irreconcilable attitude of Mazzini and Garibaldi towards both the liberal papacy of Pius IX. and the national monarchy of Charles Albert of Sardinia helped to precipitate disaster; even in Britain the errors of the Chartists and the violence of the Young Irish thoroughly discredited the popular cause. Rarely has there been so impressive and cumulative a demonstration of the danger which arises, and the devastation which results, when political dominance falls into the hands of the doctrinaire, the intransigent, the demagogue, the extremist, the man of theories, the despot of ideas. The rising democracies, deluded and misled by blind guides and false prophets, blundered so irretrievably into chaos and contention, that only men of blood and iron, like Bismarck; men of craft, like Cavour; men of destiny, like Napoleon, could bring back order and secure rational progress. Guizot was a not-unprejudiced spectator of the events of this tragic period; but the words which he wrote of France in 1849 expressed the views of many moderate minds in many lands: "Plus j'y pense, plus je demeure convaincu que son grand mal, le mal qui est au fond de tous ses maux, qui mine et détruit ses gouvernements et ses libertés, sa dignité et son bonheur, c'est le mal que j'attaque, l'idolâtrie démocratique." [1] Even Mazzini for a moment seemed to despair; for, writing at this time his *Thoughts on Democracy*, he

[1] Guizot, *La Démocratie en France*, p. 2.

said: "Give the suffrage to a people unfitted for it, governed by hateful reactionary passions, they will sell it, or make a bad use of it, and will introduce instability into every part of the state." [1]

In spite, however, of the grave set-back which democracy brought upon itself in the middle of the nineteenth century, during the subsequent period it continued to make headway in all parts of the world, even in the autocratic empires of Central and Eastern Europe.[2] The spread of education, the growth of the press, the development of means of communication, the increase of working-class prosperity, the organisation of labour—these and countless other causes contributed to make both the monarchic and the aristocratic state ultimately impossible. Before emancipated man only two alternatives lay—democracy and (whether under its own or under some less alarming name) anarchy. For anarchy man was not, and is not yet, ripe. Hence the hope of the human race centred upon democracy. But still democracy continued to be effective mainly in destruction; still did it remain unstable, still impotent to build.[3] Moreover, where it established itself, especially in the Latin countries of the world, it manifested many of those other vices to which (as has already been noticed) it is liable, viz. a corruption which made it the despair of reformers; a subservience to "bosses" which drove honourable men out of politics altogether; a factiousness fatal to

[1] E. A. Venturi, *Joseph Mazzini*, p. 177.

[2] The growth of the Social-Democratic vote in Germany was undoubtedly one of the causes which precipitated the war of 1914: the Imperial Government wanted to provide a counter-irritant.

[3] Cf. A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 162: "The twentieth century is discovering to its surprise that the capacity of parliaments has been overestimated; that, however well they may shout, they find it difficult to govern."

peace; a jealousy of talent which enthroned mediocrity; a materialism which destroyed enthusiasm; a contempt for law destructive of order; a lust for plunder which degraded it to the level of the criminal. For its moral faults, as well as for its inefficiency, it seemed to deserve the condemnation of Nietzsche who said: "Democracy is not only a degenerating form of political organisation; it is also equivalent to a degenerating, declining type of man." [1]

Nevertheless, those to whom democracy was more than a mere form of government, or type of state, or order of society; those to whom it appeared to be the goal of political evolution, the foreordained environment of the perfect man, all but an end in itself—could not permit themselves to despair of its redemption, its purification, its final sanctification. For to despair of democracy would be to despair of human nature, and to make surrender to the pessimism of Nietzsche or the still more horrible Prussianism of Treitschke. Moreover, if the new democracies of the nineteenth century showed all the vices of ungovernable youth, in the older democracy of Britain—in spite of grave defects—there were large and abiding elements of hope. To the history of democracy in Britain we now turn our attention.

[1] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 203. Cf. also *Twilight of the Idols*, § 37. One of Nietzsche's disciples, A. M. Ludovici, *Defence of Aristocracy*, p. 253, echoes his master in the words: "Since democracy includes the voice—and a majority of the voices—of mediocre or impoverished life, it is bound by slow or rapid steps to lead to nemesis and to death."

CHAPTER IV

BRITISH DEMOCRACY

"You will observe that from *Magna Carta* to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown, an inheritable peerage, and a house of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors."—BURKE, *French Revolution.*

"In so far as the course of English Constitutional History can be summarised in a phrase, it may be described as a drift towards democracy."—MASTERMAN, *British Constitution.*

"Where freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent."—TENNYSON, *Poems of 1832.*

§ 16. *The Historic Substratum of Politics.*

WE have seen that one of the functions which history performs in respect of politics is that it furnishes "lessons" from the storehouse of the past for the guidance of the present and the future. Like a corporate memory, history brings up recollections of the bygone experiences of the race, supplies records of completed experiments, perpetuates the warnings of old disasters, encourages the repetition of successes once achieved. In respect of *direct* democracy the lessons of history are clear and unmistakable. They teach us that direct democracy is possible only to

small and homogeneous communities; that where these small communities are primitive and pastoral, like the early Teutonic tribes or the mediaeval Swiss cantons, democracy tends to be stable but stagnant; that, on the other hand, where these communities are urban and active, like the ancient city-states of Greece or the Italian republics of the Renaissance, democracy tends to be splendid but ephemeral; tends to develop the highest types of genius together with the extremest kinds of moral corruption; tends to foster the most glorious liberty but at the same time to loosen the bands of discipline and open the way to internal anarchy and foreign conquest. In respect of *representative* democracy, however, the lessons of history are as yet few and uncertain. For though, as we have seen, representative institutions have a record that goes back for a good many centuries, it is only within the last hundred years that these institutions have become the instruments of sovereign democracies, and the means by which emancipated peoples strive to exercise their newly-asserted powers. It is, indeed, just because the lessons of ancient experience do not directly apply in the radically changed conditions of modern times, that the youthful democracies of to-day find themselves so very much bewildered as to the course they should pursue. It is for this very reason that they stand hesitant at the crossways, gazing in painful doubt at the divergent sign-posts, all of which claim to point them straight to the Golden Age; and that they stand listening to the rival clamours of self-confident guides, each of whom professes to be the exclusive possessor of the secret of the shortest cut to the much-longed-for goal.

Fortunately, the service which history can render to democracy at this crisis of its fate is not limited to the provision of precedents, or the furnishing of completed lessons drawn from the records of other lands or past ages. It can also render—and it alone can render—the further indispensable service of making known the antecedents of the problems which present themselves for solution to the democracy of to-day. Most of the questions—political, social, and economic—with which modern democracy is called upon to deal are old questions that have reached their present condition of complexity as the result of long periods of evolution, and as the product of the interplay of many historic influences. This is specially obvious in the sphere of foreign affairs. The question of the lordship of the Netherlands, for instance, has been a vital question for England from the time of the Norman Conquest down to the present critical moment; the question of Alsace-Lorraine has a history that goes back to the ninth-century treaty of Verdun, if not indeed to the period nine hundred years earlier still, when Caesar saved Gaul from the Teutonic barbarians, and extended to it the culture and humanity of the Province; the Eastern question was already of immemorial antiquity when Europe and Asia fought with one another at Salamis, or wrestled together for control over the Hellespont "far on the ringing plains of windy Troy." But if the continuity of history and the antiquity of politics are specially obvious in the sphere of foreign affairs, they are not less truly facts, and important facts, in the sphere of domestic matters. No one, for example, can hope to understand the Poor Law problem who limits his study to the Reports of the Commissioners

of 1909; he must also investigate the Act of 1834 with all its subsequent modifications; he must explore the disastrous experiments of the eighteenth century; he must pursue his course back to the legislation of Tudor times, and even to the pre-legislative expedients of the Middle Ages. The same is the case with the Irish question, with the franchise question, and indeed with nearly every other vexed question of the day. It would, of course, be too much to claim that in all these doubtful and difficult matters the study of the past will give infallible guidance for the action of the present and the policy of the future; but it is not too much to say that no step forward can be safely made without an acquaintance with the path already trodden; and it is not too much to claim that a survey of that traversed track does give invaluable indications of the general direction to be pursued, and therefore of the crossways to be avoided, in the days to come.

One of the great guiding principles of politics, which is reinforced by history with countless examples and warnings, is that there must be no breach in the continuity of the national life. This is the truth, for instance, that stands out from the record of the failure of the Puritan Revolution in seventeenth-century England. The lofty ideals of the Commonwealth thinkers missed realisation because they took inadequate account of the vigour of those ancient institutions, those venerable traditions, those firmly-established conventions, those ineradicable prejudices which they aimed at sweeping aside. The splendid experiments of the Protectorate had to be abandoned because they involved too fundamental a change in the old constitution—a change incompatible with the continued

existence of the Old England which, in spite of its defects, nine-tenths of the people of the country loved with a passionate devotion. This truth, so clearly proclaimed by the fall of the English Republic and the restoration of the Stuarts, was reiterated with doubled emphasis by the course of the French Revolution, and its culmination in the restoration of the Bourbons a century later. Long, indeed, before this climax was reached, while as yet the Revolution was in its earlier and more hopeful stages, Burke uttered the admonition which events were destined so strikingly to vindicate. Proclaiming the organic nature of the state, he warned the ideologues who were practising upon the French body politic that they were performing operations which, if carried through, would involve, not recovery of health, but death, with small hope of resurrection. The patient herself soon realised the peril of her position beneath the blades of the amateur surgeons, and she fled to Napoleon Bonaparte for salvation. In our own day the truth that a nation has a life of its own; that it cannot tolerate too rapid and too radical a change of conditions; that it requires time to adapt itself to new environments and to assimilate new ideas, is being painfully learned by the great peoples of Russia, who in their turn have fallen victims to fanatics obsessed by abstract ideas, devoid of all sense of historic continuity, regardless of the accumulated experience of the ages. By what means Russia will gain deliverance from her Bolshevik ideologues we cannot yet forecast; but gain it she must and will.

Britain, apart from her short experience in the seventeenth century, has suffered much less from theoretical politicians than have the countries of

the Continent. Her annals show nothing that can compare with the influence of professors in Germany, philosophers in France, poets in Italy, or priests in Spain. The British are a practical people, not quick to respond to ideas, although remarkably ready to adapt themselves and their institutions to the exigencies of new situations. Hence the movement of the British peoples towards democracy has been slow, irregular, empirical, illogical. It has not been prefaced by any grand and comprehensive declaration of the Rights of Man; but has been achieved by a steady and stubborn insistence on the immemorial liberties of their ancestors. The British appeal has been to precedent and not to principle; to history and not to philosophy; to the law of the land and not to the natural rights of the human race. The framers of the Bill of Rights, by which our present constitution is determined, based their demands on concessions secured by the Long Parliament; the Long Parliament vehemently asserted that it asked for nothing new, but merely claimed the restoration of the mode of governance current under Henry VI.; the constitutional lawyers of Henry VI.'s time based their practice upon Magna Carta; Magna Carta professed to be little more than a detailed version of the Charter of Henry I. which Stephen Langton read to the assembled barons in St. Paul's Cathedral; the Charter of Henry I. promised that the English people should enjoy the Laws of Edward the Confessor; the Laws of Edward the Confessor were but the written record of the traditional customs of the Anglo-Saxon folk whose origin was lost in the mists of impenetrable antiquity. No people has so consistently developed on historic lines as have the British people; to none

is it so necessary that historic continuity should be maintained. Let us then cursorily trace the path by which democracy in Britain has reached its present position, in the hope that from it we may gain some indication of the straight way which should be pursued, and of the crossways which should be avoided, in the critical days that lie ahead.

§ 17. *Early English Democracy.*

"In as far as the course of English constitutional history can be summarised in a phrase," says Canon Masterman, "it may be described as a drift towards democracy." [1] This drift is discernible from the earliest days; for "the idea of government by general consent, brought by our forefathers from the German forests, has never died out of English life." [2] It has been, however, a far from uniform drift. At times, indeed, as for example during the Tudor and early Stuart periods, the superficial currents, at any rate, seemed to set in the opposite direction. But below the surface the general tendency has been steady, even though the pace has varied greatly from age to age.

It is most remarkable that in the first detailed picture of our Teutonic ancestors that has been handed down to us, viz. that drawn by Tacitus, they should stand revealed to us not merely as democratic, but as endowed with rudimentary representative institutions. What had been hidden from the wise of Greece and the prudent of Rome had in some mysterious manner been revealed to these primitive barbarians, these politically-minded babes. The

[1] Masterman, *History of the British Constitution*, p. 1. [2] *Ibid.* p. 2.

democratic element was specially marked in their national assemblies. The information which Tacitus gives us concerning these bodies is thus summarised by Bishop Stubbs: "The central power was wielded by the national assemblies. . . . There was no distinction of place or seat: all were free, all appeared in arms. . . . The debate was opened by some one who had a personal claim to be heard: he took the tone of persuasion, never that of command. Opposition was expressed by loud shouts, assent by the shaking of spears, enthusiastic applause by the clash of spear and shield. Of matters of deliberation the more important were transacted in the full assembly at which all freemen were entitled to be present."[1] The rudimentary *representative* element was evident in the *pagi* into which the nation was divided: each *pagus* sent one hundred warriors to the host, and provided one hundred assessors to assist in the administration of justice.[2]

The democratic and representative features of the Teutonic polity which arrested the attention of Tacitus in the first century of the Christian era continued to display themselves through the early Middle Ages; they formed the subject of description and comment on the part of writers such as Bede, Nithard, Rudolph, and Hucbald; they left their impress upon the *Leges Barbarorum*.[3] Hucbald in particular, when treating of the Saxons of the eighth century, depicts their constitution as a representative democracy of a

[1] Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, vol. i. p. 80. This summary is based on Tacitus, *Germania*, cap. xi.

[2] Tacitus, *Germania*, cap. vi.: "Centeni ex singulis pagis sunt"; cap. xii.: "Eliguntur in iisdem conciliis et principes, qui jura per pagos vicosque reddunt. Centeni singulis ex plebe comites, consilium simul ac auctoritas adsunt."

[3] Cf. Stubbs, *op. cit.* vol. i. chap. iii.

remarkably advanced type: the sovereign national assembly was composed of representatives of the *pagi*—each *pagus* sent thirty-six men, twelve from each of the three social classes into which the community was divided.[1]

The Anglo-Saxons, when they established themselves in Britain, brought with them their free institutions. The oldest, and for a time the most important, unit of administration was the *hundred*, which corresponded to the *pagus* of Tacitus and Hucbald. Its governing authority was the hundred-moot, held once a month, and attended, not only by lords of lands and priests, but also by the reeve and four best men from each township within its limits. When judicial business came before the moot, the whole body of suitors present acted as judge: it became customary, however, for them to delegate their powers to a representative body of twelve. After the hundreds had coalesced into shires, and the six-monthly shire-moot had been instituted, the same reeve and four best men journeyed to represent the township in the presence of the sheriff, the ealdorman, and the bishop. Once again the whole body of suitors was regarded as possessed of supreme judicial authority; but, once again, it became usual for twelve representative thegns to act for the unwieldy multitude. When the shires —under pressure of civil war and foreign invasion, and through the unifying influence of the Christian church — were amalgamated into kingdoms, the popular and representative elements in the central government tended to disappear. In spite of the

[1] Hucbald, "Vita Sancti Lebuini" in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, §§ ii. 361. The historic accuracy of Hucbald has been questioned, but his picture is almost as noteworthy, even if it be but that of a tenth-century Utopia, as if it were that of an authentic eighth-century Saxony.

efforts of Kemble and Freeman to prove that the witenagemot of the early English monarchy was originally a democratic assembly, the better opinion (*e.g.* that of Stubbs and Maitland) is decisively in favour of the view that it was, from the first, aristocratic and select. It is probable that from the days of Egbert to the days of John (roughly A.D. 800–1200) English democracy was limited to the sphere of local administration.[1] In the old courts of hundred and shire, however, it continued to flourish, perfecting itself in practice, and waiting for the day when it should claim a share—or rather should be compelled unwillingly to accept a share—of the national government. During that same four hundred years of democratic submergence, representative institutions of new kinds were introduced into the island from two separate sources: on the one hand they were developed by the clergy in the ecclesiastical assemblies; on the other hand they were imported by the Normans for their system of inquests by sworn recognition, and were extended by the able Angevins in the wide ramifications of the jury system. The Angevins, however, did much more for the English constitution than extend the jury system. They began to link up, by closer ties than had ever existed before, the old English local organisation with the new and strong central government which had been established since the conquest. The principal agents of this closer union were itinerant officials, members of the *curia regis*, who went on circuit to the shires in order to see to the collection of the king's revenues, to secure

[1] One must not, however, wholly ignore such exceptional national assemblies as the great gemot of Salisbury (1086) which was attended by many thousands of landholders summoned for a special purpose.

grants towards the needs of the realm, to inspect the militia, to examine the working of the frankpledge system, to administer justice. For the purpose of meeting these formidable officials, who came with regal pomp and power on their grand eyre, it was customary for the shire courts to elect two or more of the most eminent "knights of the shire," whose duty it was to represent the shire, and in particular to make with the king the best financial bargain possible on behalf of the shire. The next step in the development of representative government was not a long one, but it was one of extraordinary interest and importance. It consisted in the summoning of these "knights of the shire" to come together into one place, instead of waiting to be visited in turn in their respective shires. This step was taken in 1213, in the midst of the struggles of John's reign, at the moment the king and barons were beginning to collect their forces for the conflict which culminated in the sealing of *Magna Carta*. The sealing of *Magna Carta* marked the momentary victory of the feudal nobility over the monarchy. *Magna Carta* itself was a baronial document, anti-democratic and reactionary. Except indirectly, by shaking the authority of the king, it retarded rather than advanced the cause of representative government. But its acquisition inaugurated a half century of civil strife during which the king sought to recover his prerogatives, and the barons to make good their privileges. Both sides were driven for support, and particularly for financial support, to the growing third estate. Hence first the barons, when under Simon de Montfort they had overthrown Henry III. at Lewes, summoned representative burgesses from

towns to join the knights of the shire in the great "parliament" of 1265. Later, Edward I., when he came to the throne, adopted the baronial device, won over the towns by his just and beneficent rule, and constituted the "model parliament" in which both knights of the shires and burgesses from the towns were permanent elements. In 1322 it was formally recognised that no legislative measure passed in the absence of the Commons, or without their assent, was valid. The older members of the king's great council or witenagemot—bishops, abbots, earls, and barons—coalesced to form a "House of Lords." The new members, representative of the *communitates* of shires and boroughs amalgamated to form a "House of Commons." There is no space here to tell the familiar story of the processes by which (1) the franchise was fixed, until in the counties the forty-shilling freeholders held the monopoly of the vote, while in the boroughs an infinite variety of locally-determined electorates prevailed; (2) parliament extended its powers and enlarged its privileges, until at the end of the Middle Ages it had acquired a recognised measure of control over legislation, taxation, administration, and justice. Suffice it to say that under the poverty-stricken and insecurely-seated Lancastrian kings it reached the height of its mediaeval greatness, and even became for a time the governing authority in the realm; but that, having attained to power, it did not know how to use it, and, by allowing the country to drift into the anarchy of the Wars of the Roses, it found itself utterly discredited in the eyes of the community of peaceful and reasonable men who desired above all things security for the development of industry and commerce. The Lancastrian period, says Bishop

Stubbs, was the period of "the trial and failure of parliamentary government." Hence the country submitted with active goodwill to the Tudor dictatorship of the sixteenth century. For though it was harsh and unconstitutional, it was efficient and public-spirited. It gave to England the order and good government necessary for her development; it tided the country safely through the crises of the Reformation and the Spanish War. But though the Tudor monarchs dominated and subjugated parliament, they did not destroy it. On the contrary, finding it submissive and accommodating, they preferred to use it, and to work by means of it. Some of their most despotic and immoral acts were perpetrated with parliamentary sanction. Their free and frequent employment of parliament kept life in an institution which might otherwise have died—as the French states-general did die—of inanition and inactivity. Parliament continued to exist, and it never lost the memory of the powers that it had exercised, and the privileges that it had enjoyed, in the good old days of Henry VI. Hence. when the popular and patriotic Tudors gave place to the alien and self-centred Stuarts, the royal dictatorship soon became intolerable, and parliament rebelled in reassertion of its mediaeval claims.

§ 18. *The Great Rebellion.*

The Great Rebellion of the seventeenth century is the prime outstanding event in English history, as regarded from the point of view of world-development. It ranks in *Weltgeschichte* with the Italian Renaissance, the German Reformation, and the

French Revolution, as a national movement—as the *one* English national movement—whose influence was universal, and whose significance was as great in the annals of humanity as in the records of the people among whom it was enacted. It has excited the interest of Continental publicists as no other episode in English history has done: among the fullest and most authoritative studies of its course are those which have come from the pens of the French statesman Guizot, and the German scholar Ranke. Its significance and its universal importance lay in the fact that it put a check upon absolute monarchy at the very moment when in every other part of the world absolute monarchy seemed to be establishing itself in impregnable supremacy; when popular assemblies were dropping out of existence; when representative institutions were being extinguished; when democracy was dying. It set an example of successful resistance to autocracy which revived the hopes of constitutionalists all the earth over; it definitely turned the tide of world-politics, and caused it to flow with ever-increasing volume and impetus in the direction of self-government.

The general causes which produced the rebellion against Charles I. can be traced back along two separate lines—the one political, the other religious—to the Reformation as effected in England by Henry VIII. The Act of Supremacy of 1534, above and beyond its obvious results, involved a new theory of the English kingship on the one hand, and a new relation of church and state in England on the other hand. (1) We have seen that the mediaeval theory of kingship, as promulgated by popes and expounded by Catholic theologians, was that monarchs derived

their authority, ultimately indeed, from God, but mediately through His representative on earth, the successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See of Rome. In virtue of this delegated omnipotence, popes claimed and exercised the right of both appointing and deposing kings; they supported pious monarchs against their subjects; they absolved subjects from their oaths of allegiance to impious rulers. In 1534 Henry VIII. was excommunicated; the faithful were freed from their obligations of obedience; the Emperor was commissioned to expel the wicked and adulterous reprobate from his kingdom. It was no longer possible for Henry, or his Protestant successors, to admit that any portion of their royal power or dignity came to them through papal channels. They needed a clear anti-papal theory of the source of monarchical authority. At the same time they wished to assert as emphatically as ever the sacred character of their office; they were determined to remain kings *Dei gratia*. The theory which they required was found ready to their hands in the doctrine of the "divine right of kings," which had been formulated by Italian Ghibellines and German imperialists in the course of the later conflicts between the empire and the papacy; which had been adopted by Philip IV. of France in his contention with Pope Boniface VIII.; which had been employed by John Wycliffe in the elaborate argument by which he justified Edward III.'s refusal to pay tribute to Rome. This theory of the "divine right of kings" well served its original purpose of establishing the validity of the Tudor monarchy against its Catholic assailants. It was a theological dogma rather than a political principle; it gave Protestant apologists

something to say in reply to their Canonical opponents. When, however, the Protestant monarchs were fully settled in England and the Stuarts succeeded to the throne, they soon diverted the dogma from the realm of religious theory into the realm of practical affairs, and showed that it had a double edge—that it was not only effective against claims of papal supremacy, but was equally effective against claims of popular sovereignty. James I. and Charles I. not only repudiated the pope; they also denied that they derived their authority from their people; denied that they were responsible to their subjects; denied that resistance to the royal will was ever justified; denied that parliament possessed any powers or privileges which kings had not conceded, and could not rescind. It was this doctrine, as applied to the conduct of the state, that parliament was compelled to controvert and resist in 1642.

(2) Simultaneously with the assertion of the dogma of the "divine right of kings," had come the reduction of the church to the position of a department of the state. The king, proclaiming himself its "supreme head," had assumed the prerogatives of an Anglican pope; the bishops, once so powerful and independent, had been degraded to the rank of courtiers; the Christian community, cut off from fellowship with the Catholic commonwealth, had been subdued to a Byzantine obedience to the dictates of the secular ruler, who had taken over the right to fix its creeds, regulate its ritual, determine its mode of government. It had been the will of Henry VIII. and (after the brief aberrations of the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary) of Elizabeth, that the Anglican church should be neither Catholic nor Protestant; that it should move

along a *via media*, repudiating papal supremacy, but retaining many of the characteristics of the Catholic system; above all, that it should remain subject to the royal control. This settlement not only displeased the faithful members of the Old Communion; it was also intensely obnoxious to the growing Calvinistic party in this country, which wished to bring the English church fully into line with the most advanced reformed churches of the Continent. This Calvinistic party rejected the royal supremacy, and indeed all control of the church by the state; it objected to episcopacy, contending that presbyterianism was the only scriptural system of ecclesiastical government; it demanded a simplification of ritual; it advocated a drastic revision of the articles of belief. The party sprang up and developed, of course, within the limits of the Church of England; since the Elizabethan settlement tolerated no dissent. It aimed at capturing the church, and at suppressing all antagonists. Elizabeth combated it vigorously; but the accession of the Stuarts, who had been brought up as Presbyterians in Scotland, filled its leaders with hope. Promptly and with confidence they presented their Millenary Petition to James I. as he was on his journey from Edinburgh to London. James, however, had not acquired affection for the Presbyterian system from his long subjection to it; on the contrary, he had come to the conclusion that it "accorded with monarchy" no better than the devil did with God. Hence he decisively rejected the petition, and gave his resolute support to the Elizabethan settlement. In this he was followed, with a heightened strength of religious conviction and personal piety, by his son Charles.

Thus along two distinct but parallel and closely-connected lines the Stuart kings ran counter to important and increasingly numerous sections of their subjects. Parliamentarians and Puritans—constitutional stalwarts and religious reformers—combined to precipitate the crisis of 1642. But neither Parliamentarians nor Puritans were democrats. The Parliamentarians fought for the ascendancy of that landed aristocracy and moneyed oligarchy which had constituted the mediaeval estates of the realm; the Puritans had before them as a political ideal the sovereignty of the saints, the rule of the limited minority of the elect. Fundamental, indeed, to the Calvinistic system was that dogma of the total depravity of the natural man which, as we have seen, is incompatible with the democratic creed. Calvin himself had a profound distrust of the plebs; his English and his Scottish followers fully shared his anti-democratic sentiments. "Popular government," said Baillie, "bringeth in confusion, making the feet above the head." "I like not the democratic forms," confessed the saintly Baxter; "democratic government is the worst of all forms. The governors must be good as well as wise; but as the earth contains but few men that are wise and good, if they may rule but a little time, the bad must succeed them." Milton, too, far as he departed from the standards of Presbyterian orthodoxy, shared the Calvinistic contempt for the crowd: he spoke of it as the "inconstant, irrational, and hopeless herd, begotten to servility," and of its members as "exorbitant and excessive in all their motions." More important still, Cromwell and Ireton were no democrats. Cromwell was a seventeenth-century Gideon who was quite prepared to

save Israel, and expected to be compelled to save Israel, by means of an inconsiderable remnant of the chosen.[1] Ireton, the most commanding intellect of his party, on the ground that "men as men are corrupt and will be so," embodied in his famous "Heads of Proposals" a scheme of reform which allowed but small power to the people.

Ireton, however, had to contend strenuously against a new and unexpected body of opinion which had made itself heard, and had gained enormous influence, during the Civil War. As the conflict had run its course, political power had shifted considerably. Parliamentarians and Presbyterians had not been able to make good against the Royalists; nor had the advent of aid from the Scots sufficed to secure a decision. The overthrow of the king was effected, not by those who had commenced the struggle, but by a "new model" army which had no respect for parliament as then constituted, and no love for the exclusiveness and intolerance of presbyterianism. In this "new model" army had sprung up and developed, in a most remarkable manner, not only the principle of religious toleration (the complete separation of church from state), but also the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. The new doctrines found their most extreme exponent in John Lilburne;[2] they were widely disseminated by "agitators"; they were finally embodied in practical form

[1] Cf. Cromwell's Speech to the Council of Officers, January 1653: "That if they should trust the People in an election of a new Parliament according to the old constitution it would be a tempting of God, and that his confidence was that God did intend to save and deliver this nation by a few, as He had done in former times."

[2] "Lilburne," says Lord Acton, "was among the first to understand the real conditions of democracy and the obstacle to its success in England" (*History of Freedom and Other Essays*, p. 83).

in the famous "Agreement of the People," the presentation of which to the Council of the Army on October 28, 1647, may well be regarded as the starting-point of modern democratic history.[1] The democratic ferment, moreover, which worked so furiously in the army and in the classes from which the army was drawn, did not limit itself to the sphere of politics, nor did it refrain from overt action. It extended itself into the spheres of society and economics; it began to embark on bold experiments. The Levellers proclaimed the extremest dogmas of social equality; Everard and the Diggers commenced to appropriate the land; Winstanley and the Communists plotted the subversion of the whole existing order. The democrats, indeed, of one sort and another, gave Cromwell, during the period of his protectorate, infinitely more trouble than any other class in the community. He recognised that with their uncompromisable convictions, and their irreconcilable antagonisms, they were going about to reduce all things to confusion, and he resisted them with invincible common sense. They, for their part, vented upon him all the malignance of frustrated fanaticism; proclaimed, with the support of Old Testament precedents, that in the case of such as he killing was no murder, and conspired to assassinate him. When in 1658 death removed his strong hand from the helm of state, they could no longer be held in check. Dread of the doctrinaire democrats, fear of the levelling army, alarm at the communism of the saints, were among the most potent of the causes that led to the restoration of Charles II.[2]

[1] See Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, p. 333, and *Great Civil War*, vol. iii. p. 392.

[2] For the extraordinarily interesting and important political theory of

§ 19. *Democracy in Eclipse.*

Cromwell had not been a doctrinaire, but an opportunist and practical Englishman; not a fanatic, although mystically religious and deeply convinced of his providential mission; not a revolutionary, but an eminently conservative reformer. His great concern, it is true, had been to preserve that freedom of faith, and to secure that liberty of prophesying, which the victory of the army had established: but subject to this condition he had been indifferent to political forms, and in the interests of stability he had favoured as near a return to the old English constitution as circumstances had permitted. Not only had he set up a "House of Lords" to balance his "House of Commons": he had even been prepared to assume the title of "king," with all the legal limitations, and all the diminution of his protectoral powers, which it implied. His conservative and restorative efforts, however, had been frustrated by the invincible, though infinitely varied, hostilities of a nine-tenths majority of the nation—a majority composed of Royalists, Parliamentarians, Levellers, Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Sectaries—an amazing congeries of incompatibles. Hence, in the supreme interests of religious freedom and political order, he had been driven to establish a more complete and efficient despotism than the country had ever known before—a military autocracy, administered locally by means of major-generals and army councils, under which the population had groaned. Heavy, however, as the Cromwellian yoke had been, it was

this period, see Gooch, *History of Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*; Gooch, *Political Thought from Bacon to Halifax*; Borgeaux, *Rise of Modern Democracy*; and Heatley, *Studies in British History and Politics.*

found to be incomparably preferable to the anarchy into which the administration drifted after the great Protector's death. It was soon evident that the only possible means of escape from intolerable conditions of religious fanaticism and political instability would be the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. Advantage was therefore taken of dissension among the soldiers, and conflicts among the saints, to recall the exiled Charles II.

The soldiers and the saints in the days of their power had made the fatal mistake of breaking too completely with the past, and Cromwell, with all his mighty personality and immense influence, had not been able to restrain them. They had flouted the conservative instincts of the nation, had violated its traditions, had outraged its sanctities. Ultra-democratic though many of them had been in their theories, they had all of them been conscientiously and immovably resolved to get their own way, irrespective of the wishes of the multitude, or the votes of majorities. Their intransigence, unreasonableness, and opiniatrety; their incapacity for compromise or moderation, had precipitated chaos, and had involved them one and all in well-merited ruin. No persons had ever proclaimed so clearly or so loudly as the Levellers the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people; no persons had in practice ever shown a more complete contempt for the general will. The Restoration, the most popular event in English history, came as the spontaneous rising of the people against its professed champions; it was the revolt of the democracy against the democrats. It owed its popularity but very little to the personality of Charles II. Interesting as he was, he was primarily a symbol. He was emblematic

of the return of the ancient national institutions and the revival of the old communal life: his coming signalised the end of the Puritan *régime.* With him came Lords and Commons, sheriffs and justices, bishops and clergy, playwrights and actors: before him vanished, like a nightmare, major-generals and agitators, triers and ejectors, Millenarians and Fifth-monarchists, Levellers and Diggers. The country had seen enough for a time of republican governments, and heard enough of democratic theory. It was content to slumber for a century in constitutional empiricism.

The century 1660–1760 was not, however, in spite of its general stagnation, devoid of important constitutional movements; nor did it fail to generate political ideas destined to be of influence in later days. One of the prominent features of the Restoration settlement was the close alliance instituted between church and state. Monarchy and episcopacy had suffered equally under the Puritan *régime,* and they instinctively joined forces to crush their former oppressors and to support one another. Charles gave his sanction to the repressive Clarendon Code; the loyal clergy on their side with one accord revived the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and preached the duty of passive obedience to the Lord's anointed. Filmer's *Patriarcha* became the text-book of ecclesiastical politics, and its thesis the theme of countless discourses. Algernon Sidney, who ventured to traverse Filmer's arguments and to oppose Charles's patriarchal rule, was put to death as a traitor. So long as this close alliance between church and state continued, resistance was hopeless, reaction was supreme. But it did not continue for many years.

Even in Charles's reign signs of schism were evident; for Charles displayed an affection for Catholics, and an absence of hatred for Protestant dissenters, that were painful to strong Anglican churchmen. The definite breach, however, was deferred till James II. came to the throne. His aggressive Catholicism compelled the Anglicans to abandon the principle of passive obedience, to ally themselves with the Protestant dissenters, and to drive James from the kingdom. Their remarkable change of attitude was best expounded and most effectively defended in a series of vigorous pamphlets by a clergyman who bore the prophetic name of Samuel Johnson. He compared James to Julian the Apostate, and argued that he had forfeited the allegiance of his Protestant subjects. James in reply caused him to be whipped through the streets of London, from Newgate to Tyburn. Not all James's repressive measures, however, sufficed to crush the general antagonism to his policy: he had to go.

The Revolution of 1688–89 eliminated for ever from the English constitution the doctrines of the divine right of kings and the passive obedience of subjects. William III. and his successors had a title to the throne that was merely statutory; they held their office provisionally, subject to their observance of the conditions laid down in the Bill of Rights and the supplementary Act of Settlement. Hence, a new official theory of the state became necessary, which, while it inculcated the duty of obedience in normal circumstances, also justified revolt in certain exceptional cases. The required theory was found in a doctrine which had been developed from the Roman law, and employed in the sixteenth century

by French Huguenots, Scottish reformers, and Dutch rebels, to vindicate Calvinistic resistance to Catholic kings; a doctrine which (to the embarrassment of the papacy) had been astutely adopted by seventeenth-century Jesuits to vindicate Catholic resistance to heretical rulers—the doctrine of the Contract. The doctrine was not unknown in England: different forms of it had been mooted by the judicious Hooker, the pedantic Hobbes, and the fiery Milton. It was reserved, however, to the philosophic John Locke to expound it fully in such a way as to make it the *apologia* for the Revolution. The important feature of the contract theory in the history of democracy is that it reverts frankly and unreservedly to the ancient principle of the Roman law, that the ultimate source of political power is the people.[1] However oligarchic the Revolutionary settlement might in fact be during such time as the Whigs ruled the country in the name of the Orange William or the German Georges, its basal principle was democratic. It only needed a bold thinker, an ardent reformer, a resolute enemy of aristocracies and hierarchies, to seize upon this principle, and, applying it with uncompromising logic, inaugurate the democratic era. This inevitable man, however, did not arise among the countrymen of John Locke. The English nation, lapped in luxury and ease, was content to live upon the memory of its past achievements, and to enjoy the prosperity which the indulgent Walpole gave it. An air of utter contentment, suggestive of a prosperous farmyard, suffuses Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, published in the middle of the eighteenth century, and descriptive of

[1] Cf. Locke, *Two Treatises on Civil Government*, Part II. chap. x.-xi.

the England of the Hanoverians. The atmosphere of England was fatal to political thought. The inevitable developer and logical explicator of Locke was not an Englishman, but the Genevese Jean Jacques Rousseau.

In one part of the British dominions, however, the mephitic conditions of this island did not prevail. The colonies of the New World breathed an ampler, purer air. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, in particular, had developed extensive rights of self-government, and had become familiar with advanced democratic ideas. Each of them had legislatures popularly elected, and councils appointed from among their own citizens; the latter two even possessed the right of nominating their own governors. They were quick to welcome and adopt the principle of the separation of powers proclaimed by Montesquieu in 1748, and the still more revolutionary doctrine of the sovereignty of the people enunciated by Rousseau in 1762. Political conditions prior to the Peace of Paris (1763) did not permit them, however, to assert their claims to independence: the menace of the French in Canada and Louisiana necessitated British protection. The removal of the French peril opened the path to self-determination, and scarcely had the Seven Years' War been brought to a close, when the movement towards American Independence began. The War of American Independence gave an impulse to the democratic cause second only in potence to that which had come from the English Rebellion.

§ 20. *The Democratic Revival.*

There can be little doubt that, under the "old colonial system," which treated overseas dominions as estates to be worked for the benefit of the mother country, the revolt of the American colonists, sooner or later, was inevitable. The restrictions imposed by Britain upon industry and commerce, upon military and naval defence, upon self-administration and self-taxation, were such as to preclude the possibility of free development, and to doom the dependencies to a parasitic existence. Such an existence could not be rendered permanently tolerable; and either the "old colonial system" had to be abandoned, or its victims would be driven, irrespective of specific grievances, to throw it off. It is equally certain, however, that but for the unwisdom of George III. and his ministers in enforcing Navigation Laws, inflicting Stamp Acts, and imposing Imports Duties, the conflict would have been long postponed; for the colonists in the years following the Peace of Paris were filled with gratitude for the deliverance from the French peril which British arms had wrought, and zealous in their devotion to William Pitt, the Great Commoner, to whom in particular they attributed their salvation. The injudicious acts and the dictatorial claims of the British government soon destroyed these good feelings, and roused in place of them an intense antagonism which, in its turn, soon manifested itself in deeds of monstrous violence and words of outrageous unreasonableness. The inflamed oratory, however, of such men as Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, and James Otis, not only contained lurid descriptions of the wrongs of the

colonists; they also embodied vigorous statements of the Rights of Man. Still more powerfully did the calmer arguments of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton proclaim, as they dealt with the specific problem of taxation and representation, the general principles of the democratic creed. Above all, the pamphlets of the English republican, Thomas Paine, who went to America in 1774, and made the cause of the colonists his own, disseminated far and wide the long-dormant equalitarian ideas of the Levellers, combined with the contractual theories of Locke, and the dogmas of popular sovereignty and the supreme authority of the general will as developed by Rousseau.[1] All these were proclaimed in a document, mainly the work of Thomas Jefferson, which has had an incalculably great influence upon the course of subsequent world-politics—the *Declaration of Independence* of 1776. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," say the signatories to this famous manifesto; "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organising its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

[1] See specially Paine's *Common Sense* and the fourteen pamphlets on *The American Crisis*.

The ideas that were embodied in the *Declaration of Independence*, together with other kindred theories concerning "inalienable rights of man" and "immutable laws of nature," were already making their way into England itself from other sources when the war with the American colonies broke out. The government of George III. had during its opening years succeeded in rendering itself intensely obnoxious in this country by reason of its tyranny, its corruption, and its incompetence. The general dissatisfaction and disaffection were voiced by (among others) John Wilkes in a periodical produced for the occasion, and entitled the *North Briton*—in allusion to the king's hated Scottish secretary, Bute. The ministry in revenge pursued and persecuted Wilkes, even beyond the limits of the law, with a ferocity and a fury that had the effect of transforming him from a scurrilous and degraded libeller into a popular hero. In 1769 he was elected M.P. for Westminster, but the House—on technical grounds subsequently held by the courts to be invalid—refused to allow him to take his seat. Thus in England, as in America, the democratic issue was raised. A vehement agitation against the ruling oligarchy commenced; a new "Radical" party, hostile to both Whigs and Tories, was organised; a Society of Supporters of the Bill of Rights was founded to maintain the cause of Wilkes; the mysterious "Junius" began the publication of his notorious letters which not only lashed the old parties with merciless malignity, but also provided a clear-cut programme for the new one. Among the main items of the "Radical" programme, as drafted by "Junius" and pressed by Wilkes and his Society of Supporters, was parliamentary reform. The glaring

defects of the existing system of representation were pointed out, and a scheme of redistribution and re-enfranchisement was advocated strikingly resembling the scheme finally incorporated in the Act of 1832. It was, of course, in 1769 regarded as revolutionary, and it had no chance of realisation. But its promulgation had the effect of rousing more conservative reformers to a sense of the urgency of the constitutional question. In 1770 the Earl of Chatham (the elder Pitt) introduced, though unsuccessfully, a modest measure of parliamentary reconstruction. More important still, the same year Burke published his grave and impressive *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*. "The virtue, spirit, and essence of our House of Commons," he argued, "consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a control *upon* the people . . . it was designed as a control *for* the people." The government of George III. and Lord North, however, paid no more heed to the superficial remedies proposed by Chatham and Burke, than it did to the radical reforms demanded by Wilkes and "Junius." It drifted with blind perversity into the disaster and chaos which marked the black year 1780—when the American colonies were all but lost; when the French fleet held command of the Atlantic, and the Dutch rode victorious in the North Sea; when the Spaniards were closing in on Gibraltar, and the armed Neutrals of the Baltic were flouting the British rules of naval warfare; when Hyder Ali of Mysore was threatening to extinguish English dominion in India; when Ireland was on the verge of rebellion; when the Gordon rioters held London for a week in their power, and when disaffection throughout the country was

rife. In that dark year a new, more vigorous, and more sustained agitation for reform commenced. An influential Yorkshire committee of reformers was organised by Christopher Wyvill; a Westminster association was instituted which, under the presidency of Charles James Fox, adopted as its programme a scheme that embodied precisely the "six points" later advanced by the nineteenth-century Chartists; a new general Society for Promoting Constitutional Information was founded by Major John Cartwright, who from this date till his death in 1824 devoted all his energies to the cause of reform; in the House of Commons, Dunning succeeded in securing the passage of a strong motion of protest against royal influence in politics; even in the House of Lords the Duke of Richmond ventured to introduce a Bill to establish manhood suffrage. The result of combined disaster and disaffection was the fall of the obnoxious North government. William Pitt the younger, who—after two short ministries had come and gone—succeeded to power in 1783, was well disposed towards moderate reform, and during the first six years of his tenure of office he made several attempts to persuade the House of Commons to remove the worst anachronisms in its constitution. Nothing, however, had been accomplished when in 1789 the reverberations of the French Revolution changed the whole political situation.

William Pitt himself, having inherited his father's hostility to France, viewed the Revolution at first with complacency: it removed from power the House of Bourbon which for a century had been the most inveterate enemy of Britain. Other leading

men, however, were less phlegmatic. The heads of the older parties, both Whig and Tory, were profoundly alarmed at the revolutionary menace to all existing social, political, and religious institutions. Their perturbation found expression in the tremendous denunciations and prophetic warnings of Burke's *Reflections*. On the other hand, the Radicals, led by Charles James Fox, were almost beside themselves with joy. Members of Parliament favourable to the Revolution formed themselves into a society called the Friends of the People, and began an active democratic propaganda; throughout the country Corresponding Societies and Constitutional Societies were instituted and brought into touch with France; the old organisations of Wilkes and Cartwright were resuscitated and made to move. Above all, Thomas Paine re-emerged from respectable obscurity into cosmopolitan activity; he began by replying to Burke's *Reflections* in a dissertation on *The Rights of Man* (1790), which had an immense vogue at once, and a continuous influence on English politics for half a century; then he crossed to France, attached himself to the republican Girondists, and actually became a member of the Convention; he gave his new associates the benefits of his American experiences, renewed his American friendship with Lafayette, and to him dedicated a second part of *The Rights of Man* (1792), in which he laid down specific proposals for the conversion of Britain into a democratic republic. By the time this work was published, however, the aggressive energies of the French Revolutionists had thoroughly roused the alarm of all the European governments. Even Pitt had been stirred from his complacent contemplation of the

troubles of the Bourbon monarchy. The deposition and ultimate execution of Louis XVI., the September massacres of the nobles, the November decrees, the repudiation of treaties, the menace to the stability of neighbouring states—these had brought him, as they had brought most leading Continental statesmen, to a conviction that war was inevitable. The Revolutionists themselves precipitated the conflict, and by the middle of 1793 the issue was fairly joined. The outbreak of war with France made French propaganda in England treasonable. As French victories and conquests displayed themselves in rapid succession ; as the French menace to the security of Britain and the Empire increased ; public opinion hardened, and antagonism to the Friends of the People, the Corresponding Societies, and the other democratic organisations grew. In 1794, weakened by numerous withdrawals, they began to die out ; in 1799 those that had not expired were suppressed. Until the end of the war in 1815 there was a general suspension of all movements towards democracy or reform. Only Major Cartwright and a small company of stalwarts marked time in the country ; while in the House of Commons Sir Francis Burdett, almost alone, monotonously and persistently piped an annually-recurrent democratic tune to empty benches.

§ 21. *The Final Triumph.*

The twenty years of superficial stagnation and apparent quiescence, 1794–1815, were not as a matter of fact years of relapse. They were years during which irresistible forces were accumulating. While all the overt energies of the nation were concentrated

upon the war and the problems to which the war immediately gave rise, beneath the surface a mighty upheaval of the people was taking place. The Industrial Revolution was in full course, rapidly converting England from an agricultural to a manufacturing country, causing immense migrations of labourers from the rural south-east to the urban north-west, stimulating unprecedented increases of population, congesting masses of human beings in the abominable purlieus of factories, giving rise to new and insistent social problems, providing media for the swift dissemination and propagation of all sorts of revolutionary ideas. In spite of anti-combination laws (made specially strict in 1799) artisans began to organise themselves into trade unions, whose objects were both to secure better conditions of labour and also to grasp political power. Amongst the members of these unions the republican writings of Thomas Paine enjoyed an enduring popularity. Scarcely less influential, and even more alarming to the ruling classes, were the pamphlets of Thomas Spence of Newcastle who for forty strenuous years (1775–1814) promulgated a seductive "plan" for the nationalisation of the land, and the inauguration of the millennium.

It was hoped that the termination of the war in 1815, and the restoration of peace conditions after a quarter-century's interruption, would bring prosperity and contentment; but, owing to causes which cannot here be enumerated,[1] these hopes were not realised. The decade 1815–1825 was, indeed, a period of peculiar economic distress, social unrest,

[1] They are fully treated by Martineau, *History of England*, vols. i. and ii.; and by Spencer Walpole, *History of England*, vol. i.

and political agitation. The government, of which Lord Liverpool was the nominal head, still under the spell of the revolutionary spectre, felt it necessary to adopt measures of extreme repression. Marches of "blanketeers," Spa Field riots, and Cato Street conspiracies, were countered by suspensions of liberties, imprisonments of leaders, Peterloo "massacres." The spirit of the proletariat was roused to fury. William Cobbett on his "rural rides," and by means of his weekly paper, urged the masses to insist on admission to the franchise; "Orator" Hunt stumped the country inflaming popular passion against the ruling oligarchs; Francis Place, from the quiet parlour behind his bookshop at Charing Cross, organised a formidable attack upon privilege. It is probable, however, that nothing much would have resulted from all the pamphleteering, all the oratory, all the wire-pulling, had it not happened that from 1819 the great Whig party began to regard with favour the project of parliamentary reform. Some sixty years earlier, George III., soon after his accession, had hurled the long-dominant Whig oligarchy from power "with hideous ruin and combustion." During the whole period of his reign, with but a few brief intervals, the Whigs had languished in hopeless opposition. Their rivals, the Tories, in virtue of royal favour, extensive patronage, and effective control of the constituencies, seemed to be entrenched for ever in office. In 1819 a general election took place, and so intense and universal was the popular hatred of the government, that, if any sort of representative franchise had existed, the overwhelming defeat of Liverpool and his colleagues would have been assured. So complete, however, was the command of the ministry

over the restricted electorate that the "general will" of the nation remained inoperative, and the hated Cabinet was reimposed upon the country for another seven years—a term which, it was realised, might easily be multiplied to seventy times seven. The Whigs clearly perceived that, if in such favourable circumstances they could not capture the machine, they might be compelled to resign themselves to perpetual exclusion from office. They feared also that the repressive policy to which the Liverpool government was committed might well lead to a sanguinary revolution, in which Whigs as well as Tories would be destroyed. Hence they were fain to ally themselves with the Radicals, and to press, not, of course, for any really democratic change in the constitution, but for just such a moderate extension of the franchise to the middle classes, just such a judicious dismemberment of rotten boroughs, as should enable themselves to recover power. They were aided in their campaign by Jeremy Bentham and the "Philosophical Radicals" who, in 1824, started the *Westminster Review* as the organ of a powerful reform propaganda. For several years the combined Whig-Radical attack on the Tory strongholds met with no success; but at last the opportunity of the allies came when, in 1829, the Tory party split in violent schism over the question of Catholic Emancipation. The "Canningite" Tories joined the progressive coalition; the reactionaries under Wellington were compelled to resign; a Liberal ministry under Grey was installed in office; after two years of unparalleled agitation, the Reform Act of 1832 was placed on the statute-book.

The Reform Act of 1832 was very far from being a

democratic measure. It embodied the modest ideals of the Whigs and Canningites who desired power for themselves, not control for the people. It effected a cautious redistribution of seats, taking members from rotten boroughs and giving them to hitherto unrepresented towns; it bestowed the franchise upon well-to-do farmers in the counties, and comfortable householders in the municipalities. It deposited electoral power in the hands of less than one million voters in a population of over twenty-four million souls. Small, however, as the actual democratic gain seemed to be, the Act of 1832 achieved the all-important result of utterly shattering the defences of the old parliamentary system. It rendered subsequent advances inevitable and easy. Its *bourgeois* terms were naturally regarded as wholly inadequate and unsatisfactory by the organised artisans of the manufacturing towns, whose tumultuary clamour for reform had been a potent factor in terrifying the Tories into resignation and submission. Hence, when the jubilations of 1832 had died down, and the working-classes had awakened to the fact that they were no more powerful and little better off than before, a new agitation commenced which finally crystallised its demands into the "six points" of the Charter—the same "six points" as had been advanced by Fox and his Westminster associates fifty years earlier, viz. manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, and vote by ballot on the one side; with annual parliaments, payment of members, and abolition of property qualifications on the other. Beyond these political demands, however, there lay vast and vague economic demands, coupled with threats of extensive expropriations and a prolonged general strike (termed euphemistically a

" sacred month "). The moderate and constitutional programme of the framers of the Charter, which it was proposed to carry through solely by means of " moral force," gave place to the vehement and violent propaganda of the " young men in a hurry," who soon ousted the older and wiser leaders. For them the operation of " moral force " was too slow, the process of convincing the reason and converting the conscience of the community too tiresome: they, like their democratic contemporaries on the Continent, resorted to " physical force," attempted by terrorism to impose the will of the minority upon the body politic, and thereby roused the antagonism of lovers of peace and order—the moderate majority, the true democracy of the country—and involved their cause in the common ruin of the 1848 *débâcle*.

The tragic fiasco of 1848, coupled with increased national prosperity, due to the repeal of the Corn Laws and the development of commerce, caused the democratic movement to flag for the next twenty years. The artisans became engrossed in profitable industrial activity, and sought improvement of their condition rather by trade union effort than by political pressure. The politicians at Westminster, however, continued uninterruptedly their struggle for power and office. The Reform Act of 1832 had fulfilled its prime purpose of re-establishing the Whigs in control of the government. But the dispossessed Tories did not resign themselves passively to their eviction. Not only were they on general grounds resolved to recover their places; they developed a most determined opposition to Whig policy on many specific questions, notably on the question of Free Trade. They found a leader—brilliant, resourceful,

ambitious, unscrupulous—in Benjamin Disraeli, who with matchless skill and audacity conducted them through the wilderness towards the Canaan of their desire. In the resultant conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines for the possession of the Promised Land, parliamentary reform was seized upon as a potent weapon by both sides. Neither side desired it for its own sake or on principle, but both hoped by a judicious extension of the franchise to win the gratitude and support of a new electorate whose aid would enable it to rout its opponent. Thus a reform competition was entered into by the rival politicians, which Disraeli in virtue of his superior recklessness was able to win. His was the Reform Act of 1867, although in its process through the House of Commons it almost ceased to be his or any one else's, and became a sheer "leap into the dark." His was the Act by which for the first time, and distinctly prematurely, democracy was established in Britain. It was the most revolutionary of all the Reform Acts prior to that of 1918. And the curious thing about it is that no one was clamouring for it; no one in particular wanted it; no one intended it; and, when it emerged out of the inane onto the statute-book, no one was pleased with it. Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson who, in spite of his anti-democratic sympathies,[1] has written a very good book on *The Development of Parliament during the Nineteenth Century*, well describes the Act of 1867 as "a great step in the direction of democracy, taken not with forethought and deliberation, but as it were by a stumble and a

[1] "For my own part I am not a democrat, and I have no desire to see the democratic theory prematurely applied in all its completeness" (Dickinson, *Development of Parliament*, p. 173).

fall," and says of it, that "it was not the deliberate work of either of the great parties, but the half-accidental result of the balance of forces in the House, and of evolutions of attack and defence performed on a swamp of party expediency." [1]

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 63.

PART II

THE CROSS WAYS

CHAPTER V

SECTIONALISM

"If I had the power, as I have the will, I would arraign the Labour Party before the national conscience and ask it to show cause why it should not be condemned for corrupting the citizenship of the working man."—Professor HENRY JONES, *Hibbert Journal*, 1911.

"The failure of the Labour Movement is in the fact that it is a Labour Movement instead of a Citizens' Movement. If the Labour Movement would retrieve its dismal record of constant and successive failure it must produce a new theory and a new plan of action altogether. It must become broader in its aim and stronger in its appeal to the non-labour section of the people. It must appeal to the whole nation instead of to a section of it."—RICHARD HIGGS, *The Labour Movement.*

"The working-class is ranging itself against the owners of land and capital. The nation is dividing into two antagonistic sections."—G. LOWES DICKINSON, *Development of Parliament.*

"The particularism of trades and professions, and the racial feeling of Wales, or Ulster, or Scotland, or Catholic Ireland, seem to be growing stronger and not weaker."—GRAHAM WALLAS, *The Great Society.*

§ 22. *The Sequel to the Second Reform Act.*

THE Reform Act of 1867, by conferring the franchise upon all urban householders and ten-pound lodgers, admitted the artisan class to power. It added about thirteen-hundred-thousand voters to the roll, thus more than doubling the electorate. The new electors were for the most part illiterate, for no national system of elementary education had at that time been established in the country; and the prospect of so large a dilution of the trained intelligence of the

sovereign portion of the people seriously alarmed many even among those who had advocated a cautious extension of the franchise. Disraeli himself was unperturbed, for he had emerged from the parliamentary battle-field with an enhanced reputation for strategic ability and tactical skill. The Prime Minister, Lord Derby, who regarded politics as a form of sport, shared Disraeli's satisfaction that by means of the Act the Tories had "dished the Whigs"; but he was a little uneasy as to the result of "the great experiment," and uncertain where the nation would land after its "leap into the dark." Robert Lowe, who had led the opposition to the Bill, predicted that it would cause an increase of corruption in the constituencies, a decline in the quality of the House of Commons, and a growth of the dictatorial ascendancy of the Cabinet. Even John Stuart Mill, philosophical Radical though he was, trembled at the possibility of the tyranny of an ignorant majority, and urged that, by the adoption of an elaborate scheme of proportional representation, minorities should be protected, and a bit placed in the jaws of Leviathan. Outside Parliament, Thomas Carlyle compared the passing of the Act to *Shooting Niagara*, and thundered at the folly which introduced into the constitution "new supplies of blockheadism, gullibility, bribeability, amenability to beer and balderdash." Other and less emotional pessimists—such as Sir James Stephen and Sir Henry Maine—uttered gloomy forebodings as to the effect of the introduction into Britain of "popular government."

The wide extension of the franchise effected in 1867 was indeed, as John Bright himself freely admitted, premature: the vote was given to multi-

tudes of men who had not asked for it, did not want it, and were unaware how to use it. But that is the worst that can be said about it. The extension was bound to come sooner or later, and it was right that it should come as soon as its coming was consistent with the real interests of the community-as-a-whole. The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century had made democracy ultimately inevitable. The development of the newspaper, the growth of the habit of public meeting, the spread of ideas even among people technically illiterate, the organisation of the artisans in societies and unions—all these features of the nineteenth century marked its near and necessary advent. There was no question *whether*, but merely *when*, its presence should be recognised, and itself admitted to its rightful inheritance; just as there is no question *whether*, but merely *when*, a child shall be weaned, a boy put into trousers, or a youth released from tutelage. Nevertheless, the establishment of the urban democracy in power in 1867 constituted a political revolution in Britain greater and more momentous than any that had transpired since 1689. With the exception of Robert Lowe, very few of the statesmen of the time seem to have realised the full significance of the change effected in the Constitution. Before many years, however, had elapsed three new facts became evident, viz. first, that the recently enfranchised urban electorate lay entirely outside the sphere of the old political parties, and had but little interest in the disputes which hitherto had occupied the belligerent activities of Whigs and Tories; secondly, that the old parties, if they wished to continue to exist, would have to modify their programmes to suit the new

conditions, and would have to organise all their forces in order to capture the favour of the sovereign proletariat; thirdly, that one curious anti-democratic anomaly incongruously embedded in the Act—that of "three-cornered" constituencies—presented so formidable a pitfall for the feet of heedless majorities that it behoved them to keep their members very close together, and extremely well under control, if they were to avoid being caught in the ingenious minority-trap. It was in Birmingham that these facts were first perceived, their significance realised, and means to deal with them devised. John Bright led a vehement and successful attack upon the "three-cornered" constituencies (which were abolished in 1884); Joseph Chamberlain formulated, with a lucidity and incisiveness novel in politics, a Radical programme which made a powerful appeal to the masses, and promulgated it with a vigour which gave it rapid dominance; above all, Francis Schnadhorst, with a Germanic genius for organisation, created the elaborate and effective machinery of the Birmingham "caucus," which speedily reduced the distracted opposition of Midland Toryism to impotence. The moral fervour of Bright, the forceful cleverness of Chamberlain, and the laborious efficiency of Schnadhorst, acting in combination, established in Birmingham and its vicinity so complete and potent a party ascendancy, that in other constituencies the Radicals adopted the policy and the machinery of the Birmingham organisers of victory. The resulting "caucuses" of the country co-ordinated themselves in 1877 into the National Liberation Federation whose well-planned campaign did much to secure Gladstone's overwhelming triumph at the polls in 1880. Disraeli

survived his decisive discomfiture only a year, and his death left the Tory party helpless and forlorn under the feeble leadership of a few bewildered old gentlemen of an obsolete day. The younger members of the party, and particularly Lord Randolph Churchill, who, though opposed to radical change, yet believed in the existence of a Tory democracy that merely needed to be massed and disciplined, broke away from the "old gang," adopted Birmingham tactics, tried to formulate an attractive programme of Conservative reform, organised Conservative caucuses which ultimately coalesced into the National Union of Conservative Associations. The unexpected schism caused in the Radical ranks by Gladstone's sudden conversion to Home Rule for Ireland in 1885 enabled the Young Tories to reap the fruits of their toils at an earlier date than they had dared to hope for. They secured the return of the Unionists to power in 1886, and enabled them, with one short interval, to retain power for twenty years. Their astonishing victory over their lately compact and disciplined opponents was assisted and confirmed by the votes of a mass of new electors recently added to the roll. In 1884 Gladstone, by means of the third Reform Act, had unified the urban and rural franchises, thus admitting some two million agricultural labourers to the vote. This great unorganised body had but little sympathy with, or comprehension of, the ideas and ideals of the Radical urban artisans; it generally supported church and state as it knew them, that is as it saw them personified respectively in the parson and the squire. Even more than the urban electorate it needed political education and regimentation. Both parties, therefore, rapidly

extended the urban caucus system to the county constituencies, and tried by vigorous propagandist campaigns to enlist, train, and discipline the new electoral hosts. Politics assumed the form, and adopted the nomenclature, of war.

The furious party conflicts of the 'eighties—marked as they were by all the bitterness of shattered alliances, sundered friendships, disappointed hopes, and ruined ambitions—thus gave a new and ominous tone to British politics. Parliament ceased to be a rational debating hall where patriots seriously discussed and sincerely considered diverse schemes for the benefit of the community-as-a-whole; it became a battle-field where serried arrays of angry enemies struggled for victory, heedless of argument or appeal, regardless of the enduring interests of the nation, bent only on the momentary triumph of the party. Rigid discipline destroyed individual independence; despotic "whips" drove gangs of servile supporters through the division lobbies; debate was reduced to an empty formality (since it was no longer allowed to influence predetermined votes), or was degraded to the base uses of a weapon of deliberate obstruction. Worse than all, the two old parties which, with all their faults had some traditions of national service behind them, were joined in the hurly-burly by new parties frankly sectional. The Liberal-Unionist group which separated itself from the Gladstonian Liberal party had, indeed, but a short career as a distinct entity: it rapidly and naturally drifted into Conservatism. More serious was the formation of an Irish Nationalist group under Charles Stewart Parnell. It had no interest in anything outside Ireland; even in Irish affairs it showed an unreasonableness and intran-

sigence that barred the way to all practicable measures of reform; its violence, its unscrupulousness, its remorseless indulgence in all the arts of political wreckage caused an incalculable acerbation of an already envenomed struggle, and an incredible increase of demoralising intrigue. Most serious of all —though the deadly seriousness was not so evident at the moment—was the establishment of an Independent Labour group which looked not to the concerns of the whole community, nor even to those of one of its constituent nations, but solely to the interests of a single class. Its formation marked the initiation of that most fatal of all conflicts, the "class war."

§ 23. *The Schism of the Nation.*

From time immemorial the controllers of English policy have been generally divided into two parties, which may be broadly described as the party of order and the party of progress. The division is a natural one, and in a country of settled constitutional government an almost inevitable one. It corresponds to two fundamental but opposite tendencies of the human mind, which, though they exist together in nearly every one, nevertheless exist in different proportions in different persons, and even in the same person at different times. The first is the tendency to look to the past, to reverence old-established institutions, to cling to traditional faiths, to remain true to ancient loyalties, to preserve accumulated treasures, to worship departed heroes and saints, to respond to the fascination of "the old perfections of the Earth": it is the conservative tendency. The

second is the tendency to look to the future, to see the defects of the past and the present, to cherish ideals, to advocate reforms, to make experiments even when the risk is great, to be hopeful of change, to be eager for motion : it is the progressive tendency. Even in the blurred records of Anglo-Saxon times we can faintly discern the conflict of reforming kings and monks against reactionary thegns and secular priests. After the Norman Conquest the picture becomes clearer, and in the struggles between feudal nobles and the pioneers of the new national economy we are able distinctly to perceive the play of the rival principles : rarely has conservatism so plainly expressed itself as in *Magna Carta*, or the subsequent declaration of the barons at Merton, *nolumus leges Angliae mutari*. With the establishment and definition of parliament in the thirteenth century the organisation of the two parties became more permanent, and the manifestation of their tendencies more obvious. In the Wars of the Roses the Lancastrians, with all their show of constitutional rule, stood for the decaying feudal *régime* of the past ; while the Yorkists, with all their arbitrariness, stood—as did the Tudor heirs of their "new monarchy"—for the rising and progressive middle class. It was in the seventeenth century, however, that the positions and principles of the two parties became most sharply defined. The early Stuart kings and their oppugnant parliaments, during forty years of embittered controversy, fought so doggedly backward and forward over wide areas of political theory and historical precedent that the whole ground grew familiar to the combatants, and their respective strongholds became clearly delimited. Constitutional debate developed into civil war ;

Roundheads and Cavaliers represented on the field of battle the ideals of the coming democracy on the one hand, and the declining autocracy on the other. After the period of the troubles was over, and the country was once more at rest under the restored monarchy, the warring principles were mitigated into the political rivalries of Whigs and Tories. At the close of the Hanoverian era, during the upheaval due to the French Revolution, the parties were remoulded into their Liberal and Conservative forms.

Concerning these two permanent and almost necessary parties four things may be predicated. First, they have constantly changed their shapes, altered their programmes, modified their constitutions, transmuted their modes of operation, shifted their ground: it is doubtful whether the modern Liberal would have anything except spirit, attitude, and outlook in common with Thomas Becket or Simon de Montfort. Secondly, these changes have been mainly due to the recognition (conscious or subconscious) by the parties or their leaders of the fact that adaptation to environment is necessary, if extinction is to be avoided. We sometimes marvel at the rhythmic "swing of the pendulum" in modern parliamentary history, whereby Liberals and Conservatives with apparently automatic regularity have been placed alternately in power. There is about it no mystery, such as there is about the remarkable equilibrium of sex in nature. The "swing of the pendulum" is not primarily due, as is sometimes said, to the fickleness of the electorate, but rather to the mobility and plasticity of the parties. They have shown willingness to become many things to many men, if by some means they may secure a majority. For instance, the balance

of power and consequent political deadlock in 1885 caused Gladstone to make a bid for the Irish vote by adding Home Rule to the Liberal programme. The Conservative *débâcle* in 1906 necessitated the complete overhauling of the whole programme of the routed politicians. By such means balancing electors are enticed from one side to the other and the equilibrium of parties is restored. Thirdly, widely as the two parties have differed from one another in attitude and policy, they have always had much in common. If this had been otherwise, they would not have been two parties, but rather two nations. They have recognised the validity of the same political axioms and postulates, and have even been in agreement concerning a few fundamental constitutional propositions. Their differences have not gone down to the roots of civic and social existence. They have held congruous opinions upon matters of vital importance. It would overburden this section to trace the parallel and closely-related development of their principles through the centuries; it must suffice to point out, merely by way of example, that modern Liberals and modern Conservatives agree in the maintenance of (*inter alia*) the constitutional monarchy, the cabinet form of government, the authority of the House of Commons, the rule of the electoral majority, the principle of religious toleration, the supremacy of the civil over military power, the strength of the navy, the continuity of foreign policy, the efficiency of education, the prominence of social reform. Their differences relate rather to ways and means than to ends; rather to accidents than to essences. This brings us to their fourth characteristic: they both, according to their lights and subject

to their infirmities, have been national and patriotic parties. They have recognised in principle—however imperfectly they have in practice lived up to the principle—that they owe their supreme duty not to their political allies, their constituents, their neighbours, their co-religionists, or any other section of the community, but to the community-as-a-whole. Burke, writing to the Sheriffs of Bristol concerning his membership of the House of Commons, expressed this fact in famous words: "Parliament," he said, "is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of *one* nation with *one* interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general interest of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but, when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament." The only possible defence of the limited and partial electoral system of Burke's day was that it was a tolerably good means of selecting a House of Commons which, when elected, represented not its electors but the empire as a whole. Burke, in fact, represented America as effectively as either Franklin or Washington could have done; Pitt, though returned for the ludicrous pocket-borough of Old Sarum with its half-a-dozen constituents, was truly "Member for India," and not for India only, but member for every part of King George's dominions that needed representation, and representative of every subject who had wrongs to redress.

The two old parties, then, were divided ideally,

the one from the other, merely by differences of detail on matters relating to *the community-as-a-whole*, by divergent opinions as to the best ways and means for benefiting *the entire empire*, by opposite views concerning the ultimate and permanent interests of *the aggregate of all classes and all localities*. In parliament, of course, where party attained to power, supplementary differentia emerged: each party was subdivided into groups which had subordinate regional interests to serve; each group consisted of individuals each of whom had to consider his constituents, when to do so did not involve the violation of larger duties. The House of Commons was indeed originally, and still is, a concentration of *communitates*. It is quite proper that Irish members should think of the interests of Ireland, provided that they keep them in due accord with the interests of the British empire as a whole; it is quite right that the Connaught or the Ulster members should think of the interests of their province, so long as they keep them in proper subordination to the interests of both Ireland and the empire. Sectionalism, however, carried beyond these limits leads to mortal schism in the body politic. Such schism was plotted by Parnell when in 1880 he organised the irreconcilable Nationalist group with its loyalty limited to a single island; such schism was preached by Keir Hardie when in 1893 he constituted the Independent Labour group with its efforts concentrated upon the interests of a single class.

The Nationalism of the Irish is merely a natural and healthy insular patriotism carried to excess. How proper and even useful the spirit of local loyalty may be, if kept in due proportion, is seen in the

generally sane and sober activities of the Scottish and Welsh national groups.[1] The curse of the Irish is simply their lack of balance, their limitation of outlook, their narrow and exclusive egoism. The Sectionalism of the Independent Labour group is, however, less healthy and still more deplorable. The attempt to separate one social order from all others and to serve its interests alone; the effort to disintegrate the nation into antagonistic classes and to make one of them supreme; the endeavour to relieve the poor and needy not with the aid of, but at the expense of, their neighbours—all this is pathological and symptomatic of political death. Manifestations of the presence of the virus of the class war have displayed themselves on many disastrous occasions in British history. One recalls Fitzosbert's rising in 1196, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, Cade's rebellion in 1450, Ket's insurrection in 1549, and the campaigns of the followers of Everard and Winstanley in the seventeenth century. All resulted in widespread catastrophe to the very people that they were intended to benefit. It was not, however, until the time of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century, with its immense economic changes and

[1] The newspapers of March 20, 1918, contained the following notice:

NEW WELSH PARTY

Welsh M.P.'s of all parties have agreed on common action on matters affecting the Principality.

A committee appointed to draft a form of constitution has suggested consideration of the following questions:

1. Devolution as relating to Wales, and the creation of a Welsh Office, with a Minister responsible to Parliament.
2. Relation of Wales to the Liquor Control Board.
3. Any question specially affecting Wales which may arise on the Education Bill.
4. Ministry of Health Bill, so far as it affects Wales.

It is proposed to appoint five sub-committees to watch the administrative work of various Government departments.

social upheavals, that the virus of the class war began chronically to poison the national life. This was the period when trade unions began to spring into existence, and it was in them particularly that the venom worked. Their history is, indeed, the record of one long and doubtful struggle against the insidious corruption of Sectionalism. Their structure, their purpose, and the passivity of the bulk of their members, make them peculiarly liable to infection; it is fatally easy for those who are organised to fight for the rights of a craft to be led by alien guides into courses that conflict with the larger claims of citizenship. Since the trade unions with their great membership and their considerable wealth give to the Labour group such strength as it has, it is necessary briefly to survey the history of trade unionism in England, and to note how the splendid vigour of a great national institution has been captured and perverted (let us hope temporarily only) to the service of a sect.[1]

§ 24. *The Early History of Trade Unions.*

Trade unions originated in England. They are among the most remarkable and creditable of the creations of the English genius for self-government and self-determination. Some writers, *e.g.* Brentano and Howell, have tried to trace them historically to the guilds of the Middle Ages; but the connection is merely imaginative, and even the similarities are superficial only. They rose, as a matter of fact,

[1] In 1913 the number of Trade Unions in the United Kingdom was 1135, with a total membership of 3,987,115: see detailed table in *Labour Year-Book for 1916*, p. 113. The accumulated funds of the hundred principal unions were, in 1910, £5,121,529: see *Board of Trade Report* (Cd. 6109), p. xx.

during the course of the eighteenth century,[1] and they were distinctly the concomitant of the Industrial Revolution. The shifting of industry from village to town, the development of the factory system, the invention of new machinery, the application of water power and steam power, the migrations of population and the concentration of a " new nation " of artisans in manufacturing districts—all this gave rise to novel and acute social and economic problems for the solution of which the constitution of the old rural England was inadequately equipped. In the sparsely-peopled, slow-moving, well-ordered England of late mediaeval and early modern times both agriculture (the staple occupation) and manufacture (mainly the by-occupation of rustics) were regulated by the paternal state. The cost of raw materials was fixed, wages were assessed, quality of goods was supervised, prices of the finished product of labour were authoritatively determined. Among the most important of the regulative Acts, by means of which this determination was effected, was the Statute of Apprentices passed during Elizabeth's reign.[2] Under the terms of this statute, which was formulated in the interests of labour, on the one hand wages were to be fixed annually by the justices of the peace, on the other hand the period of apprenticeship to a craft was established at seven years, and the number of apprentices which a master could take was strictly limited. During the eighteenth century both these important regulations fell into desuetude, and with the introduction of machinery not only did the wages

[1] Schloesser, *Trade Unionism*, p. 16, gives the following early examples: Framework knitters, 1710; Hatters, 1772; Compositors, 1775; Cutlers, 1790.

[2] 5 Eliz. c. 4 (1563), repealed 38-39 Vict. c. 86 (1875).

of manual labour tend to fall, but the factories became filled with infant "apprentices" whose unpaid services were all that was necessary for the maintenance of the new mechanical modes of manufacture. The first combinations of workmen had as their object the demand for the reinforcement of the Elizabethan Act. The demand was perfectly legitimate as well as eminently reasonable; but combination to make the demand was illegal. A long series of anti-combination laws, going back as far as A.D. 1305, prohibited "conspiracies of labourers" to increase wages or modify conditions of employment. These laws had not been oppressive in the circumstances in which they had been enacted; but when the machinery of state regulation had broken down, as it had in the eighteenth century, they remained a gross anachronism. They were, however, vigorously enforced against the new "trade unions," and (under the influence of the panic caused by the French Revolution) they were even strengthened by fresh legislation culminating in the very stringent Act of 1799.[1] Trade unions, then, at the beginning of the nineteenth century were illegal conspiracies in restraint of trade, and they were subjected to the energetic pursuit of the law. Nevertheless they were not driven out of existence; some of them survived in successful concealment; others camouflaged themselves as "friendly societies" which were not only tolerated but even encouraged by the government.[2] In 1824 at least forty-seven unions were in being.[3] The injustice of the anti-combination laws was, how-

[1] 39-40 Geo. III. c. 106.
[2] Cf. Stats. 33 Geo. III. c. 54 (1793) and 35 Geo. III. c. 111 (1795).
[3] See list in Schloesser, *Trade Unionism*, p. 20.

ever, very keenly resented. A long agitation for their repeal, organised by Francis Place in the country, and led by Joseph Hume in parliament, was successful in 1824. That date, then, marks the beginning of the history of trade unionism proper in England. Its subsequent evolution falls into three main periods, the dividing lines of which may be said to lie about the years 1848 and 1890 respectively.[1]

The period 1824–1848 was one of revolutionary agitation and unrest. The iron of repression had entered into the soul of the labourers; their secret clubs had become associated with anti-social oaths, clandestine rituals, and anarchic principles; they had imbibed the dogmas of political rebellion and the class war. The repeal of the anti-combination laws led immediately to so violent an explosion—marked by strikes, machine-breaking, rick-burning, and mob turbulence—that the very next year (1825) parliament had to define precisely the purposes for the attainment of which combinations should be regarded as lawful.[2] These were, broadly, two only, viz. the determination of wages, and the fixing of the hours of labour. Hence trade unions remained illegal in so far as they went beyond these two purposes; in particular they were criminal at common law if their activities could be identified as "a conspiracy in restraint of trade." Thus throughout this period (and indeed till 1871), the spectre of unlawfulness haunted them; they had no legal status, they were tolerated but suspected, their sphere was restricted,

[1] Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb in their *History of Trade Unionism* distinguish six periods during the years 1824–1894. Their dividing dates are 1842, 1860, 1875, 1885, 1889.

[2] Stat. 6 Geo. IV. c. 129.

their officials were unrecognised, their funds were unprotected. The trade unions, on their side, did nothing to allay suspicion, or to invite a larger legal recognition. They lent themselves to tumultuary agitation; they showed a reactionary antipathy to the introduction of machinery and to industrial improvements generally; they hampered commerce, prevented the production of wealth, benefited no one. They gave their adherence to the hare-brained schemes of Robert Owen, the forefather of Syndicalism, who tried to organise them into a single "Grand National Consolidated Union" for the purpose of establishing co-operative communism on the ruins of the existing economic order. They listened to the early burblings of Karl Marx, who saw in them a useful and potent instrument for effecting the European Revolution. They became involved in the excesses of Chartism, and they shared its destruction in 1848. Disraeli, watching with dismay the misdirected efforts of the unhappy proletariat to find escape from drudgery, relief from poverty, emancipation from ignorance, and release from impotence, depicted in lurid language in his great novel *Sybil* (1845) the schism of England into the "two nations." Other and less antipathetic observers did more than discern the schism; they tried to heal it. Above all, within the ranks of trade unionism itself leaders arose who recognised the fatal madness of the principle of the class war, and the impossibility of the success of Sectionalism; who perceived the sincerity with which the community-as-a-whole wished to remedy social and economic evils, if only the right but difficult way could be discovered; who grasped the truth that trade unions

could themselves do much to effect the salvation of their members, if only they would work in constitutional channels, would co-operate with the community, would win the goodwill of the nation at large, would develop an organisation of self-help and mutual assistance. The period 1848–1890, during which the wise old leaders secured control and held sway, is the great era of English trade unionism. William Allan of the Enginemakers, Robert Applegarth of the Carpenters and Joiners, Edwin Coulson of the Bricklayers, Daniel Guile of the Ironfounders, and George Odger of the Shoemakers formed a "Junta" whose prudent and statesmanlike guidance helped firmly to establish and to co-ordinate a large number of great societies.[1] Their policy was to amalgamate local unions into national organisations, and to associate the national organisations of the various crafts in a general effort for the improvement of labour conditions. They accepted the existing industrial system, and disavowed all intention to destroy it; they recognised the essential community of interest of employer and employed; they worked in close and cordial fellowship with all agencies that had for their object the betterment of the people. They inaugurated the Trade Union Congress in 1868; secured the great Trade Union Acts of 1871 and 1876 which gave full legal recognition to the unions, and complete protection to their funds. The federations which they founded or directed were not merely fighting forces prepared if necessary to do battle for industrial rights; they were also and mainly friendly societies which

[1] Note particularly the formation of the following general unions: Bricklayers, 1848; Typographers, 1849; Engineers, 1851; Carpenters, 1860; Durham Miners, 1869; Cotton-Spinners, 1870; Railwaymen, 1871; Bootmakers, 1874.

accumulated capital, invested it in profitable ventures, and from their well-managed wealth provided all kinds of benefits (such as sick pay, unemployment compensation, and old-age pensions) for their thrifty members. The influence of the old leaders, however, great as it was, and well though it was supported and perpetuated by the high character and ability of such men as William Newton of the Engineers, Alexander Macdonald and Thomas Burt of the Miners (the first representatives of labour in Parliament, 1874), George Howell of the Bricklayers, Henry Broadhurst of the Stonemasons, and George Shipton of the Builders, was never dominant enough to stop all violence, or wholly to eliminate the virus of the class war. In 1866 outrages—attacks on non-unionists and sabotage, especially on the part of the Sheffield saw-grinders—led to the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the whole question of the working of the trade unions and their influence both on the character of the workmen and the general prosperity of the country and its commerce. The Commissioners, and particularly two of their number, viz. Mr. Frederic Harrison and Mr. Thomas Hughes, were able to report that the abuses complained of were not general, and to recommend that the unions should be strengthened in their legality by that statutory recognition which the Acts of 1871 and 1876 accorded. Legal security, however, did not give the additional vigour to the law-abiding elements in the unions which it had been expected to bestow. In the troubled 'eighties, when, as we have seen, the old political parties began to crumble, and the Irish Nationalists organised their disruptive campaign, fresh and more serious disturbances broke out. Violent assaults upon non-

unionists, picketing of a most unpeaceful kind, breaches of contracts, tumultuary strikes, furious attacks upon the old leaders, disorderly revolts in the Trade Union Congress—such became increasingly frequent. These ominous symptoms were closely associated with the preaching of Socialist dogma by a group of new aspirants to leadership, among whom Messrs. Tom Mann, Keir Hardie, and John Burns were prominent; and by the formulation of a "new unionism" whose essential principle was the repudiation of the existing social and economic order, and the revival of the class war.

§ 25. *The "New Unionism."*

The Trade Union Congress which, as we have seen, was first summoned in 1868 to deal with the questions raised by the reports of the Commissioners of the preceding years, had developed by degrees into an important annual labour parliament in which not only trade union problems but also many questions of general interest were debated. At first attended by only 34 delegates representing societies whose aggregate membership was but 118,367, it had rapidly increased until from 300 to 400 delegates attended yearly on behalf of societies whose membership aggregated well over a million workers.[1] In 1871 it had appointed a permanent parliamentary committee whose prime duty had been "to watch all legislation affecting labour, and to initiate such legislation as congress may direct." In order the more effectually

[1] Even so, it was an incomplete representation of the trade union world; for never has the number of unions sending delegates reached 200. In 1913, *e.g.*, it was 135 out of a total of 1135.

to fulfil this duty prominent members of the committee had begun to seek seats in parliament. In 1874 two of them, Messrs. Thomas Burt and Alexander Macdonald, had been elected, by the support of the Liberal vote, to the Liberal seats of Morpeth and Stafford respectively. In 1880 Mr. Henry Broadhurst had joined them, also as a Liberal-Labour member. At the election of 1885 no less than eleven Labour candidates had been returned. They had all been either avowedly Liberal in politics, or else close and cordial allies of the Liberal party. The years 1880–1885, however, had seen an immense outburst of Socialism in England. The revolutionary Socialists had formed the Social-Democratic Federation under Mr. H. M. Hyndman in 1883; the evolutionary Collectivists had organised themselves into the Fabian Society under Mr. Sidney Webb in 1884. In 1885 the new influence made itself powerfully felt at the Trade Union Congress: the old leaders were attacked with unmeasured virulence; the alliance of Labour with Liberalism was condemned; the dogma of the class war was proclaimed; the formation of a separate Labour group in parliament advocated, the principal of Sectionalism promulgated. The ferment of Socialist revolt, which from 1885 to 1895 turned the Trade Union Congress into a bear-garden, operated also in the labour world at large to produce most acute industrial unrest. In particular a new type of trade union began to be created—a mere fighting organisation which, repudiating all the "friendly society" activities of the "old unions," devoted its whole energies and all its funds to the waging of industrial war. Such were the Dockers' Union founded by Mr. Ben Tillett in 1887, the Sailors' and Firemen's

Union instituted by Mr. Havelock Wilson in 1888, and the Gasworkers' and General Labourers' Union established by Mr. Will Thorne in 1889. The "old unions" had been constituted by limited societies of skilled artisans permanently employed, who could afford to pay comparatively high contributions in anticipation of long-deferred but certain and substantial benefits. The "new unions" were efforts to organise unskilled, underpaid, fluctuating, and submerged labour. The contributions demanded had to be placed at the minimum; the rewards promised had to be delivered at once. Self-help by means of thrift being in the case of such low-grade, scantily productive, and largely superfluous labour wholly out of the question, benefits had to be obtained either from the employers by means of sudden, general, and determined strikes, pushed home to victory with extreme rapidity at any cost; or else from the state, that is from the community-as-a-whole, by means of widespread political agitation for minimum wages, eight-hour days, labour bureaus, relief works, accident insurances, employers' liabilities, old-age pensions, etc. Justification for these novel and extreme demands upon harassed employers and a patient public had to be found in the realm of principle; and the theories of Socialism lay ready to hand. According to the Marxian Socialists the labourers were the dispossessed creators of value who had a just claim to the whole wealth of the country; according to the Fabian Collectivists the state was the proper authority to direct and control industry, and to provide all the means of the good life for all the members of society. Hence in the late 'eighties (1885–1890) the "new unionism" came into exist-

ence as a joint product of the vast loosely knit organisations of unskilled labour, and the small but compact, disciplined, and educated coteries of the Socialist societies. In 1890, at Liverpool, the leaders of the "new unionism" made a strong and vehement effort to capture the Trade Union Congress. In so far as the effort displayed itself in a direct frontal attack—accompanied by a free use of the poison gas of calumny—upon the old leaders, it failed. It succeeded, however, in securing the acceptance by the Congress of resolutions in favour of the eight-hours' day, and the establishment of municipal workshops for the relief of unemployment. At the Norwich Congress of 1894 the "new unionist" victory was complete. After a furious conflict, matters of practical importance to old trade unionists were set aside, and the Congress devoted its energies to the discussion of abstract Socialist theories, eventually carrying a resolution (219 for, 61 against, 98 neutral), proposed by Mr. Keir Hardie and supported by Messrs. Tom Mann and John Burns to the effect that "it is essential to the maintenance of British industries to nationalise the land, and the whole of the means of production, distribution, and exchange." One result of the "new unionist" triumph at Norwich was the secession from the Congress of the old-established Society of Boilermakers. Its secretary, Mr. Robert Knight, wrote a report to his members in which he said: "It is a misnomer to call the Congress which has just concluded its sittings at Norwich a Trade Union Congress, for this it has ceased to be, and has become an annual gathering of advanced Socialists whose dreamy ideas find vent in strongly worded resolutions which we cannot en-

dorse." [1] The Socialist capture of the trade unions, which, in spite of a temporary rally of the "old unionists," was made good by 1900, was due to no small extent to the formation of the so-called Independent Labour Party in 1893.[2] Its secretary, Mr. Tom Mann, writing immediately after the victory of Norwich, described it thus: "The I.L.P. is an uncompromising Socialist organisation that will not merely endorse Socialistic principles and then proceed to work with the orthodox, but will refuse to bow down to a philanthropic section of the Liberal party, for the same reasons that it will have nothing to do with the old-world Whigs or the antediluvian Tories." [3] The militant influence of the I.L.P. was seen in an attempt made in 1899 to form a General Federation of Trade Unions for fighting purposes. The "old unions," however, for the most part held aloof, and only forty-three societies consented to compromise their freedom by federation. The number has since then been increased to 146, but this represents little more than one-tenth of the existent unions. In 1900, at a special Labour Conference held in London, Mr. Keir Hardie, first chairman of the I.L.P., carried the following resolution which marks the definite establishment of Socialist ascendancy over Labour, the completion of the capture of the trade unions, the public avowal of the principle of Sectionalism, the formal proclamation of the class war: "That

[1] Drage, *Trade Unions*, p. 124. A similar protest from Mr. J. H. Kirkman of the A.S.E. is quoted, p. 126.

[2] The name "Independent Labour Party" is an entire misnomer. The I.L.P. is not a party but a group; it is not a Labour but a Socialist group which has been increasingly dominated by middle-class "intellectuals"; it is not independent, but is closely bound in the fetters of a doctrinaire bureaucracy.

[3] *Daily Chronicle*, September 17, 1894.

this Conference is in favour of establishing a distinct Labour group in parliament, who shall have their own Whips, and agree upon a policy which must embrace a readiness to co-operate with any party which for the time being may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of Labour, and be equally ready to associate themselves with any party in opposing measures having an opposite tendency." Thus was constituted the "Labour Party," whose members, paid mainly by funds provided by the trade unions, were required to take a pledge "to abstain strictly from identifying themselves with, or promoting the interests of any section of the Liberal or Conservative parties." This meant the cutting away of "Labour" from the rest of the community, the deliberate withdrawal of its attention from national politics in order to concentrate it upon sectional concerns. Sectional concerns were, however, at the moment, it must be admitted, of unusual importance. For in this very year 1900, which saw the formal schism of "Labour" from the nation, occurred the famous conflict of the Taff Vale Railway Company with the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the judicial results of which jeopardised all the funds of all trade unions.

§ 26. *The "Labour Party."*

Before dealing with the Taff Vale case and its legislative sequel, the Trade Disputes Act of 1906, let us trace the history of the "Labour Party" from its inception in 1900 to the outbreak of the war in 1914.[1]

[1] For the first five years of its existence the "Labour Party" was known as the "Labour Representation Committee."

It was formed as "a federation consisting of Trade Unions, the I.L.P., the Fabian Society, and a large number of Trades Councils and local Labour parties." [1] It was, and is, a federation of a most curious and disproportionate type. The trade unions provide the overwhelming majority of members and the immense bulk of the funds; but the Socialists determine the policy. Rarely has there been a more remarkable example of the tail wagging the dog. The original ratio of Socialists to Trade Unionists was 22,861 to 353,070, *i.e.* Socialists were about 6 per cent of the whole. In 1912 (the last year for which, owing to the Osborne Judgment, figures are available) the ratio was 31,237 to 1,858,178, *i.e.* Socialists were little more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the whole. Yet on the executive committee, which wields a bureaucratic authority, the Socialist influence is supreme. Not only do the $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of specifically Socialist members of the party (many of whom do not belong to the ranks of Labour at all) appoint three out of the sixteen (*i.e.* $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent) of the executive, but the remaining thirteen of the executive are almost invariably Socialists, since Socialist minorities have for the most part succeeded in capturing the great trade unions, as well as the local councils and labour organisations.[2] In 1903 the sectionalism of the "Labour Party" was further

[1] *Labour Year-Book*, 1916: The Social Democratic Federation was also originally included, but it withdrew in 1901. Ten years later the S.D.F. was reconstituted as the British Socialist Party, and in 1916 it sought readmittance to the Labour Party at the Bristol Conference.

[2] Cf. Kirkup, *History of Socialism*, p. 385: "Although the Labour party was not a Socialist party in name or membership, it became the organ through which the political activities of the I.L.P. and the Fabian Society were almost completely expressed. Its policy was purely Socialist, and the great majority of its leading members, inside and outside Parliament, were Socialists."

emphasised by the passing of a resolution to the effect that " the members of the executive committee should strictly abstain from identifying themselves with, or promoting the interests of, any portion of the Liberal or Conservative parties." At the same time a development of revolutionary significance was determined upon : it was resolved that a compulsory levy should be made on all members of the party, regardless of their political opinions, at a fixed rate, " for the maintenance of Labour M.P.'s and for assisting in paying election charges." Labour members who should be thus promoted and paid should be required to pledge themselves to complete and unconditional obedience to the party's commands. In view of the necessary consequences of these resolutions, it is no wonder that Mr. Richard Bell, M.P., secretary of the A.S.R.S., and a staunch " old unionist " of the Liberal-Labour type, wrote : " The formation of the Labour party with its compulsory maintenance fund has been a good thing for the Socialist organisations. They largely dominate the policy, whilst the trade unions provide the funds." [1] It is obvious, indeed, that the inevitable effects of the resolutions of 1903 were (1) to convert Labour M.P.'s into delegates, and delegates dependent not on their parliamentary constituents but on an outside organisation over which the constituents had no control whatsoever; hence, (2) to disfranchise large numbers of such electors as had Labour M.P.'s for their nominal representatives; and (3) to force multitudes of trade unionists, whose political convictions remained national (whether Liberal or Conservative), to support candidates whom they detested, and promote policies

[1] Bell, *Trade Unionism*, p. 82.

of which they profoundly disapproved.[1] These inevitable effects manifested themselves immediately in the clash which culminated in the famous and most righteous Osborne Judgment. In 1904 the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants made the new compulsory levy for the support of the Socialist "Labour Party." The Walthamstow branch, whose members were dominantly Liberal, refused to pay, and denied the legality of the levy. The A.S.R.S. threatened that those who refused to pay should be expelled from the society and should forfeit all their contributions and benefits. The story of the six years' conflict is too long and intricate here to tell.[2] Suffice it to say that the Walthamstow branch was triumphant (1910), and that when the A.S.R.S. in fury at its discomfiture closed the branch, expelled Mr. Osborne, and confiscated all his contributions and benefits, a second lawsuit compelled the vindictive society to make amends (1911). The Osborne Judgment saved representative democracy in Britain from destruction—at any rate for the moment. In so far as its legal consequences went beyond the immediate needs of the case and unduly hampered the proper political activities of trade unions, they were modified by (1) the adoption of the practice of payment of members of the House of Commons, and (2) the Trade Union Act of 1913, which authorised political action on the part of the unions, and allowed payments to be made in respect thereof, out of special funds voluntarily contributed.

[1] Only one further link needed to be forged in order to complete the circle of the Socialist bondage, and that was to make membership of a trade union compulsory on every worker in a craft or industry. Strenuous efforts were being made at the time—and are still being made—to forge this link.

[2] It has been excellently told by Mr. W. V. Osborne, Secretary to the Walthamstow branch, in his book, *Sane Trade Unionism*, chaps. viii.-x.

The struggle of the Socialists, however, to capture the trade unions and to secure indirectly through them that political influence which they could never hope directly to obtain, fierce though it was, took a place second in rank to the still more crucial struggle of the "Labour Party" as a whole, to gain immunity from all legal restraints in the waging of industrial war by means of strikes, breaches of contracts, and picketing. The Osborne Judgment of 1910 was less obnoxious to it than the Taff Vale Judgment of 1900-1901. In August 1900 an unauthorised strike occurred on the Taff Vale Railway, accompanied by many violations of agreements, much turbulence and intimidation, together with an orgy of tumultuary picketing. The Taff Vale Company, which suffered heavy losses during the continuance of the strike, lodged a claim for over £24,000 damages against the A.S.R.S., contending that the society was responsible for the wrongs committed by its members. This contention was held to be valid in the Court of Queen's Bench; was declared to be invalid in the Court of Appeal on the technical ground that a trade union, not being either a corporation or a partnership, could not be sued in its registered name; but was finally upheld to the House of Lords on the equitable ground that (in the words of the Lord Chancellor) "if the Legislature has created a thing which can own property, which can employ servants, which can inflict injury, it must be taken to have impliedly given the power to make it suable in the Courts of Law for injuries purposely done by its authority and procurement." [1] The A.S.R.S., therefore, had to pay compensations and costs, which altogether amounted to

[1] H.L., July 22, 1901.

£42,000. This judgment, equitable though it was, clearly portended speedy bankruptcy to trade unions in general. It showed that three things were urgently necessary: first, that the legal position of trade unions as corporations should be fully and formally recognised; secondly, that the disciplinary power of the duly elected executives over refractory branches and lawless members should be greatly strengthened; and thirdly, that, while the unions should remain responsible for the acts of their official agents, they should be freed from the risks of having their accumulated funds jeopardised by unauthorised wrongs wrought by irresponsible members. Several Bills to give adequate protection to trade union funds were drafted during the years 1902–5, but none was found to be acceptable, both to the "Labour Party" and to the Conservative House of Commons. The whole political situation, however, was changed by the general election of January 1906. As the result of that election not only were the Liberals placed in power with an immense majority, which included twenty-three of the old Liberal-Labour group; but the new separatist "Labour Party" found itself with twenty-nine pledged delegates in the House of Commons. Thus the total Labour vote in the new parliament was fifty-two, and this body tended more and more to become a compact unitary "group" which concentrated all its energies on the interests, or supposed interests, of the class of manual workers, and sold its vote on matters that did not concern it to whichever of the two historic parties would offer to it the larger bids of "social reform." It took its stand—aloof from national affairs—side by side with that other sectional group, the Irish Nationalists;

and the two began, to the destruction of English political life, to develop the group-science of log-rolling. If only the "Labour Party" would drop their advocacy of secular education and would support Home Rule, the Nationalists would join them in compelling the complete reversal of the Taff Vale decision!

The Liberal party had during the election conflict deeply pledged itself to bring in some measure of relief for trade unions, and accordingly, early in 1906, it introduced a "Bill to provide for the Regulation of Trade Unions and Trade Disputes." It was on the whole a reasonable Bill. It gave, it is true, excessive licence to that form of intimidation known as "peaceful picketing." On the main point, however, viz. that of the liability of the unions for torts, it laid down the sound principle that the unions should not be chargeable with damages "in respect of any tortious act committed in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute, *unless the act was committed by the executive or by some person acting under its authority.*" This safeguard completely satisfied the demands of the older and more sober Labour leaders. Mr. Thomas Burt, for example, said: "The unions should, in my opinion, frankly accept responsibility for the action of their agents, when their agents are acting by the authority of executive councils."[1] But it did not satisfy the Socialist controllers of the new unions who were resolved to secure complete immunity from responsibility, even though to do so involved the demand on behalf of the unions of a privilege which no other

[1] See Circular to Northumberland Miners' Association quoted in *Times*, February 6, 1906.

bodies enjoyed; and even though to do so implied the surrender on the part of the unions of all claim to be regarded as corporations, or to have any sort of organic group personality.[1] This monstrous demand for special privilege—which the old unionists did not want, and which the law officers of the Crown strongly denounced—was weakly and wickedly conceded by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in the Commons, and was accepted with unparalleled pusillanimity by the Lords under the leadership of Lord Lansdowne who made a speech in explanation of his action (Dec. 4, 1906), for which Mr. Graham Wallas rightly says that he deserved imprisonment.[2] The Trade Disputes Act 1906 (1) legalised "peaceful picketing"; (2) exempted trade unions from the common law relating to conspiracy; and (3) forbade the Courts to entertain any action brought against any trade union "in respect of any tortious act alleged to have been committed by or on behalf of the trade union." All the provisions of the Act are bad in the excess of licence which they allow to wrong-doing; but the third goes beyond all the limits which, prior to the actual passing of this iniquitous statute, would have been deemed credible. Lord Halsbury was not using the language of exaggeration when he described this flagrant specimen of class legislation as "the most outrageous Bill ever attempted to be placed upon the Statute Book."

The effects of the Trade Disputes Act were immediately and incalculably disastrous both for the country at large and for the trade unions themselves. First,

[1] The development of National Guilds out of bodies that have thus abjured personality and responsibility is inconceivable.

[2] Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics*, p. 176.

the number of disputes immensely increased: in 1905 there had been 358; in 1906 there were 486; in 1907 there were 601; by 1913 the number had risen to 1497; while in 1914, before the outbreak of the war (Jan.–July), there had already been 836, and the country was on the eve of a gigantic and general industrial conflict that threatened to assume the dimensions of a civil war. Secondly, the gravity and violence of the disputes was deplorably enhanced; peaceful picketing displayed itself as sanguinary terrorism; contracts, agreements, settlements, all became "scraps of paper" to which irresponsible strikers, with truly Germanic ruthlessness, paid no heed at all; immense and flagrant wrongs were done for which the Courts were precluded from giving any redress. Parliament had, indeed, legalised a new anarchy and called it a restoration of trade union conditions. The "Labour Party" had done the unions the immeasurable disservice of making it impossible for any one to enter into a binding engagement with them; it had made them outlaws from the regions where good faith prevails. For them industrial peace based on mutual pledges had been rendered impossible. Such was the nemesis of privilege. Thirdly, within the trade unions themselves all the bonds of discipline were relaxed. The carefully elaborated rules as to the procedure to be observed prior to the declaration of a strike became in an instant obsolete. On the one hand the "rank and file" under self-elected shop-stewards could, and increasingly did, defy the official leaders, proclaim strikes at their own caprice, and ignore all attempts of their superiors to exercise control. On the other hand the official leaders, now freed from the fear of

compromising their unions, and tending more and more to be drawn from the class of violent agitators, could, and increasingly did, defy the moderating influence of the sober majority of their members; could, and increasingly did, with impunity embark on lawless and reckless adventures involving breaches of contract, violations of honour, sabotage, and intimidation. The Trade Disputes Act struck a mortal blow at industrial democracy, and delivered the trade unions into the hands of revolutionary oligarchies. It is the *Magna Carta* of Syndicalism and Anarchy.

§ 27. *Labour and the War.*

The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 found this country—thanks mainly to the activities of the two intransigent groups, the "Labour Party" and the Irish Nationalists, and in particular to the effective operation of the Trade Disputes Act which their united pressure had forced upon an unfaithful Legislature—on the verge of a revolutionary civil upheaval. Both government and trade union executives had lost control of the situation, and the nation was helplessly drifting, under the impulse of a handful of obscure ideologues of the Bolshevik type, towards sanguinary chaos. The war has not conferred many benefits upon the world by way of compensation for its immense calamities; but this at least must be placed to its credit, that it enabled Britain to pause and recover herself on the edge of the social abyss. The magnitude and sudden imminence of the German menace—the very existence of which the Socialist Labour leaders had persistently

denied; the appalling peril in which Britain was placed owing to the inadequacy of her military forces—all increase of which these same leaders had vehemently and successfully opposed; the tragic and spectacular collapse of that "Internationalism" (which more correctly would be termed "Cosmopolitanism," since it repudiated nationality) on which the workers had been taught to rely as a preventive of war; the vanishing at the critical moment of the "Great Illusion" with which Mr. Norman Angell had beamused the pacific world—all these things revealed to the British democracy at large the fallibility, the folly, and the falsity of the guides whom they had been blindly following towards destruction. The lesson was driven home by the obviously perverse and obscurantist—as well as flagrantly unpatriotic and anti-national—attitude towards the war assumed from the first by the I.L.P. and the numerous pacificist and defeatist organisations of which its members formed the nucleus. It was clear that those cosmopolitan Socialists who before the war had so grossly deceived themselves and deluded the nation were advocating a policy which if it were adopted would involve the country in everlasting disaster and disgrace, and were behaving themselves in a manner totally inconsistent with good citizenship. It was further clear that those trade union practices which under Socialist and Syndicalist influences had established themselves in the workshops—especially incessant and spontaneous strikes on the one hand, and persistent restriction of output on the other—were incompatible not only with victory in war, but equally with prosperity in peace. Hence began—and still continues—a titanic struggle of newly-illuminated

Labour to emancipate itself from the Socialist and Syndicalist thraldom which has imposed itself upon it. "Here," says Mr. W. A. Appleton, secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions, "lies the immediate task—the consolidation of the real trade union movement. Let it be quite separate and autonomous. Let it decline groupings which jeopardise its existence and place its numbers and its funds under the control and at the service of men who are not in it, and whose aims are foreign to it. . . . The present situation is intolerable. . . . The fight to recover freedom will be bitter, for the politician will not easily give up his prey; but if the straight men, who are trade unionists first and politicians afterwards, will put their hearts into the work success is certain." [1] The same cry for deliverance is the weekly theme of that new, able, and admirable Labour paper, the *British Citizen and Empire Worker*. The issue is tremendous, and it is not too much to say that on it depends the future of the British democracy. The pressure of the war has for the moment healed the schism of the nation. It has exposed the folly of Sectionalism, the errors of the Socialist and Syndicalist misleaders, and the madness of the class conflict. Can the reunification of the people be completed and made permanent, or must the breach caused by the Socialists and the Syndicalists be reopened once more, to the ultimate destruction of the empire? The issue is joined; but what the outcome will be is not yet determined. Let us note the omens both bad and good.

To take the bad first. The outbreak of war found the alien and anti-national Socialist and Syndicalist

[1] *The Observer*, September 2, 1917.

minority dominant over organised Labour: it had secured complete control of the "Labour Party"; it had captured the Trade Union Congress; it manipulated the General Federation of Unions; it ruled supreme in such great amalgamated societies as the Miners, Railwaymen, Transport Workers, and Engineers. The opening up by the war of a new world of interests, activities, and ideas shook this alien ascendancy to its foundations. Labour began to struggle to escape from sectionalism into citizenship. To a large measure, as we shall see, in Parliament, in Congress, in Federation it succeeded in doing so—at any rate for the duration of the war. In the great societies, however, Labour was held in firmer grip, and (owing to the Trade Disputes Act) the loyalists found it harder to effect its deliverance. The government, too, which—backed by the general will of the community and supported by the patriotic majorities of the unions, might have intervened with decisive effect—acted with amazing feebleness, ineptitude, and fatuity, and made needless and fatal surrenders to seditious minorities. The South Welsh miners' strike of August 1915, the Clyde munition-workers' strike of March 1916, the threatened railway strike of August 1916, the engineers' strike of May 1917, are merely a few of the worst examples of the way in which revolutionary coteries have taken advantage of national necessity to secure class gains; have defied the authority of both parliament and union executive; and have extorted by violence payments and privileges which have converted the members of their protected trades into a favoured and subsidised aristocracy. This aristocracy forms the only class against which as a whole the charge

of "profiteering" can legitimately be levelled. The successive increases of wages demanded and secured under menace by railwaymen, engineers, and miners sweep away more than all the profits of those industries, and the deficit falls as tribute or blackmail to be paid by the community-as-a-whole. The result is the inflation of the currency with unnecessary issues of inconvertible paper money, the cruel enhancing of prices already too high, the oppression of every section of the nation which cannot or will not combine to recoup itself at the expense of the rest. Closely allied with this incessant and insatiable demand for additional wages and war-bonuses has been the persistent restriction of output, even of commodities essential to the very existence of the state, such as munitions, ships, aeroplanes. In some important quarters vain have been all appeals of government; empty all promises of trade union officials: the shop-stewards and the rank and file have refused to exceed the stipulated limit which represents but a small fraction of the possible product. "Ca' canny," always demoralising and blighting, has been carried beyond the verge of a dishonest and suicidal custom, into the region of felony and treason. The same must be said of the menacing resistance offered by large sections of organised labour to more than one measure stated by the government to be, and ultimately proved by circumstances to be, vital to the successful conduct of the war. Particularly has this been the case in respect of the Military Service Acts, the long postponement of which through fear of systematised revolt has cost the country countless lives, and has imperilled the whole cause of the Allies. Professor E. V. Arnold of Bangor described

the condition of things at its worst when he wrote in *The Times* (August 31, 1915): "Working men are strongly organised, and were, before the European struggle broke out, quite frankly bent upon a class war, in which they intended to defy government, parliament, and law alike. Now, as a body, they are in alliance with government as against the Germans; but it is to them just as free an alliance as that of the Colonies with England, and they will take orders, if at all, only from their own leaders, who are more nearly represented by the Trade Union Congress than by any other body." [1] If this gloomy picture were indeed true to fact, then might we well despair. For it portrays a Sectionalism which has widened into an irremediable schism. It represents Labour as a separate state within the state, considering whether it shall give its assistance to the Allies or to the Germans! If this were true to fact, it would mean that there is no British nation, but merely two or more irreconcilable classes; no British democracy with a common tradition, a common will, and a common hope, but only a number of mutually conflicting groups.

Fortunately, it is not true to fact. It represents only the gloomier side of the view. There is another and a brighter side. This is seen in the splendid response which all sections of the community have made to the call of duty and danger; in the willing sacrifice of wealth and health and life which members

[1] With this passage compare the picture of the South Welsh miners given by Rev. J. V. Morgan in Part II. chap. vi. of his *The War and Wales*. The miners, he says, "are rapidly becoming, industrially and politically, an independent organism in the Welsh body politic" (p. 281). In the coal strike of 1915 they "thought only of themselves, their own claims, and their own future. Their maxim, which they had elevated into a religion, was that their country's necessity was the miner's opportunity" (p. 308).

of every class have offered in defence of home and liberty; in the brotherly co-operation of soldiers of all grades in the terrific work of war; in the fervent hope, born amid the intercourse of the trenches, that in the new British Empire which will emerge from this ordeal of fire and blood there may be a new unity and a new communal life. One manifestation of this hope is the attempt to create on national and not on sectional lines a "New Labour Party." To this attempt we will now turn.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIALISM

"Il y a opposition évidente et irréductible entre les principes socialistes et les principes démocratiques." . . . "En réalité il n'y a pas de conceptions politiques qui soient séparées par des abîmes plus profonds que la démocratie et le socialisme." . . . "Le principal ennemi actuel de la démocratie, le seul qui pourrait la vaincre, c'est le socialisme."—LE BON, *Psychologie du socialisme.*

"La démocratie tend à la conciliation des classes, tandis que le socialisme utilise et organise la lutte de classe."—LAGARDELLE, *Le Socialisme ouvrier.*

"Le socialisme est le nouvel adversaire de la liberté et du progrès."—LEROY-BEAULIEU, *Collectivisme.*

"Democracy, guided by the spirit of freedom, will resist Socialism."—RAE, *Contemporary Socialism.*

"Socialism cannot be the continuation of democracy. It must be—if it can be at all—a totally new culture, built upon ideas and institutions totally different from the ideas and from the institutions of democracy."—LEVINE, *The Labour Movement.*

"Socialism exercises a natural force of attraction for cranks of all kinds."—MICHELS, *Political Parties.*

"We make war against all the prevailing ideals of the State, of country, of patriotism."—KARL MARX, *Manifesto.*

"Marx was, and still is, the guiding spirit of modern Socialism."—HUNTER, *Violence and the Labour Movement* (1916).

§ 28. *The "New Labour Party."*

THE grave and irremediable defect of the "Labour Party" as it had been constituted in 1900 was its sectionalism. It was not a party at all, but a group: it represented the interests of only one order; it was dominated by doctrinaire Socialists; it was

committed to the class war; it tended to fritter away its energies on the discussion and furtherance of visionary schemes, imperfectly planned and inadequately thought out, whose realisation would in most cases have involved social and economic disaster. The war burst upon it as an immense shock. It was wholly engrossed with its sectional concerns, and was oblivious of the fact that the international horizon had for several years been growing black with impending storm. The crash of reality aroused it from its pre-occupations, and caused it to survey the larger world of national and continental politics with a new concern and a new comprehension. Although one fraction of it, viz. the cosmopolitan Socialists of the I.L.P., led by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and including many other middle-class ideologues, remained incurable in its illusions, obstinate in its obsessions, and irrepressible in the mischievous energy with which it advocated neutrality, pacificism, voluntarism, and *défaitisme* generally — the immense mass of its members, led by the genuine captains of labour, recognised instinctively the truth of the situation, perceived the deadly peril in which Britain was placed, realised that freedom and all that makes life worth living were at stake, saw the necessity of a fight to the death with autocracy, grasped the conception of the solidarity of the community, and nobly resolved to play their part in the great national struggle for existence. This is not the place in which to describe the splendid services rendered to the country by the Labour leaders who joined the Coalition Government; by the patriotic speakers who combated the cosmopolitan Germanophiles in the Labour Congress; by

the organisers of the General Federation of Trade Unions who toiled for industrial peace; or by the multitudes of the rank and file who volunteered for the army and fought with immortal heroism in the early battles of the war. The only things to be noted here are those that relate to the history of democracy. They are these. First, that during the course of the war, and as a result of the war, the "Labour Party" has immensely widened its horizon; has taken a loftier standpoint; has surveyed as never before, with comprehensive gaze, the affairs of the nation, the continent, and the world. Secondly, that it has recognised the grave defect of its former sectionalism, and has striven to enlarge its scope so as to become more truly representative of the nation as a whole. These are signs of immense hopefulness. No lover of Britain can read week by week, as I do, the *British Citizen*, the organ of patriotic labour, without a feeling of intense thankfulness that from the heart of trade unionism itself has come so notable a manifestation of healthy national life. But the question arises: How far has the "Labour Party" succeeded in its efforts to widen its horizon and to enlarge its scope? The answer — unfortunately, but not unnaturally—is that as yet, in spite of the fine lead given by many of its own prominent men and by the *British Citizen*, it has not been very successful. That is not surprising when one considers the tightness of the grip with which the Socialist and Syndicalist theoricians had fastened themselves upon it. Sindbad the Sailor could not get rid of the Old Man of the Sea in a day. The "Labour Party" has widened its horizon indeed; but it looks at the new phenomena too much in the old spirit. It

discusses foreign affairs, imperial concerns, war aims, peace settlements, leagues of nations, and so on; but it discusses them with the same lack of knowledge, the same failure to realise facts, the same tendency to be caught by phrases, the same liability to rush to rash conclusions, which of old marked its discussion of social and economic problems. Moreover, still more deplorably, it sometimes discusses these questions as though Labour, and Labour alone, had the right to decide them; as though the community-as-a-whole, as represented in parliament, were a negligible factor; as though the nation might even have to be coerced into accepting sectional control. Some realisation of the unreasonableness of this attitude may account, to a certain extent, for the effort made at the beginning of the present year (1918) to widen the scope of the "Labour Party." More powerful considerations, however, tending to this end were, first, the desire to secure the support of the eight million new electors enfranchised by the Representation of the People Act: secondly, the determination of the great trade unions to free themselves from the excessive control of heavily over-represented Socialist organisations. At a great meeting held at Westminster on February 26, 1918, it was decided to enlarge the party (1) "by bringing into its ranks those who have no need to join trade unions and no desire to join Socialist societies, but whose sympathies are democratic," and (2) "by giving special facilities and encouragement to women electors to join it." On receiving information of this decision many middle-class intellectuals and many women joined the "Labour Party." All this is hopeful. When, however, one reads the extended manifesto

of the reconstructed party which Mr. Arthur Henderson has published under the title *The Aims of Labour*, one realises that the old sectional spirit is not eliminated, but that it is still there in much of its old narrowness and intransigence. In this book, which might have been so healing in its effect, we have—leavened, it is true, with a good deal of worthy sentiment—the old and false antithesis between the working class, with "their immense industry, their patient endurance, their direct and simple sense of right and wrong," and the ruling class with their "insensate ambitions" (p. 11); we have the old and vicious identification of democracy with labour, in such statements as that which says that "a generation of political effort on the part of the people brought an extension of the franchise to the commercial and middle classes, but added nothing to the power of democracy, except the right to combine in trade unions" (p. 17); we have the old and long-exploded Marxian fallacy—the catch-word of the class war—that "the producers have been robbed of the major part of the fruits of their industry under the individualist system of capitalist production" (p. 23); we have a veiled threat of a violent social revolution unless the exploiting classes make an unconditional surrender (p. 58); we have the plain proclamation that "by peaceable means, or by direct assault, society is going to be brought under democratic control"—by which is meant the control of the "New Labour Party." This is all very lamentable. Mr. Henderson has failed to rise to the height of a great opportunity. He is still held in the fetters of the I.L.P. Instead of trying really to nationalise the "Labour Party," all that he has had the imagina-

tion and courage to do is to try to secure allies in his effort to make Labour dominant over the nation; he has merely invited miscellaneous sectionalists (mainly women and clergymen) to join the old separatist group. The fact of his continued bondage to doctrinaire Socialism is seen still more clearly in Appendix II. to *The Aims of Labour*. This Appendix consists of a "Draft Report on Reconstruction" entitled "Labour and the New Social Order." Internal evidence suggests that it is the joint-production of Mr. Henderson and the Fabian Society. It is, at any rate, instinct with the principles of predatory Socialism.

What, then, is this Socialism, this great superstition of the nineteenth century, which has so long held, and which still so firmly holds, organised Labour in its grip?

§ 29. *The Genesis of Socialism.*

The term "Socialism" came into use during the 'thirties of the last century.[1] The movement, however, to which it was applied was considerably older. It may, indeed, be regarded as the joint-product of the Industrial Revolution in the world of economics and the French Revolution in the world of ideas. The premonitory symptoms of the rise of Socialism can clearly be discerned in the closing years of the eighteenth century.[2] The Industrial Revolution of

[1] Kirkup, *History of Socialism*, p. 3, says: "The word 'Socialism appears to have been first used in the *Poor Man's Guardian* in 1833." Harley, *New Social Democracy*, p. 2, however, gives a quotation from the French paper *Le Globe*, February 13, 1832, in which the word appears: "Nous ne voulons pas sacrifier la personnalité au socialisme." It became freely current in England during the controversy that took place 1835 onwards concerning Robert Owen's schemes.

[2] Socialistic *ideas* of one sort or another can, of course, be traced to a much remoter antiquity. Many of them were prevalent in the seventeenth

that period—which caused manufacture to supersede agriculture, made town dominant over country, established the factory in ascendancy over the home, converted master-craftsmen into employers, and workmen into "hands"—produced a more rapid and profound change in the social condition of Western Europe than had ever occurred since the incursion of the barbarians and the break-up of the Roman Empire. It stimulated an unprecedented increase in population;[1] caused vast migrations from scattered villages to congested coalfields; rendered obsolete all existing regulations, whether of state or guild, respecting terms of service, quality of goods, or wages of labour; led in some cases to appalling conditions of squalor and degradation; gave rise to new and insistent social problems on a scale never before known. Rarely in the history of western civilisation has there been such urgent need of strong and wise governmental control as there was during this era of economic transition. On the one hand, invention and discovery, new processes of manufacture and new means of communication, were opening up vast undeveloped markets, and were inviting to a gigantic industrial competition that yielded fortunes hitherto undreamed of; on the other hand, the

century: cf. Gooch, *History of Democratic Ideas*. Some can be traced through the Middle Ages to Early Christian and Classical times: cf. Jarrett, *Mediaeval Socialism*.

[1] The population of England and Wales is estimated at a fairly stable five millions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The following table, compiled from Porter's *Progress of the Nation* (1836), gives the subsequent increase:

Estimate,	1700 =	5,134,516
„	1750 =	6,039,684
1st Census,	1801 =	8,872,980
2nd „	1811 =	10,200,615
3rd „	1821 =	11,978,875
4th „	1831 =	13,897,187

responsive movements of the unorganised masses who followed the call for labour, while they led the capable few to wealth and honour, conducted the normal and subnormal many into monotony and misery. It should have been the province of the government to appropriate to the public service the clearly unearned increment of the landlord; to encourage the capitalist in his enterprises, but at the same time, by formulating regulations applicable alike to himself and his rivals, to help him to escape from the worst compulsions of competition; to protect the impotent artisan, the necessitous woman, and the unhappy child from injury in the new and perilous circumstances. Unfortunately, however, the government was quite unequal to its responsibilities and opportunities. It was, at the close of the eighteenth century, utterly discredited among practical men by its economic blunderings—by its clinging to mediaeval mercantilism, by its suppression of colonial industry and commerce, by its insistence on navigation laws, by its meddling with currency, by its political manipulation of tariffs. With one accord enlightened economists, led by Adam Smith, called upon it to cease from its blighting interference, and allow trade and industry to be free. Their demand was supported by the philosophers of the *Aufklärung*, who proclaimed that if only Nature were permitted to reassert her supremacy over human convention, each individual, pursuing his own ends under the guidance of reason and conscience, would further in the highest possible degree the general interests of humanity. Hence the policy of *laissez-faire*—that extreme individualism which left the landlord unchecked in his exaction of rent; the capitalist unaided in his struggle to

maintain decent conditions of labour; the manual worker undefended in the presence of economic forces against which he was powerless to contend.

No one in particular was to blame. The western world was passing through a cataclysmic industrial upheaval. It was difficult for contemporaries to realise the nature of the changes which were going on around them; impossible for them at once to secure control of the new forces that were operating, or to prevent them from inflicting much misery. But every one with a heart and a conscience perceived that all was not right with the world; that on the contrary there was much that was intolerably wrong. The large number of those who recognised this very palpable fact may be classified into three main groups: first, Anarchists; second, Reformers; third, Socialists. The Anarchists, among whom Proudhon was pioneer and Bakunin the major-prophet, surveyed the industrial chaos with a profound pessimism. Not only did human affairs seem to them to have gone wrong; but they despaired of the possibility of putting them right along existing lines. Hence they proposed "to grasp this sorry scheme of things entire" and, having shattered it to bits, to leave each emancipated individual to follow the guidance of Nature and, in voluntary co-operation with his fellows, to "remould it nearer to the heart's desire." They were extreme individualists. Their practical policy was primarily destructive—the abolition of state, church, marriage, social distinctions, private property, nationality; but some of them had visions, beyond the immediate and universal ruin, of small idyllic communities of the free. The Reformers—of whom, perhaps, in this country, Lord Shaftesbury may be regarded as

typical—while recognising fully the evils of the factory system, and even the deeper diseases of the body social and politic, did not regard them as incurable, or as necessarily inherent in the established order. Hence, invoking the legislative aid of the state, and appealing also to private beneficence, they proceeded to plan and carry through a useful programme of ameliorative measures. They frankly accepted the existing organisation of society, and believed that the best hope for humanity lay in its progressive adaptation to new circumstances as they should arise. Midway between the Anarchists and the Reformers stood the Socialists. They shared with the Anarchists the view that the existing social and economic order was beyond redemption; that it was necessary totally to destroy the "capitalist system"; and that all institutions, whether political or ecclesiastical, which were inextricably bound up with the "capitalist system" would have to be eradicated with it. But, as against the Anarchists, they shared with the Reformers a belief in the efficacy and importance of political action. Even if the state as it existed did not seem to be amenable to their purposes, they projected the establishment of a new proletarian polity that would accomplish their designs. They were authoritarian not anarchic. They insisted not upon individual liberty but upon the communal will. In their leading ideas they were the heirs of the French Revolution: perhaps Babœuf, with his Charter of Equality of 1793, was most obviously and directly their forerunner. Their description of the ills of their age showed that on the critical side of their propaganda they were more or less united and agreed. Their constructive

proposals were, however, infinitely varied, mutually unrelated, and conflicting. The only common characteristic which marked them all was that all alike were Utopian and impracticable. Saint Simon invoked the aid of Louis XVIII. in his endeavour to revolutionise society, relieve the poor, reward merit, and rehabilitate the flesh. Fourier dreamed of the reorganisation of the race by the establishment of *phalanges*—symmetrical communities of four hundred families each, each family to average 4½ persons, and each phalange to occupy a square league of land.[1] Robert Owen, in England, similarly advocated the redistribution of mankind into "communities of about twelve hundred persons who should be settled on spaces of land of from 1000 to 1500 acres, all living in one large building in the form of a square, with public kitchen and mess-rooms"; but, fortunately, he devoted himself to the more practical and reforming tasks of shortening the hours of labour, furthering factory legislation, founding infant schools, and developing the system of co-operation.[2] In Germany Rodbertus urged the state to take over the management of both the production and the distribution of wealth, with a view to the ultimate completion of communism. Socialism, in short, remained entirely visionary and Utopian, until Karl Marx gave it a dogmatic creed, and Ferdinand Lassalle a rudimentary organisation.[3]

[1] Fourier, although he is always classed among the pioneers of Socialism, really had more affinity with the Anarchists.

[2] Robert Owen has been termed "the father of English Socialism." This is not a happy ascription. It would be more correct to call him "the grandfather of English Syndicalism."

[3] Both Marx and Lassalle were Jews, and it is noteworthy that much of the modern development and propagation of Socialism have been due to members of the Hebrew race.

§ 30. *Marx and Proletarian Ascendancy.*

Of Lassalle little need here be said. His Socialistic activity was limited to the last two years of his life (1862–64). Within those two years, however, he published his *Working-Men's Programme* and his *Open Letter*, in which he urged the proletariat to capture political power in order to improve their economic condition, and he founded the *Universal German Working-Men's Association*, whose immediate demand was manhood suffrage, but whose ultimate purpose was the establishment by the democratised state of " productive unions " in which the labourers should receive the whole product of their toil. Lassalle's death in 1864, as the result of a disgraceful duel, discredited his teaching and disorganised his Association, leaving the undisputed leadership of the Socialist movement to Karl Marx.

Lassalle had had a high and appreciative conception of the national state : he had looked forward to the establishment of a German national government by the emancipated German people, and had expected that from this would flow the triumph of a German Socialism. Marx, on the other hand, was a cosmopolitan who openly proclaimed " war against all the prevailing ideals of the state, of country, of patriotism." He was denationalised, having been driven by authority from Prussia, from France, from Belgium, until in London he found liberty to dwell, to fight, to starve. He was unclassed, being a member of the bourgeoisie who had turned upon his fellows with the fury of a renegade. He was without religion, having been conveyed from Judaism to Protestantism by his father at the age of six, and

having abandoned Protestantism for aggressive Atheism when he grew to manhood. He was a man embittered by persecution, enraged by antagonism, soured by adversity, exasperated by suffering. Naturally authoritarian and dogmatic, endowed with a double portion of the Prussian spirit of despotism, intolerant of criticism and opposition, he passed a stormy life in a long succession of quarrels and conflicts. His inspiring and dominant passion was the passion of hate—hate in its virulent and peculiarly Germanic form. He hated the ruling classes everywhere; he hated the ministers of all religions; he hated the bourgeoisie; he hated the capitalists; he came in time to hate most of his fellow-haters, such as Proudhon, Lassalle, and Bakunin, with whom he quarrelled as to the ways and means by which they should give effect to their common malignities. It was hate that goaded him to his enormous literary labours; it was hate that determined his selection and rejection of historical facts for his distorted description of industrial England; it was hate that fixed his economic principles, that twisted all his arguments, that vitiated all his conclusions; it was hate that organised the *International* in 1864, and hate, spontaneously generated within its fiery circle, that exploded it ten years later. *Das Kapital* (1867) is the enduring testament of Marxian animosity; it is not a work of economic science, although it contains some acute analysis; it is not a work of history, although it presents masses of authentic facts of a sort; it is a work of dogmatic mythology, the formula of a new religion of repulsion, the Koran of the class war.

But, though hate was the master motive of the

ministry of Marx, it was hate that had an obverse side. Marx was not a mere destroyer like Bakunin; and if Marxian Socialism has made a more successful bid for disciples than Nihilism it is because it contains positive and constructive elements. Marx's detestation of existing governments, established churches, enfranchised middle classes, and enriched capitalists, caused him to feel a natural affinity with rebels, heretics, wage-slaves, and paupers—with all, indeed, who seemed to suffer, like himself, from the prevailing organisation of society. He sought to ally this miscellaneous proletariat to himself in his assaults on the citadels of his foes. True, he never really got to know the proletariat, to which he did not belong, and of which he always retained a certain imperial contempt. Such acquaintance with it as he secured was attained in the Reading Room of the British Museum. Hence the Marxian proletariat is an ideal or imaginary thing, a macrocosm of Marx himself—poor, laborious, atheistic, outcast, denationalised—a ludicrous travesty of the real working men of the actual world of affairs. Nevertheless, in the industrial conditions amid which he wrote his inflammatory manifestos, there was sufficient poverty, sufficient misery, sufficient injustice, sufficient oppression, to give point to his denunciations and exhortations. It was easy to persuade the wretched, the unsuccessful, the discontented, that their woes, failures, and grievances were due not, on the one hand, to their own incapacities, nor, on the other hand, to circumstances which for the moment had passed beyond all human control; but rather to a conspiracy of exploiting classes—monarchs, nobles, priesthoods, capitalists. It was easy to set the masses of the un-

fortunate in motion against those more prosperous than themselves; easy to sound the tocsin of the class war. This deplorable thing is what Karl Marx did. He did it in all honesty, no doubt, and with as sincere a zeal as that with which Mahomet preached the gospel of the sword. But Providence does not intervene to save men from the consequences of their conscientious convictions; nor does it protect the multitude from the disasters which ensue from the following of false prophets; and there can be little question that the influence which Marx has exerted has been one of the most fatal factors in the troubles of Western civilisation during the past fifty years. There is this, however, to be said in mitigation of his offence—and it is to the credit both of himself and of human nature, as represented by his numerous disciples, that it *can* be said—viz. that neither he nor they were content to be moved by mere hatred of their supposed enemies, by mere envy of the more prosperous, by mere desire for the possessions of others. Neither Marx nor the hosts whom he marshalled for the holy pillage were bandits avowedly out for plunder. It is fundamental to the Marxian system, and it is the honourable secret of the success of the Marxian propaganda, that the primary dogma of the new religion was Justice. By whatever crooked processes of inverted Hegelianism Marx had arrived at his conclusions, he had somehow managed to convince himself that the class war which he proclaimed was a just war; that landowners and capitalists were thieves; that the poor were the dispossessed, and the proletariat the disinherited. He persuaded both himself and the faithful that they were out to recover their own. He seized upon a half-truth, stated with-

but adequate qualifications by Ricardo, to the effect that labour is the sole source of value. Accepting this erroneous premiss as a fundamental economic verity, he argued that, as all wealth is produced by labour, so to the labourers all wealth is due. Hence he repudiated the claim of landlords for rent, denied the right of capitalists to interest, rejected the plea of employers for profits, even ignored as a rule the fact that there are other and more important kinds of labour than manual labour. Since it was evident, however, that labour did not receive all the wealth of the world, but on the contrary, had to be content with wages which, by an apparent "iron" law, tended to remain as low as the level of subsistence, he contended that the wide difference between the wages actually received by labour and the wealth produced (according to his theory) by labour constituted a "surplus value" of which the working class was robbed by its various exploiters. Here, indeed, was a gospel of plunder for the proletariat; and no wonder that those who believed it became social revolutionaries to whom the class war appeared to be a sacred crusade. It was, and is, of course, a monstrous myth. The Marxian theory of value on which the whole superstructure of the predatory cult has been built has been well described as "the greatest intellectual mare's nest of the century which has just ended." [1] It is difficult to realise how any honest mind could have formulated so crude an absurdity, had it not been distorted by the passion of hate; or even how such a hate-distorted mind could have done it anywhere except in the British Museum. It is a superstition which crumbles at the touch of in-

[1] Mallock, *Critical Examination of Socialism*, p. 18.

dustrial fact or scientific criticism; a creed which can be believed only because it has been involved by Marx in such a tangle of obscure phraseology and irrelevant statistics that it has become unintelligible to the devotee, who can do nothing but accept it as a mystery of faith. Nevertheless, false as it is, the Marxian theory of value is the sole theoretical justification of the class war, and the class war is still the guiding and inciting principle of most of the Socialist organisations both in England and abroad.[1]

§ 31. *Webb and Bureaucratic Collectivism.*

Although the Marxian cult of the class war, with its gospel of confiscation, its sacro-sanct scripture, its irrational creed, its militant methods, and its pontifical organisation, made some headway in England, there were many who, although they sympathised with the general purpose of the Marxian propaganda, could not accept its false political economy or its revolutionary procedure. Prominent among these were the people who instituted the Fabian Society in 1884 and the Independent Labour Party in 1893. They were mainly tender-hearted men of the middle-class who, although they themselves were in comfortable positions, rightly felt disturbed by the obvious and unnecessary sufferings of the poor. They were by nature Social Reformers, and only the fact that

[1] The *British Socialist Party*, successor to the Social Democratic Federation, represents the orthodox Marxian tradition in Britain. Besides this there are the *Socialist Labour Party*, whose members "must signify and affirm their belief in the class struggle before admission," and the *Socialist Party of Great Britain*, whose supporters are "determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged Labour or avowedly Capitalist." The *Industrial Workers of the World* "deny that there is anything in common between working men and capitalists," and declare that "there can be no peace between the exploited working class and the exploiting capitalist class."

they wished to carry reform to the extreme length of the subversion of the existing capitalist system renders it possible to call them Socialists at all. They were not, like Marx, embittered materialists rampant in a world which they wished utterly to destroy, but amiable idealists who thought that things were moving quite in the right direction, and that they merely needed to be accelerated, and pushed a little beyond the generally accepted terminus. They were not hostile to the existing political order; on the contrary most of them contentedly occupied stools in government or municipal offices, and found the duties associated with them so excellently organised and so light that they had ample leisure in which to turn their thoughts to the regeneration of mankind. They made no overt attacks upon revealed religion; quite the reverse, they proclaimed that their views were essentially Christian, and it may be admitted that some of them were in every way well qualified to become Anglican curates or Nonconformist lay-preachers. They rejected all the fundamentals of the Marxian cult; and the World which thought that it knew, from the *Communist Manifesto* and the raging propaganda of the *International*, what Socialism meant, was amazed and bewildered at the spectacle of these mild, silk-hatted, frock-coated civil servants (together with clergymen, society ladies, and other respectable persons) appropriating the dreaded name.[1]

[1] Cf. Pease, *History of the Fabian Society*, p. 236: "The Fabian Society's first achievement was to break the spell of Marxism in England." Mr. Pease, however, is premature. The spell of Marxism is not broken. The *Socialist Labour Party*, for instance, is at this moment deluging the workshops of the country with tracts by Marx and his *fidus Achates* Engels, and is indignant that "literary parasites of the capitalist class are flooding the press with essays labelled 'Socialism,' in which everything is called 'Socialism' from a profit-sharing bakery to the government printing office."

As educated economists they necessarily repudiated the crude fallacy of the Marxian theory of value;[1] as prosperous members of the *bourgeoisie* they deeply deplored the Marxian dogma of the class war, rejected the strong doctrine of a social hell prepared for all but good proletarians, and proclaimed in its place a social universalism instinct with the weak benevolence of eternal hope; as philosophical thinkers they dissociated themselves from the materialism of Marx, from his determinism, from his exclusively economic interpretation of history; as practical politicians they renounced and denounced his revolutionary methods. In the end there was not much of Marx left with which they could be said to agree. And yet there was just enough to warrant their assumption of the name of "Socialists," and hence to necessitate their condemnation as such. They shared with Marx the desire for the complete subversion of existing society, and its reconstitution on new lines;[2] they clung to the Marxian fiction of "surplus value," *i.e.* to the illusion that labour in general and manual labour in particular produces large stores of wealth of which it is wrongfully deprived; hence, in spite of their deprecation of the class war, they poured forth tracts and essays, and delivered

[1] Cf. Kirkup, *History of Socialism*, p. 373: "Marx's *Kapital* at that time was accessible only in French and German; the early Fabians began a systematic study of the book, and found that they were not in agreement with its Law of Value, which at that time was regarded by English Social Democrats as virtually the sole basis of Socialism." There is a convenient summary of the Marxian Theory of Value in Rae's *Contemporary Socialism*, pp. 160-6.

[2] The Fabian Society, according to its prospectus, "aims at the reorganisation of society by the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit." The Independent Labour Party proclaims that its object is "to establish the socialist state when land and capital will be held by the community," etc., etc.

incessant lectures, by which the predatory passions of the proletariat were excited, and in which they were deliberately exhorted—on the specious ground that they were but seeking their own—to appropriate capital and land. Thus they were genuine Socialists, as opposed to mere Social Reformers; they aimed at a visionary New World, and not merely at a renovated Old World. But, on the other hand, although they shared the Marxian aim, they dissented *in toto* from the Marxian methods. It was indeed the distinctive characteristic of Fabian Socialists—and generally of their progeny in the I.L.P.—that they proposed to carry out their depredations by legal and constitutional means. Evolution not revolution was their watchword; gradual appropriation not violent expropriation. They had no desire to leave their comfortable office stools for risky barricades, nor did they think it necessary to do so. As dominated by civil servants, and in particular by Mr. Sidney Webb of the Colonial Office, they had a profound belief in the efficacy of Acts of Parliament, Orders in Council, and Departmental Regulations. Accordingly they held, and very warrantably held, the view that all that they desired to do could be accomplished by legislative and administrative means. They realised that their proposals promised to yield great profit to large bodies of the new democratic electorate, and they were convinced that the lure—which they, no doubt, quite sincerely regarded as but a rightful restitution of stolen goods—would in time prove to be irresistible. They proposed to use the power of the state (and, under it, the local government authorities) to effect the gradual elimination of the landlord and the capitalist, and to set up the Socialist *régime*.

In thus placing state-action in the forefront of their propaganda they fell exactly into line with a Collectivist movement which was very much older than themselves. In the Middle Ages and early modern times the state had regulated industry and commerce, fixed wages, relieved the impotent poor, provided work for the unemployed, undertaken many public services. The state's mismanagement of its business had in the eighteenth century provoked a strong *laissez-faire* or individualist reaction; but at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the factory and the anti-slavery laws, the old communal activity was recommenced. As the century went on this activity was once again rapidly extended from the negative sphere of regulation into the positive sphere of industrial organisation. As Mr. Sidney Webb wrote in 1888: "The community now carries on for itself, in some part or other of these islands, the post office, telegraphs, carriage of small commodities, coinage, surveys, the regulation of the currency and note issue; the provision of weights and measures; the making, sweeping, lighting, and repairing of streets, roads, bridges; life insurance . . . " etc., etc., *ad infinitum*.[1] This is all quite true, quite familiar, quite obvious. But Mr. Sidney Webb called it "Socialism"! No wonder that when Sir William Harcourt this same year heard the word so used he exclaimed, "We are all Socialists now!" He might have added that the majority of the human race had been Socialists in this sense from the earliest days of political organisation. Of course, however, it was *not* Socialism, nor had it any necessary connection with Socialism. To use the term Socialism as

[1] See *Fabian Essays*, pp. 47-8.

synonymous with state-action was merely to confound language and to obfuscate thought. The essence of Socialism is the expropriation of the capitalist and the landlord, and neither the pace at which it is done nor the means by which it is effected is material. Marx would do it at once and by means of a violent social revolution; Mr. Webb would do it gradually and by means of peaceful political pressure. But to take the term "Socialism" and transfer it from the end to the means was a gross abuse of phraseology. It has indeed been a fruitful source of confusion. The discussion of Socialism has been darkened by it for a whole generation.

Although Mr. Webb and his Fabian confederates aimed ultimately and far off at true Socialism, the immediate object of their endeavours was merely an extension of bureaucratic Collectivism. They were enamoured of the governmental and civic offices in which they lived and moved and had their being. If only they could accelerate the process of nationalisation and municipalisation which they saw going on all around them, they believed that all would at last be well, and that they could gradually evolve Socialism by diverting into the public treasury all the interest of capital and all the rent of land. Thus they concentrated their energies upon efforts to extend the functions of the state—to make it the sole employer of labour, the sole educator of the young, the sole healer of the sick, the sole reliever of the poor. They decried individual initiative, condemned competition (except as a method of appointment to clerkships in the civil service), advocated confiscatory taxation as an end in itself, tried to bring every one and everything under bureaucratic control. Though

this Collectivism of theirs was not in itself Socialism, nevertheless by means of it they were able—especially through incessant and harassing attacks on those capitalists and those landlords whose possessions were their ultimate quarry—steadily to advance towards Socialism.

§ 32. *Cole and Socio-Syndicalism.*

Fabian Collectivism had its vogue in this country during the quarter century 1884–1909. Most of this time, thanks to the confusion of its phraseology and its "terminological inexactitudes," it was very generally regarded as Socialism itself, except of course by the indignant Marxians of the Social Democratic Federation who never ceased to speak of it with hatred and contempt as organised hypocrisy.[1] It attained its apogee in the production of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission of the latter year. This Report came as a revelation of its glaring defects as a principle of social regeneration, and displayed in unmistakable relief some of its fundamental fallacies. It elaborately analysed the causes of poverty, and it attributed them all to external circumstances. It rarely suggested, and sometimes sophistically denied, that the problem of pauperism is at all due to the mental and moral defects of the paupers themselves, and that laziness, ignorance, drunkenness, gambling, and vice are independent and radical causes of submergence. It manifested to the world the extreme over-emphasis which Fabians (in common with all Socialists) place upon environment as the cause of social evils; it showed how grossly they over-estimated the importance of economic factors,

[1] The same protest against the identification of "Statism" with Socialism is the theme of M. Vandervelde's recent book, *Le Socialisme contre l'État.*

as compared with moral and intellectual factors, in historic evolution; it revealed their pathetic but irrational faith in outward applications—*i.e.* in mere changes in institutions, or even in the names of institutions—to cure deep-seated diseases in the blood of the body politic; it betrayed them as above all things bureaucrats with unbounded belief in the omnicompetence of government departments. The discredit which this obviously inadequate, wrong-headed, and misleading Minority Poor Law Report of 1909 rightly brought upon the Fabians who inspired it, exactly coincided with a general popular disillusionment concerning the results of that Collectivism which they had so assiduously advocated. Collectivism had by them been seductively advertised before the man-in-the-street as the infallible cure for inefficiency, as the universal remedy for the defects of the competitive system. At the same time it had been less ostentatiously, but not less assiduously, commended to the genuine Socialist as the best practical means of realising his predatory ideas of "distributive justice." Neither of the two very different customers was satisfied with its accomplished effects. On the one hand the man-in-the-street had discovered that there are narrow limits within which alone a civil service is capable of conducting business successfully; that it can manage to run quite adequately a routine monopoly like the Post Office, but that it is ill-fitted to control enterprises which require energy, alertness, quickness of decision, freedom from convention. He had discovered, moreover, that Collectivism tends to scandalous extravagance, to oligarchic tyranny, and to grave public corruption, and that it does not necessarily produce industrial

peace. Its flagrant failures, both in the national and in the municipal sphere, were even threatening to bring the state itself into contempt. On the other hand, the expectant Socialist of the pure type was disgusted at the absence of any sign that the day of spoliation was drawing nearer. The capitalist system seemed to be as firmly established as ever, even after a quarter of a century of Fabian sapping. Hence a falling off from the Fabian Society began.[1] Mr. H. G. Wells, for instance, left it and described its members, "the Webbites," as "a very small group of pedants who believe that fair ends may be reached by foul means." A more formidable deserter, however, was Mr. G. D. H. Cole: for he not only left it and began vehemently to abuse it; he also developed an antagonistic theory, and organised a rival and bitterly hostile society. In condemnation of Fabian Collectivism, which once he advocated, he exhausts the resources of an extensive Oxford vocabulary. "Collectivism," he says, "is at best only the sordid dream of a business man with a conscience"; it is "intellectually bankrupt"; it is a "Prussianising movement" which inevitably leads to "administrative tyranny." The Collectivist state, so highly exalted by "the dotards of the *New Statesman*," is but "the Earthly Paradise of Bureaucracy." As for Collectivists themselves! They "may take their choice: they are knaves who hate freedom, or they are fools who do not know what freedom means."[2] Mr. Cole presumably does know what freedom means;

[1] The membership of the Fabian Society is given by Mr. E. R. Pease, its secretary, as 2804 in 1913. In the *Labour Year-Book* for 1916 it is stated to be 2500.

[2] The above quotations come from Cole, *Self-Government in Industry*, pp. 5, 113, 122, 206, 208, 231.

for he lectures under the auspices of the National Council for Civil Liberties which exists "to work for the repeal of the Military Service Acts," and "to safeguard freedom of speech, the right of civil trial, and the other civil liberties of the British people."[1] What then is the alternative which this lover of freedom offers in place of Collectivist tyranny? Is it credible? It is a hare-brained academic scheme—recalling the fantastic creations of the Abbé Siéyès—which displays in exquisite balance the leading characteristics of despotism, combined with the leading characteristics of anarchy. The authority of the state over industry is to be entirely repudiated: for "the state is the corner stone of the edifice of capitalism," and the organised workers "must learn to deal with the state in industry as an external body." The class war is to be re-proclaimed in its most implacable form: "Let it be understood once for all that the interests of capital and the interests of labour are diametrically opposed, and that, although it may be necessary for labour sometimes to acquiesce in social peace, such peace is only the lull before the storm"; hence "industrial peace must not be permanent, for there is real class-antagonism, a quarrel that can only be adjusted by the overthrow of capitalist society." Labour is to be organised into great industrial unions or aggregations of unions—to be called National Guilds—for the purpose of waging this war to a successful issue: for "the first purpose of trade unions is to fight the employers, and any other activities in which they engage should always be regarded as secondary and in comparison

[1] Since the above was written Mr. Cole has appeared as joint author of a book entitled *The Meaning of Industrial Freedom.*

unimportant" ; they "exist above all to fight the capitalist" ; their very end is "to carry on the class struggle." To make the unions more efficient fighting machines they are to be radically reorganised, the present unwarlike leaders being set aside in favour of belligerent shop-stewards and irreconcilable champions from the rank and file. Above all non-unionists are to be conscripted or destroyed : for "a man can have no reasonable excuse except stupidity for not joining the union in which his fellows are organised, and mere stupidity, as well as knavery, has to be coerced, where coercion serves a useful object. Either from stupidity or from deliberate treachery, the non-unionist in an organised industry is a traitor to his class, and the workers have no use for traitors" ; hence "the blackleg should have no more protection than the law is absolutely forced to give him," for although "it is not as a rule wise to offer physical violence to blacklegs, there is nothing wrong about it except in the eyes of the law and the middle classes."[1] This is the "freedom" then for which Mr. Cole is so eagerly longing ; this the "freedom" which the National Council of Civil Liberties exists to promote. It is the sort of freedom that one associates with the Spanish Inquisition, with the rule of the Prussians in Poland, the Tsars in Finland, or the Turks in Armenia. If this is freedom, there are others besides Collectivists who will be prepared to be described as knaves who hate it, or fools who do not know what it means !

The methods of warfare to be employed by these conscript hosts of labour in their battle with capitalism are, needless to say, as ruthless as are the methods

[1] The quotations in this section are taken from Cole, *The World of Labour*, pp. 259, 285, 288, 370, 376, 377, 387, 388.

advocated for the coercion of blacklegs. They culminate in the " general strike " which is to destroy the citadel of the enemy. When the final victory is gained the triumphant unions, as National Guilds, will assume control of the industries which they have captured (if by any chance there are any left to control); they will organise themselves in a Central Guild Congress, and will then enter into an equal partnership with the state (if by any chance it has survived the civil war of which it has been the helpless spectator).

Such is Guild Socialism, or Socio-Syndicalism, in which Mr. G. D. H. Cole and other misguided ideologues think they see the way of salvation for the people of Britain. They are suffering from an academic nightmare. They have no conception of what modern industry means—some of them even discuss the question whether, in their mediaeval revivals, machinery shall be retained or not! They have no inkling of the parts played in present-day manufacture and commerce by invention, by discovery, by business management, by organising ability. They are vain theoricians unacquainted with the fundamentals of the problems which they play at solving. Nevertheless they are dangerous; for their plausible platitudes tend to lead many astray. They have used harsh words of the Collectivists: they have given them the choice between being called knaves or being called fools. For themselves there is no such choice: they are both. They are knaves in that they wantonly and wickedly fan the flames of the class war, and relentlessly oppose all schemes of co-partnership and profit-sharing which hold out hope of industrial peace. They are

fools in that they imagine that there can ever be in a community any such duality of sovereignty as they propose between their revolutionary National Guilds and their degraded democratic state.[1]

§ 33. *Merits and Defects of Socialism.*

It will have become evident from the foregoing sections that Socialism is a protean expression, and that between the leading varieties of Socialists—Marxian, Fabian, and Guild—there is little in common save a desire to subvert the existing social order and to establish some sort of a new one in its place. In these circumstances it is difficult to speak of Socialism in general terms, or to discuss its merits and defects without reference to the wrangling sects and sub-sects into which it is divided. Nevertheless something may be said; and first as to its merits.

That it has merits need not be disputed. It has become a religion to multitudes of well-meaning persons who would never have been attracted or driven to it by any of the baser passions—hatred, envy, jealousy, cupidity, destructiveness—to which it makes so powerful an appeal.[2] It has won its way

[1] The scheme is described by Cole, *Self-Government in Industry*, pp. 86-88. The author naïvely admits that "the new social philosophy which this changed conception of sovereignty implies has not yet been worked out." This is true. It is equally true that it never will be worked out, except in the University of Bedlam. Cf. J. A. Hobson, *The Fight for Democracy* (National Labour Press), p. 32: "The notion of two states, one a federation of trades and guilds, running the whole body of economic arrangements for the nation by representative committees based upon the common interest of industry, the other a political state, running the services related to internal and external order, and only concerned to intervene in economic affairs at a few reserved points of contact, will not bear criticism."

[2] That Socialism is primarily an irrational religion is one of the main contentions of Gustave Le Bon in his *Psychologie du socialisme*. "Le

in the world, and made itself one of the most potent factors in present-day politics, because it also makes an appeal—however mistaken and mischievous—to the finer qualities of human nature, to pity for the unfortunate, sympathy with the suffering, zeal to secure justice for the defrauded, and passion to exact reparation from the oppressor. The first merit of Socialism, then, is that it depicts in flaming colours and fiery words, such as compel attention, the evils that afflict the industrial community. It shares this merit, it is true, with Christianity, Philanthropy, Syndicalism, and Anarchism; but it makes a presentation of the case which is generally much more effective than theirs. More than any other movement of the time it has roused the public conscience to the urgency and the magnitude of the social problem, and it has been the motive force behind countless beneficent reforms. A second merit is that, whereas Christianity and religion generally have stressed the view that man's misfortunes are due to his own or his parents' sins, Socialism has emphasised the opposite truth that many of his disabilities are due to circumstances over which the unhappy victim has no control, and for which his ancestors are wholly

socialisme est beaucoup plus une croyance religieuse qu'une théorie de raisonnement. On le subit et on ne le discute pas" (p. 465). Again "Comme les religions, dont il tend de plus en plus à prendre les allures, le socialisme se propage tout autrement que par des raisons. Très faible quand il essaie de raisonner et de s'appuyer sur des arguments économiques, il devient au contraire très fort quand il reste dans le domaine des affirmations, des rêveries, et des promesses chimériques" (p. iv.). The true touch of religious fanaticism is seen in the declaration of a Socialist devotee who recently reported that he "would not associate with an angel from heaven if he were not a Socialist." Mr. Lowes Dickinson (*Justice and Liberty*, p. 7) speaks of Socialists as made by an "upheaval of the soul." The writer of the article on "Socialism" in the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica* attributes belief in Socialism primarily to conversion and change of heart, rather than to conviction and change of mind.

irresponsible. A third merit is that, on the basis of this environmental theory of the determination of man's destiny, Socialism has vigorously fostered all sorts of improvements in the conditions amid which the poor pass their lives. A fourth merit is that in thus furthering social reform at the hands of the public authorities, Socialism has enlarged and broadened the current conception of the state, so that it is no longer regarded merely as a "night watchman," protective of person and property, but is recognised as the general promoter of the good life for its citizens.

Over against these considerable merits, however, have to be set defects so serious that on the whole Socialism has to be condemned as one of the most pernicious of the superstitions by which large masses of the human race have from time to time been led astray. First and foremost, it is founded upon a lie. The economic theories on which its whole superstructure of practical policy is based are false. Little more need here be said of the ludicrous Marxian doctrine of value,[1] because—although it is still the irrational creed of the immense mass of the Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists of the world—no thinker who makes any profession of sanity now defends it. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald admits that it does "serious violence to the ordinary use of language."[2] Mr. Philip Snowden confesses that in formulating it Marx and Engels erred, though he excuses them on the ground that they "erred in very distinguished company."[3] Mr. G. D. H. Cole describes the theory as "to a great extent a polemic which continues to

[1] See above, p. 213. [2] Macdonald, *Socialism*, p. 55.
[3] Snowden, *Socialism and Syndicalism*, p. 73.

thrive as a result of the persistent misunderstanding of it by Marx's own disciples." [1] Herr Bernstein, the leading Socialist economist of Germany, agrees that it is "an abstract formula which does not apply to individual exchanges of commodities at all," and so has no business whatever to be used as a polemic in the way in which Marx and his deluded disciples used it.[2] Finally, *Vorwärts*, the official organ of the German Social Democratic party, which looks upon Marx as its founder, goes so far as to say—with perfect truth, but unexpected frankness—that the Marxian doctrine of labour as the sole source of value is "comparable to the doctrine of Thales that the universe is nothing but different forms of water." [3] Thus a chorus of disavowal on the part of intellectual leaders tries to dissociate modern Socialism from the exploded fallacy on which it was founded. It is contended that, after all, it was merely an "explanation" for which another (? equally false) may be substituted without inconvenience.[4] But this was not the case. It was not an "explanation," a movable ornament; it was the foundation, the basis, the removal of which involves the ruin of the whole edifice. To disavow the Marxian theory of value is to condemn the whole Socialist agitation prior to the formation of the Fabian Society in 1884; it is to repudiate the *International* as reconstituted in 1889; it is to knock the bottom out of the present-day propaganda of the British Socialist party, the Russian

[1] Cf. *The Highway* for February 1915.

[2] Cf. *Ency. Brit.* s.v. Marx, vol. xvii. p. 811.

[3] *Vorwärts*, quoted by Mallock, *Limits of Pure Democracy*, p. 111. The Marxian doctrine of value is subjected to sympathetic but destructive analysis by Benedetto Croce in his *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx*.

[4] Cf. Ramsay Macdonald, *The Socialist Movement*, p. 212.

Bolsheviks, and the Industrial Workers of the World.

Closely akin to this primary fallacy, and yet separable from it, is the secondary fallacy of the doctrine of the surplus—the doctrine that labour produces much more than it gets, and that consequently it is robbed of its just due by capitalists and landlords.[1] To this fallacy even the Fabians cling: it is indeed (as they have abandoned the Marxian theory of value) their only excuse for existence as a body separate from the main mass of social reformers. Now it is quite true that in present-day distribution of wealth there are many anomalies which it behoves the reformer firmly, but cautiously (lest he cause worse anomalies), to remedy; but it is not true that these anomalies at all follow the line of the general rule that labour as a whole is underpaid, and that other forms of service are overpaid. Quite the contrary. The preachers of the doctrine of the surplus grossly exaggerate the importance of manual labour in industry, and ridiculously underestimate that contribution to the total wealth of the community which is due to expert skill, to inventive genius, to scientific discovery, to business management, to capitalist enterprise, and to mastery of the intricacies of finance. It is to the "captains of industry," in the broad sense of the term, that the value of the product of labour is primarily due. These "captains of industry," of course, include many highly skilled workmen who very properly demand and receive a large share of the total wealth which they assist in

[1] Cf. Hirsch, *Democracy* v. *Socialism*, p. 3: "The fundamental economic conceptions of Socialism arise from Karl Marx's theories of value and surplus value."

producing; but for the most part they belong to grades of labour other than manual. The unaided manual labourer produces very little, and if he were to receive no more than he actually makes, his earnings would frequently fall below the level of subsistence. Modern humanitarian sentiment rightly insists that, however unprofitable a servant he may be, he shall have the means to live the decent life: but it is one of the most urgent economic needs of the day that manual labour, for which inventive genius is providing so many substitutes, should increase its skill, enlarge its productivity, and render itself capable of promoting, instead of retarding, industrial progress. Socialism, so far from stimulating the manual labourer to effort to train his abilities and equip himself to render more useful service to his fellows, incites him by false teaching concerning his present achievements to concentrate his energies upon the task of securing more of the present limited national income of which he produces so small a fraction. It even encourages him to restrict his present inadequate output! Hence, and hence inevitably, the class war—which, as we have seen, is a cardinal dogma of Marxian Communism and of the Socio-Syndicalism of Messrs. Cole & Company, and from which not even the Fabians have succeeded in extricating themselves. No merits which Socialism can display before the judgment-bar of Humanity can atone for the evil which it has wrought by fomenting class antagonism through the promulgation of pernicious economic errors. More than any other system of false doctrine it has tended to destroy the unity of the nation, to acerbate sectional passion, and to hamper the cause of genuine social reform which, in order to be stable,

must be effected by the general good-will of the whole people.[1]

[1] Since I am discussing Socialism merely as it relates to Democracy, it is unnecessary for me to criticise here its false doctrines concerning land and capital, its indiscriminating condemnation of competition, or its generally erroneous views of human nature and organised society. It would be more relevant to treat of its extravagance and expensiveness—on the lines of Mr. E. L. Godkin's pungent essay, "Who will pay the Bills of Socialism?" or Lord Avebury's and Major Leonard Darwin's books on Municipal Trading—but extravagance and expensiveness are characteristics of Collectivism rather than of Socialism proper. Socialism proper means not extravagance but spoliation.

CHAPTER VII

SYNDICALISM

"Syndicalism and Democracy are the two opposite poles which exclude and neutralise each other."—E. POUGET, *The Syndicate.*

"The Syndicalist has a contempt for the vulgar idea of Democracy; the vast unconscious mass is not to be taken into account when the minority wishes to act so as to benefit it."—A. D. LEWIS, *Syndicalism and the General Strike.*

"If Revolutionary Syndicalism triumph, the Parliamentary Régime so dear to the intellectuals will be finished with."—G. SOREL, *Reflections on Violence.*

"The effect of political majorities, when they do make themselves felt, is to hinder advance and to suppress the progressive, active, and more developed minorities."—L. LEVINE, *The Labour Movement.*

"There is for the conscious minority an obligation to act without paying any attention to the refractory mass."—E. POUGET, *The Syndicate.*

"Le syndicalisme ouvrier s'oppose nécessairement, par essence, à la légalité actuelle. Il tend à se développer pleinement à l'encontre de toutes les autres forces sociales, dont la principale est l'État."—E. ANTONELLI, *Démocratie Sociale.*

§ 34. *The Reaction against Politics.*

IT will have been noticed that the present-day tendency of Socialism is distinctly towards a return to Marx. The Marxian dogma of the class war has been revived in its most virulent form, and it has definitely secured ascendancy as against the milder but less logical universalism of the Fabians and the I.L.P. who try to combine the sentimental doctrine of eternal hope for all men in the next social world,

with the active preaching of perdition to capitalists and landlords in this. Marxian "internationalism" —which, as we have already remarked, is not internationalism at all, but anti-nationalism and cosmopolitanism—that is, the theory of the solidarity of the proletariats of all peoples in their world-struggle with the possessors of property, tends to prevail over the Collectivism which postulates the national state, and makes the nationalisation of industry its first object of endeavour. Marxian antagonism to the existing state-system of the world displays itself on every hand, and even a once-so-good Fabian as Mr. Graham Wallas reveals in his later works a growing disillusionment respecting politics and political action. The revolutionary methods advocated by Marx are once more being vehemently urged as against the slow, permeating, evolutionary processes of the disciples of Mr. Sidney Webb. In short, after a quarter of a century of eclipse, Marx is achieving a notable second advent. The occasion of the centenary of his birth, May 5, 1918, saw a remarkable outburst of superstitious veneration all the world over.[1]

This significant and ominous return to Marx, this abandonment of the comparative rationality of Protestant Fabianism for the blind acceptance of the irrational dogmas of Socialist Orthodoxy, is in part

[1] The May number of *The Socialist*, the official organ of the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain, is devoted to the worship of Marx. One of its articles, headed "Marxism and the S.L.P.," says: "The S.L.P. is the highest expression of organised Marxism in this country. . . . The S.L.P. has translated Marxism from theory into living practice. . . . Our teachings are rapidly permeating the rank and file of the whole Labour movement. . . . The secret of our strength emanates from the fact that we are Marxians." There are only two advertisements in this number of the *Socialist*, and one of these announces the publication of a new pamphlet by Leon Trotsky on *Bolshevist Socialism*—a pamphlet printed at, and procurable from, the Glasgow headquarters of the S.L.P.

but a symptom of a widespread revolt against the authority of reason evident at the present time. It is a revolt which in religion has led to a curious revival of mediaeval mummery; in philosophy has given us Bergson's theory of creative evolution with its insistence on the influence of intuitions that language is impotent to express; in history has produced the socio-psychological school of Karl Lamprecht with its emphasis upon the operation of unconscious impulses. The Marxian revival is further due, however, to special causes of its own, and of these the two most important are: first, the failure of Fabian Socialists, *i.e.* Collectivists, and parliamentary Labour parties to achieve their purposes and fulfil their promises; secondly, the discredit into which representative government and politics generally have fallen by reason of their ineptitude and corruption.

Mr. G. D. H. Cole has described the British Labour Party as "that sad failure of Socialism,"[1] and he is never tired of emptying upon it the vials of his wrath and the crucibles of his contempt. It is not undeserving of his strictures; for its leaders in the days of their irresponsibility made promises which they could never perform, and raised hopes impossible of realisation.[2] As soon as they acquired power, entered parliament, attained to office, they found themselves confronted with practical problems, the complexity and gravity of which they had never before comprehended. They very generally rose to the needs of the occasion, frankly abandoned the

[1] Cole, *World of Labour*, p. 242.

[2] Mr. Cole himself is at present in their former happy position of irresponsibility. If ever his "National Guilds" come into existence, he in his turn will be assailed with a virulence equal to his own by his disillusioned dupes.

doctrinaire follies and extremist dogmas by means of which they had risen to leadership, and became efficient legislators and administrators of the useful but more or less conventional type. Mr. John Burns, for example, had come into prominence in 1899 as one of the most violent and irreconcilable of the dockers' agitators; in 1906 he became one of the ablest, but at the same time one of the most rigorous and least Socialistic, of the Presidents of the Local Government Board. It is easy in debating clubs, Labour congresses, and Socialist garden parties, to pass undigested resolutions in favour of six-hour days, minimum wages, the democratic control of industry, the conscription of wealth, the provision of work for all, the partition of the moon, and so on. The talkers, having talked, go their several ways, cheered by the warm atmosphere which they have created by means of their streams of heated words, and not inconvenienced by any necessity to ponder ways for converting words into deeds. Very different is it with the Labour leader in power; he is soon sobered by responsibility, made wise by experience, tolerant by contact with men of affairs, prudent by expanding knowledge. This growing moderation and restraint is, however, not unnaturally represented as treachery and desertion. He has to pay the penalty for his early excesses in a constant liability to be assailed with weapons which he himself has forged, and to be bombarded by quotations from the utterances of his own indiscreet prime. His assailants of the rank and file, incited by new and fiery leaders still in the chrysalis stage of irresponsible agitation, not only denounce his abandonment of principle, they also compare the largeness of his promises with

the scantiness of his accomplishments, and they tend to pass on to a general disparagement of politics and of political action as a whole.

Thus the Socialist disgust with its lost leaders and its unrealised Utopias, helps to swell a general widespread disappointment at the achievements of representative democracy throughout the world at large during the past generation. The expectations of political reformers remain unfulfilled, no less than the dreams of Socialist revolutionaries. Lord Brougham may, perhaps, be taken as an example of a typical political reformer. He was not an extremist—except, of course, in his estimate of his own abilities and importance. He but gave voice to the general anticipations of moderate liberals when he said, in 1843, that a democratic *régime* would be marked by unselfishness, pacificism, progress, purity, efficiency, prudence, economy, security, and lofty morality.[1] It has not, by any means generally, been marked by those virtues. Too often it has been characterised, like the monarchy and the aristocracy which it superseded, by selfishness, by bellicosity, by stagnation, by baseness, by incompetence, by rashness, by reckless extravagance, by neglect of national interests, and—worse than all—by gross corruption. It is particularly the corruption of modern democratic politics that has caused the strong reaction which is so widely prevalent. This is the burden of the lamentations and denunciations of the Syndicalist Jeremiah, Georges Sorel. "Experience shows," he cries, "that in all countries where democracy can

[1] See at length Brougham, *Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. pp. 109-15. Six pages of eulogy conclude with the dictum: "Such are the virtues of the democratic system. Let no one undervalue them; for they are the greatest that any scheme of polity can possess."

develop its nature freely the most scandalous corruption is displayed without any one thinking it even necessary to conceal his rascality. . . . There is not a great deal of difference between a financier who puts big-sounding concerns on the market which come to grief in a few years, and the politician who promises an infinity of reforms to the citizens which he does not know how to bring about. . . . Democracy is the paradise of which unscrupulous financiers dream." [1]

§ 35. *The Rise of Syndicalism in France.*

In few countries with representative institutions has political corruption touched lower depths than in France during certain periods of the Third Republic.[2] Not only has politics been degraded to the level of a mere means of livelihood by a large class of professional office-hunters, but even the constituencies and their multitudes of individual voters have come to regard political power as primarily an instrument of private profit. Now and again, as is inevitable in such an environment of debased public morality, scandals of the first magnitude have developed and come to light. Such in comparatively recent times have been the Wilson scandal (1887), when many persons, including the son-in-law of President Grévy himself, were revealed as trafficking in honours and offices; the Boulanger scandal (1891), when disgraceful disclosures of military treachery to the Republic shook national confidence; the Panama scandal, which culminated

[1] Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, translated by T. E. Hulme.

[2] Cf. Bodley, *France*, book iii. chap. vi. A lurid picture of the defects of the parliamentary system in France is also painted in a novel entitled *Les Valets* by Georges Lecomte (1898).

in 1892, when gross financial peculation on the part of eminent men was made manifest; finally, and most deadly of all, the Dreyfus scandal, which filled the five years 1894–1899 with conflict and with shame, displaying to the world unfathomable depths of infamy in regions where honour and justice should have reigned supreme. It was in 1899, in the midst of the profound disgust which the Dreyfus disclosures at Rennes had produced, that M. Gaston Deschamps wrote his powerful and disquieting book, *Le Malaise de la Démocratie.* "Notre vie fiévreuse," he proclaimed, "devint, peu à peu, une véritable course aux scandales" (p. 125). It was the Dreyfus case that caused Georges Sorel to despair of the state, and to concentrate his hopes for the future of humanity on Syndicalism. It was in the troubled years that followed this awful exposure of political depravity that Syndicalism itself took shape. Syndicalism, in short, is the nemesis of a corrupt democracy.

The way for Syndicalism had been for some time made straight in France. Syndicalism is — as, of course, its name implies — a development of trade union theory and organisation. Now the French trade unions (*syndicats*) have had a curious and chequered history. Until 1864 they were illegal associations, and not till 1884 did they receive full recognition by the law. France under the Old Régime had suffered so severely from the presence within her body-politic of unassimilable groups—provincial, communal, religious, industrial—that one of the first acts of the triumphant Revolution (1791) was to pass the *Loi Chapelier* abolishing them all, and prohibiting the formation of any organisations that should intervene between the individual citizen and

the universal state. This prohibition was renewed under the Consulate in 1803, the Empire in 1810, and the bourgeois Monarchy in 1834.[1] Hence prior to 1864 such workmen's unions as existed were either mere Friendly Societies (*Mutualités*) or sheer revolutionary secret societies (*Sociétés de Résistance*). The relaxation of the law in 1864, combined with the stimulus provided by the formation in the same year of the Marxian *International Association of Working Men*, led to the rapid rise of trade unions dominated by Marxian Socialists. They became involved, however, in the awful excesses of the Commune of 1871—to which Marx himself gave his benediction—and they perished, together with the *International* itself, in the horror caused by that inhuman abomination. As soon as peace was restored (1872), they were started again, but on new lines by moderate men, headed by the patriotic Barberet, whose object was to maintain industrial harmony and to obviate strikes.[2] Under their influence a general *Union des Chambres Syndicales* was formed—an entirely constitutional trade union federation. Hardly, however, had the new movement got under way when violent efforts began to be made to secure control of it by Marxians (Guesdists), Revolutionaries (Broussists), and Anarchists (Allemanists). In 1884 the government intervened. On the one hand it fully recognised the trade unions, but on the other it tried to strengthen the hands of the moderates in them, and to link the unions themselves to the general life of the community, by founding through the municipalities subsidised *Bourses du Travail* or Labour

[1] Cf. *Code Pénal*, §§ 414-16.

[2] "A strike," said Barberet, "is a crime of *lèse-démocratie*."

Exchanges—institutions with buildings which should serve as headquarters for working men, bureaus of information, centres of education, social clubs. For the moment the extremists were checked; but not for long. They diverted the energy of their hostility from their moderate rivals in the trade unions to the government which had established the *Bourses* as an antidote to the class struggle. They cut themselves off from the common life of the nation; they denounced politics; they adopted the principle of "direct action"; they proclaimed war upon all who were not of their way of thinking. The hopes of the extremists more and more became concentrated upon the "general strike"—first definitely promulgated as a panacea by a Parisian carpenter named Tortelier in 1888—as a means of overthrowing suddenly and completely the present political system and carrying through the social revolution. In 1895 this violent minority established the C.G.T. (*Confédération Générale du Travail*), in direct antagonism to the official *Bourses* (or rather to the municipalities and the state which supported them), for the express purpose of organising and consummating this revolutionary "general strike." For seven years a furious conflict was waged between the *Bourses* and the C.G.T., *i.e.* between moderates and extremists, between patriots and sectionalists, between believers in the unity of the nation and devotees of the dogma of the class war. Unhappily, the extremists secured a complete triumph in 1902: the C.G.T. absorbed and assimilated the *Bourses*. This lamentable result was primarily due to the fact that within the *Bourses* themselves Syndicalist and Anarchist views had begun to prevail. In 1892 a spontaneous *Fédération*

des Bourses had come into existence, and its secretary, Fernand Pelloutier, used his position and his influence to secure the surrender of the *Bourses* to the C.G.T. In vain did the municipalities struggle and protest. Finally they withdrew their subsidies, and then speedily the disendowed *Bourses* lapsed into the hands of the revolutionaries, and died on the bosom of the C.G.T. This year, 1902, may be regarded as the date of the definite beginning of the Syndicalist movement.

§ 36. *The Syndicalist Idea.*

It is needless to say that, though the organised Syndicalist movement can be dated only from 1902, it embodies ideas and incorporates active elements that are considerably older. First and foremost, it revives in its most implacable aspects the Marxian principle of the class war. It is a proletarian revolt, economic in its nature, and virtually limited to manual labour in its scope. Its purpose is by violent assault to expropriate the possessors of land and capital, to seize the means of production, and to employ them for the benefit of the expropriators. "Every one," we are told, "would take what he needs wherever he found it; the result would be the completest possible emancipation!"[1] Secondly, it is a spontaneous "rank and file" movement, a passionate tumultuary rebellion, which repudiates leaders, rejects rational guidance, emulating earthquakes, blizzards, volcanic eruptions, and other blindly destructive natural phenomena. Yet, though "rank and file," it is not democratic. It defies the general will and

[1] *Report de Congrès National Corporatif*, 1900, p. 198.

the rule of the majority just as emphatically as it revolts against the leadership of the sane. It is an insurrection of a "conscious minority," an anarchic upheaval of a comparatively small band of rebels against all authority.[1] In so far as it has any positive qualities at all, its affinities are with such political aberrations as Venetian oligarchy and Jacobin bureaucracy, or with such religious oppressions as those maintained by Calvinistic Councils and Spanish Inquisitors. It is narrow, bellicose, intolerant, unscrupulous, and cruel. But, thirdly, its positive qualities are few. It is dominantly anarchic and nihilistic. In particular, it manifests a determined antagonism to the national state and to all the principles and practices of politics: the state maintains the existing order, hence it must be destroyed; politics mix the classes, hence they must be abjured. In thus declaring war on the state, denying the authority of law, and repudiating political action, the Syndicalists go beyond Marx and tend towards the anarchism of Proudhon and Bakunin.[2] Fourthly, as a substitute alike for the slow reformative operations of democratic politics, and for the constitutional revolution promised, but not effected, by the Collectivists, the Syndicalists proclaim the dogma of the general strike. The dogma of the general strike occupies the same central position in the Syndicalist cult as the dogma of value holds in the cult of Marxian Socialism. It is, however, even more than that irrational superstition, a mere article of faith; for, whereas Marx does make a pretence of demonstrating to human reason the truth

[1] Ford and Foster in their *Syndicalism* say that American Syndicalists have been "dominated by a militant minority of 10 per cent."

[2] "I despise the law," says Mr. Tom Mann: cf. Snowden, *Socialism and Syndicalism*, p. 209.

of his incredible error, the Syndicalist frankly admits that the general strike and the new economic heaven which it is to inaugurate upon this earth belong to the realm of mythology. The theory of value does at least profess to interpret the present life; the dogma of the general strike is almost wholly prophetic of the social world to come. Sorel repeatedly speaks of the "myth of the general strike," and he defends his use of the expression thus: "In employing the term myth I believed that I had made a happy choice, because I thus put myself in a position to refuse any discussion whatever with the people who wish to submit the idea of a general strike to detailed criticism." [1] Reason, in fact, is deliberately rejected by the Syndicalist. The movement with which he identifies himself, and on which he places his hopes, is a movement of blind impulse and irrational violence. It does not attempt to look intelligently beyond the catastrophe in which the present social order shall perish. The universal general strike is a sort of day of judgment beyond which it is impious to speculate. The idea of the general strike was, as we have seen, first formulated as the prime article of a fighting creed by Tortelier in 1888: but the conception which was thus forged into a magical weapon of war, was of course not wholly new. Mirabeau had realised the immense power that resided in mass immobility; the English Chartists had considered the possibility of enforcing their demands by a sabbatical refusal to work; the *International* of 1864 had included the general strike as an item in its programme; at Brussels in 1873 the members of an International Labour Association

[1] Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (Hulme's Translation), p. 23.

actually wished to put the theory of the general strike to a test. But not till the Syndicalists adopted it as the fundamental article of their creed, did it attain to its present mythological eminence. The general strike has come to be regarded almost as an end in itself, and all strikes are looked upon as good, inasmuch as they train and prepare for the great universal upheaval. Strikes are even spoken of under the term "industrial activity," as though a workman learned to work, and found a place in which to work, merely in order that he might cease work and prevent any one else from working in that place.[1] Moreover, not only does the Syndicalist pin his faith upon the strike, he regards the strike as an act of war which is to be waged against society with the utmost violence and with the completest absence of remorse or restraint: it is a fight to a finish, in which no arbitrating state is to be allowed to intervene. Any strike, however insignificant, *may* develop into the great general strike which "like the Napoleonic battle is completely to annihilate a condemned *régime*." [2] Further, even when no actual strike is in progress, the state of industrial war is held to exist all the same. No agreements between employer and employed mitigate it; contracts are but "scraps of paper" to be repudiated with Germanic effrontery whenever circumstances suit. At all times sabotage, the boycott, the "label," and the practice

[1] Cf. Lewis, *Syndicalism*, p. 10: "All strikes are useful; they train men in working together and rouse their spirit; they encourage insubordination and make revolution more probable. The great weapon of the workers against their masters is disorder." Similarly, p. 27: "The strike is regarded as excellent in itself, apart from anything gained by it. Strikes exercise men in solidarity, in working together for their own aims, and in revolting, and therefore they are useful."

[2] Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 297.

of "ca' canny" are regarded as proper means by which to render the efforts of employers vain, to reduce capitalists to impotence, to bring ruined industries into the hands of their destroyers, to undermine the fabric of the state, and to hurl the whole political system down in irremediable destruction.

Finally, it is hoped that out of the horrors of the class war and the chaos of the general strike, a new "producers' paradise" may arise—as, according to Milton, the palace of Pandaemonium arose at the instance of the devil out of the confusion of hell. Even Sorel, however, is not so confident as Satan. All that he dare say is that "the social war for which the proletariat ceaselessly prepares itself in the Syndicates *may* engender the elements of a new civilisation suited to a people of producers."[1] He deprecates any attempt to forecast the plan of the desired millennium. To make such an attempt would be to apply reason where irrational impulse and incalculable caprice must be allowed full sway. *Solvitur secedendo* might well be the motto of the Syndicalist, who abjures all the higher moral and intellectual qualities of man and falls back upon those blind instincts which impelled and directed the insensate monsters of the prime. Two rash colleagues of M. Sorel, viz. MM. Pataud and Pouget, it is true, have ventured in their book, *Comment nous ferons la révolution*, to pierce the veil, and to depict the imaginary splendours of the New Syndical Jerusalem. The gross absurdities of their depressing nightmare have determined the more prudent fanatics of the Syndicalist cult no more to try to peep through *The Gates Ajar*.

[1] Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 298 (italics mine).

It would be incredible, were it not an ominous fact, that in the twentieth century so mad and wicked a superstition should make headway among masses of working men, or that it should receive sanction and support from philosophers like Sorel and Labriola. It argues a profound pessimism, a grave distrust in human nature, a profound disillusionment concerning what hitherto has been regarded as progress. In so far as this lamentable reversion to the anarchy of the pre-Adamite earth is due to the sins of a corrupt democracy, it is not too much to say that the corrupters of democracy are among the worst enemies of the human race.

§ 37. *The Significance of Syndicalism.*

Is Syndicalism, however, wholly devoid of rational meaning? Has it no elements of sound sense and right feeling? Does it stand for nothing but folly and crime? By no means. Iniquitous as it is, and fatal as its realisation would be, it has its nobler aspects, and its prevalence is due to the fact that it does express, however monstrously, legitimate human repulsions and aspirations. Like other widespread movements of men, it wins its way—and it is consoling to believe that it does so—rather by means of its fractional good than its integral evil, rather in virtue of the small element of rationality which is to be found among its wild excesses of unreason than in virtue of its utopian impossibilities or its hateful enormities.

We have already seen that, in the first place, it stands as an incarnate protest against the corruption of modern politics. Although it exaggerates the evil,

and although too readily it surrenders to despair of a remedy, nevertheless it does raise a prophetic and commanding voice in denunciation of the discreditable intrigues of party tacticians, the base truckling of demagogues and crowd-flatterers, the subtle degradation of the electorate effected by doles and bribes, the subterranean influence of financiers and monopolists, the tuning of the press, the general conversion of politics (too often seen of late) into a criminal conspiracy. We have also seen how, in the second place, it embodies a natural and proper disgust at the wide divergence between the promises of Socialists on the platform and the performances of Socialists in power. The leading English case of Mr. John Burns is exactly parallel with the cases of MM. Millerand, Viviani, and Briand in France. All of them rose to notoriety as preachers of violence and harbingers of revolutionary Utopias; all of them became ministers, able, strong, and efficient, but entirely opposed to all attempts to realise by the means which they had advocated the ends which they had professed to desire. In respect of M. Briand the discrepancy has been specially conspicuous. In December 1899 at the *Congrès Général des Organisations Socialistes*, held in Paris, he distinguished himself by a speech of remarkable bitterness, a speech defiant of the government, clearly portentous of a speedy social revolution. Its leading feature was its strong recommendation of the use of the new magical weapon of the general strike. "Citoyens," the speech began, "la grève générale est une conception dont j'ai quelque peu endossé la paternité." [1]

[1] The speech is given in full in Appendix II. of Mermeix' *Le Syndicalisme contre le Socialisme.*

By a curious and dramatically appropriate turn of the wheel of fortune M. Briand was Prime Minister of the French Republic in 1910 when the C.G.T. made its supreme effort by means of the great railway strike to overthrow the state. Without any hesitation, and with fine loyalty to the community whose servant he was, M. Briand broke the strike by issuing an order for mobilisation, and calling the rebellious railwaymen to the colours. He acted with splendid courage and with justified decision; but what a comment were his acts of 1910 upon his words of 1899! What wonder that those who were still intoxicated by the frothy vintage of the speech, should cry "traitor" to the face of the man whose political action eleven years later saved the society which the speech had condemned to destruction! Socialism has always promised more than it can perform, and raised hopes that it can never fulfil. It well deserves the attacks which, in the name of Syndicalism, are being made upon it by its former dupes. These attacks are specially directed against the so-called "intellectuals"—middle-class theorists (such as Messrs. Sidney Webb, Bernard Shaw, Ramsay Macdonald, Philip Snowden in England)—who by their command over words, and by their skill in camouflaging error with imitations of argument, have secured a position of leadership which they have used to guide the hosts of labour into the barren deserts of delusive mirages. Syndicalism, however, in its well-grounded uprising against the Socialist deceivers of labour, goes, in its usual excessive and unreasonable way, to the length of repudiating leadership altogether. It reverts to the irrational indeterminism of creative evolution.

This Bergsonian feature of Syndicalism brings us to a third characteristic which is entirely explicable and essentially just, but which again is over-emphasised to a degree that makes it both absurd and perilous. Syndicalism is a cry for freedom. It is an appeal against both the bureaucratic over-centralisation of the modern state and the capitalist over-organisation of the great industries of the present day. It demands a return to a simpler communal life, with more local autonomy and with less interference with individual initiative. It asks for a revival of more human conditions of labour, for the reconversion of "hands" into men and women, for the restoration to the workers of some measure of control over their actions, for the abolition of "wage-slavery" (a ludicrous expression!) in favour of an enhanced "pay": all this is in essence reasonable and admirable. It is worthy of most sympathetic encouragement and support. But by Syndicalists this proper desire for liberty, for self-realisation, for industrial control, for group autonomy, is carried to the extreme of anarchy, spoliation, rebellion, and revolution. The Syndicalists, like their Marxian progenitors, fix their attention too exclusively on the economic aspects of society. They are, moreover, possessed by false economic doctrines; they are devoid of knowledge of the complexities of modern industry, commerce, and finance; they are clamorous to destroy organisations which they do not understand, to seize property to which they have no claim whatever, and to secure control of a machinery of production, distribution, and exchange which they could not possibly work. They are like children crying for the railway train—for possession, and for

management of the train—which is to take them for their summer holiday to the seaside. Just as children tend to ignore rights of property, difficulties of operation, and claims of other people, so do Syndicalist producers tend to ignore the consumers, exploit the community, defy the democracy.

§ 38. *Syndicalism in Practice.*

The zealous and "conscious" minority who in France, America, the British Empire and elsewhere, profess and propagate Syndicalism have not rested content with a mere campaign of words. Syndicalism is pre-eminently a creed of action. It does not pretend to possess a reasoned system of doctrine; it makes no claim to stand the test of critical examination. It is true that theorists have fastened themselves upon it, have tried to interpret and expound it, have even aspired to lead and direct it. Such men are Sorel, Berth, and Lagardelle in France; Labriola, Lanzillo, and Leone in Italy. But these theorists, though full of sound and fury, signify little. They are, indeed, members of precisely that middle-class oligarchy of "intellectuals" against whose dominance Syndicalism is a revolt. They propound weird phantasies; they invest Syndicalism with the mystery and mummery of a mythological religion; they exalt its defects into primary virtues; they incite its devotees to extreme courses and violent excesses. But they do all this from outside it. They do not belong to it. True Syndicalists do not acknowledge their leadership, or admit that their expositions of Syndicalism are correct. True Syndicalists, in fact, boast that they have, and will have, no leaders;

that they have, and will have, no fixed principles beyond the irrational determination to destroy the present social and political system in the hope that out of the ruin some better industrial reconstruction, based on trade unions, may be made. It is only this vague and illusory hope that distinguishes them from Anarchists pure and simple.

It is much easier, however, to repudiate leadership in the abstract than to get rid of the actual control of leaders; much simpler to profess an abandonment of dogma than in very deed to gain emancipation from it. In practice the rejection of the authority of sane and responsible trade union leadership by the Syndicalists merely means that they place themselves at the mercy of any and every small self-conscious minority that for any or no cause elects to rebel. Similarly the abandonment of all effort to formulate a coherent creed and an intelligible policy merely means that every wild-cat scheme of social revolution gains acceptance, and that all the fevered fancies of the unbalanced brains of countless illiterate fanatics secure converts in the chaos.

In the circumstances it is a matter of some difficulty to trace with certainty the operation of Syndicalism in practice. Syndicalism itself is so manifold, and on its negative or destructive side it has so much in common with Marxian Socialism on the one hand, and Anarchism on the other hand, that it is almost impossible to single out any specific phenomenon and say: This is definitely and exclusively Syndicalist. Nevertheless, it would seem to be fair to regard the following features as so prominent in Syndicalism as to warrant our taking them as criteria: first, the

repudiation of the sovereignty of the state, the denial of the authority of the law of the land, and the exaltation of the industrial union with its rules and customs to the place of supremacy; secondly, the employment of the general strike as the prime means for the attainment of industrial ends (such as increase of wages or reduction of hours), for the waging of political conflicts (such as the prevention of war), and for the precipitation of the social revolution which is to destroy the existing *régime*; thirdly, the adoption of such practices as sabotage, the boycott, the "label," and "ca' canny," with the object of rendering industry and commerce as at present organised unprofitable and unworkable; fourthly and generally, implacable opposition to all schemes of profit-sharing, co-operation, joint control, conciliation, or reform, which would tend to harmonise the relations of capital and labour, to lessen industrial friction and unrest, to unify the interests of employers and employed.

It is in France, the native land of Syndicalism, that these deplorable symptoms of social disease have displayed themselves in their most virulent forms. Nowhere else have attacks upon the authority of the state, the majesty of law, the practice of politics been so long sustained or so deeply envenomed; nowhere else has the class-struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat been so bitter; nowhere else have sabotage and the other devices of industrial devilry been so ruthlessly applied; nowhere else have such deliberate efforts been made to organise the revolutionary general strike. The first experiment in the general strike was made on May day 1906, when the employees of 2585 industrial establishments suddenly ceased work to enforce a demand for an eight hours' day.

The experiment failed. More serious and more distinctly revolutionary was the railway strike of 1910, already alluded to, which but for the prompt action of M. Briand might well have developed into the great upheaval. Hardly less formidable were the two postal and telegraph strikes of the following year. From all these struggles, it is true, the state emerged victorious; but its victories were not easily gained. In 1913 the issue was once more joined when the Syndicates declared their antagonism to the new Military Service Law necessitated by the vast warlike preparations of Germany. What the outcome would have been it is impossible to say, for in August 1914 the German ultimatum silenced domestic strife, submerged Syndicalism in patriotism, and called the reunited French nation to fight for its life.

French theory and French example early began to influence other countries. Sweden, for example, tried the venture of a general strike in 1909; but the prompt and vigorous action of the rest of the threatened community, which organised itself to do the work of the strikers, broke the back of the revolt. Italy and Spain have proved to be congenial homes of Syndicalism, and in each of them it has closely allied itself with the Anarchism which aims primarily at the overthrow of the monarchy. To America it has travelled, mainly in the ships which in normal times pour alien immigrants of a low type upon its shores at an average rate of 2000 a day. Here it has embodied itself in that sinister and sanguinary organisation the so-called Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), in whose remorseless hands sabotage has been carried to the length of dynamite outrages,

vast incendiarism, and widespread assassination.[1] Finally, Syndicalism has achieved some remarkable and instructive results in Russia. The great strike of 1905 can, perhaps, hardly be called Syndicalist, since its avowed object was democratic and its actual achievement was the Duma. More distinctly Syndicalist was the upheaval of July 1914, on which Germany counted for the paralysing of Russia's military organisation at the moment when the Kaiser was inaugurating the great war. The men who threw up those July barricades in Petrograd were out against Duma as well as Tsar, against democracy as well as despotism; they were out for the subversion of the state, for the destruction of the nobility and the middle class, for the overthrow of the church, for the confiscation of the land, for the conscription of capital, for the social revolution. For the moment, in Russia as in France, the strong and purifying spirit of patriotism proved potent enough to serve as an antidote to the deadly poison of the class war. But, alas, only for the moment. The incompetence of the Tsardom, the corruption of the bureaucracy, the obscurantism of the church, the weakness of the middle class, the dissensions of the Duma—all combined, as the war dragged on in its disastrous and disgraceful course, to revive disgust at politics, detestation of militarism, profound suspicion and deep despair. Syndicalism, with its anti-nationalism, its class-hatred, its lust for plunder and for blood, was resuscitated. In the Bolsheviks for the first time in the world's history—and, let us hope, for the

[1] A brief account of the I.W.W. and its activities will be found in *The Times* of February 23, 1918. "It is," says the writer, "an association of criminals of the worst type and a hot-bed of crime."

last—it found itself in power. It has now had the opportunity of displaying on a large stage what it is and what it means. If its career of criminal lunacy has not warned mankind sufficiently against its future seductions, then indeed is pessimism concerning both the character and the intelligence of the human race shown to be well founded.[1]

§ 39. *The Influence of Syndicalism in Britain.*

Syndicalism in its more acute and unmitigated manifestations has not gained much hold in Britain. The peoples of the United Kingdom and of the Empire generally, are far too political, both by nature and by tradition, readily to abandon faith in legislative action, or rapidly to revert to the barbaric methods of self-help and private war. They have behind them a long and inspiring record of constitutional progress, of movement towards democratic control, of gradual acquisition of political power. They are not disposed to throw away the heritage of centuries in order to snatch at the shadowy and evasive prizes which Syndicalism holds out to their greed; they have not shown themselves willing to plunge the country into the throes of a bloody revolution in order doubtfully

[1] The anti-democratic nature of Bolshevism is of course obvious. Lenin himself boasts that "just as 150,000 lordly landowners under Tsarism dominated the 130,000,000 of Russian peasants, so 200,000 members of the Maximalist party are imposing their proletarian will on the mass, but this time in the interest of the latter (*British Citizen*, March 9, 1918). Maxim Gorki says of Lenin: "Like a real *grand seigneur* Lenin despises the complicated life of the masses of whom he knows nothing at all" (*New Europe*, March 14, 1918). Finally "Rurik" remarks of the Bolsheviks generally: "From the earliest days the new organisation abandoned all pretence at democracy in the popular sense. All power was concentrated in the hands of the leaders of the local committees in different parts of Russia, the motto being not the democratic control of the committees by the majority of the workmen that had joined the party, but the dictatorship of the secret committees over the masses" (*New Europe*, April 4, 1918).

to attain ends which they have it in their power surely, if more slowly, to attain by legitimate means.

But, though Syndicalism as it displays itself in the Russian Bolsheviks and the I.W.W. is rare in Britain,[1] its subversive principles have made much headway, particularly among the sympathetic Marxian Socialists; and they have profoundly influenced the trade union and labour movements in this country. Their spread has been fostered by the same causes as have fostered it in other lands, viz. disappointment at the results of political action, disgust with the corruptions of party government, disillusionment respecting the realisation of Socialist Utopias. Says Mr. Tom Mann, the leading British advocate of Syndicalism, "The reliance upon the state, or the confidence that the machinery of the state could be democratised and used by the workers to achieve the social revolution . . . is no longer entertained by whole-hearted revolutionaries."[2] In Britain, however, the disappointment, disgust, disillusionment, and consequent despair have not been so great as elsewhere. Hence British Syndicalism is a comparatively mild form of the disease. Nevertheless, even so, it is sufficiently deadly.[3]

It is the Syndicalist spirit that has prompted the recent envenomed attacks of the rank-and-file of Labour upon the Parliamentary Labour Party. It

[1] Where Syndicalism in its pure revolutionary and anti-political form is found in Britain—as *e.g.* in London and the South Welsh Coal-field—it is usually dominated and disseminated by alien immigrants.

[2] Introduction to English translation of Pataud and Pouget's *Comment nous ferons la révolution*.

[3] Mr. Tom Mann's "industrial and political faith" is summarised in an extraordinarily interesting document which will be found in full in Harley's *Syndicalism*, pp. 44-5. He does not reject politics, but merely subordinates it to direct action. Mr. Mann is really an Industrial Unionist rather than a genuine Syndicalist.

is the Syndicalist agitation that has caused the late rapid and serious defections from the membership of the Fabian Society and its appendant I.L.P. It is the Syndicalist ferment within the great trade unions, *e.g.* the miners, the railwaymen, the transport workers, and the engineers, that has resulted in the present-day general revolt against the official leaders, the widespread refusal to obey the executives, the spontaneous outbreaks of unauthorised strikes, the extensive repudiation of discipline, the swift descent towards anarchy. It is the Syndicalist spell which has transformed so many of the old unions, with their multitudinous and beneficent activities, into mere fighting machines equipped for the overthrow of the existing social and economic order. It is the Syndicalist principle which inspires the advocates of industrial unionism in their struggle against the more moderate leaders of the skilled craft unions. It is to Syndicalist unreason and violence that is due the fact that "if a workman disobeys the behests of his union he is boycotted, insulted, and it may be ruined," and, further, that "if a man refuses to join the union he is submitted to persuasion which is too rough to be intelligently peaceful."[1] It is to Syndicalism that must be attributed, in no small measure, the fact that during the six years preceding the war the number of strikes steadily and rapidly increased, involving ever-larger masses of workmen, and becoming progressively more ferocious and destructive.[2] It is Syndicalism that incites the South Welsh miners not merely to demand enormous wages at the expense of the community, but to harass

[1] Harley, *Syndicalism*, p. 74.
[2] For figures see *Labour Year-Book*, 1916, p. 190.

the mine-owners with constant interferences, with wanton disobediences, with reckless sabotage, with cruel persecutions, and with a restriction of output so extreme as to render—as it is deliberately intended to render—the mining industry unprofitable.[1] It is Syndicalism, rather than an innocent desire for more money, that impels the railwaymen to enforce by threats and menaces successive increases of wages which cumulatively are so great as to sweep away all the profits of the Companies, and make it impossible that they should ever resume control.[2] It is Syndicalism that is breaking the unity of the nation, acerbating the class war, frustrating all attempts at conciliation and industrial pacification, engendering strikes, violating truces, ignoring contracts and agreements, even threatening to paralyse war industries in the face of a menacing Germanism.

The Parliamentary Labour Leaders, the Fabian Socialists, the officials of the I.L.P., and even the trade union executives, all perceive clearly and instinctively the peril in which the Syndicalist propaganda places themselves and their schemes of social reconstruction. Some of the most pathetic protests against Syndicalism have come from the pens of Messrs. Graham Wallas, Sidney Webb, Ramsay Macdonald, and Philip Snowden. The government, however, has shown itself singularly lacking both in perception of the new danger to civilised society, and

[1] The programme of the South Welsh Miners—the purport of which is the expropriation of the owners, the seizure of the control of the mines, and the working of them for the exclusive benefit of the miners—is set forth with engaging frankness in a pamphlet entitled *The Miners' Next Step*. It has been described as "the Bible of the Syndicalists in South Wales."

[2] The wages of the railwaymen have already begun to impose a large permanent tax upon the rest of the community. Any further increases which they may—and certainly will—extort from a pliable government will further augment this inequitable burden.

in courage in dealing with it. The great coal strike of 1911 and the railway strike of 1912 were distinctly Syndicalist, that is, revolutionary, in character. They were both marked by gross illegalities, by flagrant breaches of contract, by lawless violence, remorseless intimidation, widespread sabotage, by open defiance of the state, by reckless disregard of the community, by anti-social criminality. They were both the work of "conscious minorities" who first captured the machinery of their unions; secondly, terrorised their opponents into silence; thirdly, dragged the unwilling but inert majorities of their fellow-members into their own bellicose courses, and finally led their massed attack upon the state and the community at large. Both the strikes were organised by Syndicalist firebrands who were on principle opposed to conciliation, who despised compromises, who accepted concessions merely as evidences of the weakness of their enemies and as instalments of the ultimate booty. Both the strikes were acts of inexpiable war upon both parliamentary government and ordered political society; they were utterly anti-national and anti-democratic. Yet the government played with them, professed to regard them merely as ordinary symptoms of "industrial unrest," winked at their violations of law, refused to protect the victims of their reign of terror, applied the weak palliatives of concession and surrender. They were Syndicalist rebellions, and they ought to have been broken, like all other revolts against the authority of the community-as-a-whole. The government, which represents the community-as-a-whole, grossly betrayed its trust. It was about to reap its reward in a still vaster revolutionary upheaval, fostered by its own feebleness, in the autumn

of 1914. A Sinn Fein rebellion in Ireland—also allowed to grow to formidable dimensions by administrative feebleness—was accurately timed to synchronise with the Syndicalist rising in Great Britain. But the government's equally culpable and fatal feebleness in foreign affairs brought down upon it first the tragedy of war with Germany. It was saved from civil war by being compelled to call upon all classes to rescue it from extinction at the hands of a foreign foe.

CHAPTER VIII

ANARCHISM

"Anarchists—that is to say men without chiefs—we fight against all who are invested or wish to invest themselves with any kind of power whatsoever. Our enemy is the landlord who owns the soil and makes the peasant drudge for his profit. Our enemy is the employer who owns the workshop and has filled it with wage-serfs. Our enemy is the state—monarchic, oligarchic, democratic, or proletarian—with its functionaries, and its services of offices, magistrates, and police. Our enemy is every abstract authority, whether called God or Devil, in the name of which priests have so long governed souls. Our enemy is the law, always made for the oppression of the weak by the strong, and for the justification and consecration of crime."—*Anarchist Manifesto*, Geneva, 1882.

"We object to all legislation, all authority, and all influence—privileged, patented, official, and legal—even when it has proceeded from universal suffrage, convinced that it must always turn to the profit of a dominating and exploiting minority, against the interests of the immense majority enslaved."—BAKUNIN, *God and the State.*

"The democratic social movement has overleaped its platform and escaped out of the hands of its instigators. It has become an unmanaged and unmanageable tide."—F. H. GIDDINGS, *Introduction to Levine's Labour Movement.*

§ 40. *The Relation of Anarchism to Syndicalism and Socialism.*

SYNDICALISM has close affinities with Anarchism. "Il est indéniable," says M. Antonelli, "qu'entre le syndicalisme intégral et l'anarchisme il existe une parenté très proche."[1] M. Pelloutier, the great

[1] Antonelli, *Démocratie sociale*, p. 45. Cf. to the same effect, Cole, *World of Labour*, p. 91.

developer of Syndicalism within the bosom of the *Bourses du Travail*, was an avowed Anarchist; M. Pouget, the literary exponent of the Syndicalist future, is claimed by Kropotkin as an Anarchist; Kropotkin himself has written an anarchic Introduction, full of sympathetic commendation, to the English translation of the Syndicalist romance, *Comment nous ferons la révolution*. Anarchism, indeed, in one of its chief forms, may be regarded as but an extreme type of Syndicalism, just as Syndicalism may be regarded as but an extreme type of Marxian Socialism. The three have this in common: they all aim at the subversion of existing society, the overthrow of established governments, the expropriation of landlords and capitalists, the seizure by the proletariat of the means of production. The Marxian Socialists, however, although they would destroy the present state, and although they look forward to a distant ideal-future when the state will be unnecessary, contemplate an intermediate period when the state, captured and reconstructed by the proletariat, will be the chief means by which they will realise their economic aims. They do not, therefore, hold aloof from politics, but, on the contrary, play a prominent, though destructive and anti-democratic, part in the political arena.

The Syndicalists, on the other hand, give up the state in despair, and will have nothing to do with it. They say that it is so completely bound up with and identified with capitalist society—that it is so utterly under the control of the hated bourgeoisie—as to be beyond salvation. Hence they separate themselves from the Marxians, abjure politics altogether, and declare inexpiable war upon the state

in all its shapes and forms. In place of it they exalt the industrial group, the trade union, the syndicate. The members of this group, an autonomous community, held together by economic interests, occupying land for which they pay no rent and employing capital on which they return no interest, are to deal with such political questions as may arise in the course of their work merely as appendant to their industrial concerns. The position which the state now occupies in relation to the people as a whole and to the world at large is assigned to a federation of syndicates. Although, however, the syndicates shake themselves free from the sovereignty of the state, and proclaim their emancipation from the restraint of the law, within their own limits they exercise over the individual workman a vigilant authority which was not exceeded by the Inquisition in its palmiest days. At the present time, for instance, they compel him to join the trade union by a forceful persuasion which does not hesitate to inflict the penalties of financial ruin, personal mutilation, and even death. Once within the union, he is constrained with no less violence to conform to so-called trade union laws and workshop customs, which include "ca' canny," deliberate restriction of output, and countless vexatious regulations specifically intended to render harmonious relations between employer and employed impossible. He is involved against his will in disputes which he thinks wrong, and knows to be unnecessary; he is dragged out on strike; he is conscripted into the armies that wage the class war; he is dragooned into the insane battles wherein the misguided proletarians seek to avenge themselves for imaginary wrongs upon the bourgeoisie. Of all

the tyrannies which this earth has known the Syndicalist tyranny is one of the grossest, most cruel, and least intelligent.

Against this tyranny the Anarchist, if he is true to his creed, protests. He stands for the freedom of the individual against both the authority of the state and the ascendancy of the group. "Anarchism," says Zenker, the able Austrian historian and critic of the movement, "means, in its ideal sense, the perfect unfettered self-government of the individual, and consequently the absence of any kind of external constraint. It demands the unconditional realisation of freedom, both subjectively and objectively, equally in political and economic life." [1] Anarchism thus occupies a curious and remarkable position in the circle of political possibilities. It is the segment wherein extreme Socialism and extreme Individualism meet and join. At this strange pole of thought Communists like Tolstoy and Kropotkin, who have travelled leftward from Collectivism and have completed the half-circle, find themselves suddenly and unexpectedly in the company of Herbert Spencer and Auberon Herbert, of Max Stirner and Nietzsche, all of whom have travelled round the opposite half-circle of growing antagonism to the state and have reached by a totally different track the same pole of administrative nihilism.

§ 41. *The Anarchist Idea.*

There is something extraordinarily attractive in the Anarchist idea. The prospect of doing what you like, unfettered by any sort of restraint external to

[1] Zenker, *Der Anarchismus*, p. 3.

yourself, is one that appeals with immense fascination to all in whom the love of liberty is strong. Anarchism resembles in the large sphere of the world the kind of polity that actually does prevail, even in these imperfect days, in the well-ordered household where love reigns supreme. In such a household there is no consciousness of operative authority, no sense of restraint, no obtrusive rule of law, no insistence on rights of private property, no higgling over wages or hours of labour, no jealous antagonism of interests. Everything is held in common use; each member renders willing service to his fellows; all share alike in joys and sorrows, prosperities and adversities; no law is in evidence except that natural law of courtesy and common sense which is implanted in the mind and heart of all. The gentle Anarchist of the type of Tolstoy pictures the vast family of the human race reorganised on those lines of personal freedom and voluntary association of which the love-knit household is the fine model. It is a beautiful ideal, especially where, as in Tolstoy's dreams, it is adorned by Christian graces. Now and again it has been partially and ephemerally realised in communities other than families—in primitive churches, in co-operative commonwealths, in the better types of the Russian *mir*. Perhaps some day it may be realisable in the Great Society: for, after all, it does not involve a much greater departure from present-day political ideas than religious toleration did from the ecclesiastical ideas of the Middle Ages. Religious toleration is, indeed, Anarchism in the ecclesiastical sphere; and in the sixteenth century it was regarded with as much horror, by Catholic and Calvinist alike, as is political Anarchism to-day

by both Constitutional Democrat and Collective Socialist. Nevertheless it came; and everywhere now throughout the civilised world religion is a matter of free personal determination, and its organisation a matter of voluntary association. It is permissible to imagine, with Kropotkin, that the time may come when the individual may be as completely emancipated from political and economic compulsion as he is from religious persecution; when he will associate with his fellows or remain in isolation as he pleases; when his taxes will take the form of voluntary contributions to causes of which he approves; when his personality will have freedom to develop in all directions unchecked

It is *not* permissible, however, to imagine that the time for the realisation of the Anarchist ideal is now come, or that it is near at hand. The analogy between religious toleration and political nihilism is pressed too far when it is forgotten that the only thing which rendered possible the recognition of freedom of faith and liberty of worship was the existence of a strong national state, capable of preventing emancipated fanatics from slaying one another, and free worshippers from scandalising the community by antinomian excesses. Similarly, the polity of the love-knit household is imperfectly apprehended, and unwarrantably applied, if it is supposed either that it is really as anarchic as it seems, or that the conditions in which it flourishes prevail in the world at large. On the one hand, the love-knit household is not as anarchic as it seems. True; authority, law, restraint, are not in evidence on the surface. Nevertheless they are there. It is only necessary for a son to turn prodigal, for a daughter to assert an excessive individuality,

for a man-servant to imbibe too freely of the family wines, or a maidservant to array herself in the family jewels—for any one, in short, to give play to any of the great self-regarding passions which burn in each human bosom—and then authority, with all its appurtenances, displays itself; the authority first of the *paterfamilias*, but behind it and supporting it the authority of the state. The love-knit household runs smoothly and maintains its sweet perfection just because, and only because, it is guarded from outside interference by the might of the Great Society, and is hemmed in by controls which fix the precise limits within which it is free to develop. Hence, on the other hand, the conditions which render Anarchism possible in the household, the church, or the sheltered co-operative commonwealth, do not at present exist in the world at large. Although it is true that the normal man is at heart honest and inclined to good, yet there are so many criminals abroad, and so many criminal tendencies in the natures of all, that the restraint of authority and the compulsion of law are imperatively necessary, and are likely to remain so for many a long day. Further, although it is true that the normal man is sufficiently intelligent to manage his own affairs, share in the conduct of voluntary associations, and even perform the functions of citizenship, yet there are so many lunatics at large, and so many tendencies towards eccentricity in the natures of all, that it is impossible now, and is likely long to remain impossible, to dispense with the tutelage of government and the sanity of law.

Nothing, indeed, is more eloquent of the present-day impossibility of Anarchism than the wild words

and the wicked works of present-day Anarchists themselves.

§ 42. *Anarchism in Practice.*

The true Anarchist, as we have seen, is the advocate of unrestricted freedom both for himself and for every one else. He admits the authority of the natural law inscribed on the tables of the individual heart and vindicable before the tribunal of the individual conscience, but he repudiates all external authority, human or divine. "The liberty of man," said Bakunin in his *Dieu et l'État*, "consists solely in this, that he obeys the laws of nature, because he has himself recognised them as such, and not because they have been imposed upon him externally by any foreign will whatsoever." The true anarchist is opposed to the coercion of any human being by any other human being; he objects on principle to any and every application of force as a determinant of conduct. Tolstoy is a true Anarchist in the views which he expounds in his books, *Confession*, *My Faith*, and *The Kingdom of God in Yourselves*; Kropotkin is a true Anarchist in his mild and amiable mediations on *Mutual Aid*, *Anarchist Morality*, and *Anarchist Philosophy and Ideals*; the Rev. Richard Roberts is a true Anarchist in the conscientious objection which he manifests in his *Church and the Commonwealth* to any interference whatsoever with (at any rate his own) extreme individualism. But these gentle and dreamy ideologues, these innocent libertines with their sweet unreasonableness, are not what the world regards as typical Anarchists. Anarchism, in the popular view, so far

from being looked upon as the prime opponent of the use of force as an instrument for the determination of will, is generally considered to be the very embodiment of the antagonistic principle of relentless terrorism. Nor is the popular view mistaken. The pure and logical Anarchism of Tolstoy and Kropotkin is entirely overshadowed in importance (at least for the time being) by the corrupt and inconsistent Anarchism of Bakunin and the bomb-throwers.

"Learn the use of dynamite!" is the exhortation with which Anarchist tracts commonly conclude. *Dynamite!* The very name, derived from the Greek word for "force," connotes the utmost limit of irrational violence, brute compulsion, immoral intimidation. Is the sovereignty of the individual to be established by dynamite, the reign of natural law to be ushered in by high explosives, the *régime* of boundless liberty to be inaugurated by means of a tyranny of terror? Yes; according to Bakunin and his all-too-numerous followers, it is! "The Anarchist," says Bakunin in his *Revolutionary Catechism*, "has only one aim, one object of study, viz. *destruction*; for that and that alone he makes researches in mechanics, physics, chemistry, and medicine. He observes with the same object the men, the characters, the grades, and the conditions of the social order. He despises and hates existing morality. For him everything is moral that favours the triumph of the revolution. Between him and society there is war to the death, incessant, irreconcilable. He ought to be ready to kill with his own hands all who obstruct the revolution—and himself be prepared in the cause of the revolution to suffer

torture or to die." [1] This terrible utterance—the howl of the mad wild-beast in man—is echoed in countless Anarchist manifestos. For instance, the first article of the programme of the Pittsburg Congress of Anarchists in 1883 expresses the purpose of Anarchism as "the destruction of the existing class rule by all means, *i.e.* energetic, relentless, revolutionary, and international action." Destruction, not emancipation, is the watchword of the Bakunists; hatred, not love, is their inspiring principle; criminal licence, not the ordered liberty of natural law, is the goal of their deadly fanaticism. Is there anything in common between the mild, beneficent, Christian Anarchism of Tolstoy, and the ferocious, malignant, Atheistic Anarchism of Bakunin?

There is much in common between the two. They are, in fact, but the obverse and reverse, the positive and negative aspects, of the same thing. Both Tolstoy and Bakunin have the same ideal before them, viz. that of a society from which all existing states and all established churches shall have been eliminated. Tolstoy, however, holds with a fine optimism and a superb consistency that the ideal, it if is to be realised at all, can be realised only by means congruous with itself; he denies that freedom can be reached through terror, that force can legitimately be called in to bring the rule of force to an end, that Satan can really be expected to cast out Satan, or can properly be asked to do so.[2] Bakunin,

[1] Doubt has recently been expressed as to Bakunin's authorship of the *Revolutionary Catechism* (*e.g.* by Kropotkin in *Ency. Brit.* s.v. "Anarchism"), but no one suggests that it departs in any way from Bakunin's creed.

[2] It is noteworthy that Proudhon, the founder of modern Anarchism, takes the same sound view. "I hold," he says, "that we ought not to postulate revolutionary action as a means of social reform, because that pretended means is nothing more nor less than an appeal to force, to arbitrary power, and is therefore a contradiction" (Proudhon, *Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 198).

on the other hand, ever obsessed by the Marxian dogma of the class war, and utterly maddened by adversities of his own making, is diabolically possessed by the convictions (first, that nothing can be done to realise the Anarchist ideal until existing states and churches are destroyed, and, second, that they can be destroyed only by a relentless use of force. He is faithless and unbelieving; he is a traitor to the pure, though utopian, cause of Anarchism; he has sold his soul to the devil of violence in the insane hope that he can outwit the devil, and use him as an agent for the recovery of his illusory paradise. He has won disciples, not from among the true lovers of a perfect liberty, but from among disillusioned Socialists who have grown disgusted with the state; disgruntled Syndicalists who have found trade union leaders too moderate in their measures; rebels, criminals, maniacs; men of all sorts whose hearts are envenomed with hate and whose hands are turned against their fellows. These are the Anarchists—false to the pure form of their own creed—who kept Russia in terror from 1878 to 1881, who slew the Tsar Alexander II. in the latter year, President Carnot of France in 1894, King Humbert of Italy in 1900, President M'Kinley of America in 1901. These are the men who, with an even more frantic hostility to their kind, have thrown bombs among the people at large. Their spirit is well illustrated by an utterance of one of their number, Vaillant, who, in 1893, exploded an infernal machine in the French Chamber of Deputies. When reproached by the judge for his dastardly and indiscriminate outrage upon innocent men, he replied: "There can be no innocent bourgeois." To such lengths of criminal lunacy do

Anarchists of the Bakunin type carry the madness of the class war.

§ 43. "*Conscientious Objectors*" *as Anarchists.*

We thus see that there are two main varieties of communistic Anarchists, viz. those who may be briefly described as Tolstoyans, and those who may be briefly described as Bakunists. It would be possible, and indeed necessary, if one were making an exhaustive study of Anarchism, to distinguish many other species and sub-species, and also to say something of the individualistic Anarchists who have arrived at the goal of administrative nihilism by the anti-Socialistic track marked out by Herbert Spencer.[1] But, since we are dealing here with Anarchism simply as an enemy of democracy, it is needless to enter into these details. It is sufficient to distinguish the two leading groups of anarchic opponents of democratic state-sovereignty, viz. Tolstoyan Passive Resisters, and Bakunist Active Assailants. On the Continent and in America the Bakunist type is in the ascendant: in Britain the Tolstoyan type is more in evidence. Since we are primarily concerned with Britain we will consider the Tolstoyans first.

Even before the war passive resistance was displaying itself on a formidable scale in this country. In many directions it was successfully defying the government, and in doing so was seriously undermining the authority of the state. Generally, it was

[1] Rae, *Contemporary Socialism*, p. 280, distinguishes four sub-species of Communist-Anarchists indigenous to Russia, viz. Bakunists, Lavrists, Tchaikowskists, and Malikowskists. Since, however, Anarchism is the extreme form of Nonconformity in the sphere of politics, there are really as many varieties of Anarchism as there are Anarchists. *Quot homines, tot sententiae!*

associated with some religious or philanthropic cause, and was defended on the usual Anarchic plea that some real or imagined law implanted in the individual conscience, or made manifest to it by the inner light, was superior in its validity to the positive law of the democratic community. Thus some Nonconformists refused to pay the rates levied under the Education Act of 1902, and some Anglican Ritualists repudiated the ecclesiastical authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The claim of the individual conscience was set over against, and preferred to, the claim of the communal conscience and the communal will. The matter was, however, brought into much more serious prominence after the outbreak of the war by the passing of the Compulsory Military Service Act, which required every able-bodied man within certain limits of age to perform his ancient and elemental common-law duty of defending himself and his nation in time of danger. Of the urgency of the peril in 1916 there was no doubt, and we are now beginning to realise that it was greater even than it then seemed. The passing of this measure, however, revealed the existence of a considerable number of "conscientious objectors," that is of persons who on some moral or religious ground refused to fulfil this fundamental obligation of citizenship. They were an extraordinary company; for the most part a curious collection of eccentrics, degenerates, cosmopolitans, and undesirables. But among them were a few genuine Tolstoyan Anarchists, convinced individualists of the type of the early Christian martyrs, honest opponents of the use of force for any purpose whatsoever, earnest believers in the sovereignty of self. Their cases roused in an acute form the ancient

problems of the relation of the individual to the community, and of the relative authorities of personal conscience and positive law. From the discussion which ensued the following general principles emerged. First, that conscience must be allowed to be the supreme and final determinant of conduct. Secondly, that there are different kinds of conscience in the world, each dominant in its own sphere; there is the personal conscience dominant in the individual man; there is the group conscience dominant in the voluntary association, whether church, ethical society, trade union, or other; there is the class conscience dominant in each distinct social order; there is the communal or national conscience dominant in the great society of the national state, and generally expressed in its laws; there is, perhaps, the cosmopolitan conscience dominant in the larger community of mankind. Thirdly, that these various consciences do not always say the same thing, but on the contrary frequently clash. Fourthly, that all of them are liable to error; but that the danger of error is in inverse ratio to the magnitude and complexity of the respective organisms concerned, *i.e.* that mankind is less likely to be wrong than the nation, the nation than the class or group, the class or group than the individual. Fifthly, that the individual conscience is an extremely tricky and capricious sovereign, whose liability to error is very great, whose proper sphere of operation is generally very narrow, whose dictates need to be constantly tested by comparison with the more authoritative dictates of the consciences of the larger entities. This is not to say that the individual conscience is *necessarily* wrong when it clashes with the larger consciences around it. To say that would

be to condemn *a priori* most of the pioneers of reform; it would be to condemn Christ himself. It does, however, say that when the individual finds himself in moral antagonism to his group, his class, his nation, and mankind, he should seriously take into account Cromwell's words spoken to the seventeenth-century fanatics: "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken." In the immense majority of cases the eccentric individual *is* mistaken: the presumptions are overwhelmingly against him. Sixthly, that when any one of the larger consciences finds itself in antagonism to one or more of the smaller, the larger should assert its superior sovereignty, and should by all lawful means maintain its supremacy. At the present moment, for instance, the conscience of mankind is rightly asserting itself against the conscience of Germany; the conscience of the British nation is rightly asserting itself against the conscience of the I.L.P.; the conscience of the organised churches is rightly asserting itself against the conscience of the pacificist. Our trouble over the "conscientious objector" has been due not merely to the fact that the objector himself has asserted the ascendancy of his own unenlightened individual conscience too confidently, and has made too slight an effort to inform and educate it; it has also been due to the fact that the nation has not sufficiently made its enactments a matter of conscience, that it has promulgated them too much as matters of expediency only, that it has not enforced them with the inexorable majesty of conscious communal righteousness. It was, and is, *right* that the nation should call upon all its citizens for that equality of sacrifice which is involved in universal military

service; it was, and is, *wrong* that any exemptions whatsoever should be allowed. So spoke, and so speaks, the national conscience. In doing so it necessarily conflicts with the conscience of the pacificist. What is to be the result? Should the conscientious national state surrender its conscientious conviction in face of individual objection? It would be outrageous to expect it to do so. Should, then, the conscientious national state persecute the "conscientious objector," and drive him into the army? Necessity might compel it to do so; but, if possible, out of reverence for conscience, it should avoid challenging him on the ground of his conscientious objection. It would be better, and generally sufficient, that it should declare that by his own act he has withdrawn from his citizenship, and has surrendered his democratic rights. The true democrat recognises and obeys the general will, the national conscience, the common law. If he should cease to be able to grant this recognition and to render this obedience, he would not think of claiming the franchise. He would regard it as a monstrous anomaly that he should demand a share in the formation of a general will which he himself is unable to respect, or that he should claim to mould a national conscience whose dictates should bind others, but should not bind himself. This test of conscience in matters political reveals to a man what he is, and where he stands. To the democrat the national conscience is the prime political authority: he obeys the duly constituted law of the land even though it injures his interests, displeases his judgment, and offends his sense of justice. To the Socialist class-consciousness and class-conscience take the place of ascendancy. To the Syndicalist—lay or

ecclesiastical—the place of pre-eminence is assigned to the consciousness and conscience of the group to which he belongs. The individual "conscientious objector" is farthest of all from democracy. He ploughs a lonely furrow; he nourishes a solitary soul. He denies the organic unity of society; he separates himself from the common life of the nation to which he belongs; he does not accept the principle of the rule of the majority; he does not recognise the authority of the conscience of the community. In so far as he is really conscientious, he deserves respect; for conscience, no matter how perverse or ill-conditioned it may be, is venerable and majestic. But he does not deserve political power, and, if he were consistent, he would not claim it. He ought to be disfranchised. He is, in the proper sense of the term, an Anarchist.

§ 44. *Anarchists as Active Assailants of Society.*

Although the majority of Anarchist anti-democrats in Britain belong to the mild Tolstoyan passive and pacificist type, the more thoroughgoing and active Anarchist of the Bakunist type is not unrepresented. London and most large towns throughout the United Kingdom have Anarchist clubs where desperate men and degraded women assemble to discuss the "social revolution," to inveigh against governments, to assail churches, to denounce authority and law in all their forms, to condemn the institution of property, to advocate communism, to plot deeds of darkness and terror. They have, as a rule, reached their violent Anarchism by way of the steep Gadarene descent from Marxian Socialism,

through Bergsonian Syndicalism, to Bakunist Nihilism. But though these Anarchist clubs exist in Britain in large numbers they are not, as a rule, British. Their members are dominantly alien immigrants of a low order, in particular Russian Bolsheviks, Polish irreconcilables, German and Austrian Jews. London, indeed, is the headquarters of international (or, more correctly, cosmopolitan) Anarchism. It has become such for the simple reason that it is the *Cloaca Maxima* of Britain, which, alone among modern states, has passed no special anti-anarchist legislation, but has been content to receive Anarchists as ordinary immigrants and to deal with them by the ordinary processes of the common law. Of all foreigners the Russians have the strongest and most natural leaning towards Anarchism, and it is the Russians who form the numerically most important factor in the Anarchist clubs. Anarchism, indeed, is almost as typical of Russia as is Syndicalism of France, Socialism of Germany, and Democracy of England. It is not difficult to explain the Russian's penchant towards Anarchism. On the one hand, he had over him a uniquely despotic and oppressive government, a remarkably numerous and parasitic nobility, and a particularly obscurantist and persecuting church. On the other hand, he was familiarly and affectionately acquainted with that most anarchic of all known social organisms, the self-determining village community or *mir*, by means of which the Russian peasantry from time immemorial have ordered their lives and conducted their local affairs.[1] But if the

[1] There is a most diverting account of the *mir* in operation in Stepniak's *Russia under the Tsars*, vol. i. pp. 2-4. It is all the more amusing because it is intended seriously to commend this negation of government as a model to Western reformers.

Russians form the numerically most important factor in the Anarchist clubs, it is the cosmopolitan Jews—without country, without religion—who, though a small minority, give to the clubs their perverted intellectual life, their anti-social wills, their disordered consciences, and their nefarious activity.

It is of course impossible that hot-beds of criminal conspiracy, such as these Anarchist clubs are, should exist in London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Cardiff, Dublin, and other great centres of mixed populations, without attracting to themselves disaffected and unbalanced members of the British proletariat, or without disseminating dangerous anti-democratic doctrine. It was, for example, Bakunist Anarchism, rather than Syndicalism or Socialism, that inflamed James Larkin of "Liberty Hall," Dublin, in 1913, when he led the Irish Transport Workers to battle under such standards as "To Hell with Contracts," "Damn the Law," "Down with the Government"! It is Bakunist Anarchism, rather than Syndicalism or Socialism, that at the present day excites the extremest unrest in the labour world.

The "shop-steward" movement is largely an Anarchist movement, and just because it is such it is impossible to satisfy it by means of concessions and surrenders. The Whitley Report makes admirable proposals for the introduction of the principle of joint-control into industry, for the development of self-government in workshops, for the effecting of a real partnership between capital and labour, for the establishment of an enduring economic peace. If these things were what shop-stewards desired, the means of securing them are ready to their hands. They are, however, the very last things that the

shop-stewards desire. So far are they from desiring joint-control, partnership, and peace, that they regard them as quite the most formidable of all obstacles to the success of the class war, the social revolution, and the anarchic upheaval which are the real objects of their activities and conspiracies. There are no more deadly enemies of the Whitley Report, and of all schemes of industrial conciliation, than the shop-stewards. They exist to maintain the ferment of revolution, to wage truceless war upon employers, to defy the government, to flout trade union leaders, to terrorise peaceful workmen, to destroy discipline, to paralyse industrial efficiency, to incite the rank and file to constant rebellion. Until the "shop-steward" movement shall purge itself of its Anarchism, and until the rank and file shall learn to choose as their responsible representatives men of sobriety and democratic common sense, the movement ought to be denied all recognition by government, trade union leaders, and community. It is a negation of democracy.

§ 45. *The recent Drift towards Anarchy in Britain.*

Until, as the result of foreign infection, the "shop-steward" movement developed, Anarchism had not much of a history in Britain. It is alien from the British—or, at any rate, the English—genius, which is eminently political. The Anglo-Saxon certainly—whatever may be the case with the descendants of his Celtic predecessors and the Ivernian aborigines—has a reverence for duly constituted authority, a respect for law, a sense of historic continuity, a love

of ordered progress, that make " the mad fool-fury " of the Anarchist, with its blind destructiveness and total lack of reconstructive power, intensely abhorrent. It has been the English way to effect necessary changes by means of reform and not by means of revolution; by the prudent process of law and not by the insane gamble of violence; by the general will of the whole community and not at the terrorist dictation of a handful of sanguinary fanatics. Hence, on the one hand, Anarchist theory owes little of its development to English writers, and, on the other hand, there has been but little trace in English history of the Anarchist propaganda of deed. First, as to writers. It may be possible to detect anarchic sentiments in some of the Levelling and Communistic antagonists of the Puritan oligarchy in the middle of the seventeenth century; but these extremists secured few disciples as against the conservative common sense of such men as Cromwell, Ireton, Milton, and Harrington. More plainly and purely anarchic are the principles of Godwin's *Political Justice*—published in 1793, and showing clearly the influence of French Encyclopaedists and Revolutionaries. Godwin objects to all government, all control of man by man, all punishment, all property, all marriage. But Godwin modified his extreme views later in his life; he made a great fuss when Shelley carried off his daughter Mary, and he ended his days in Palace Yard as a yeoman usher of the exchequer—a sinecure government office which conferred the least possible good on the smallest possible number. A couple of generations later, William Morris was, I suppose, something of an Anarchist. The Communism of his *News from Nowhere* (1891) is such as to preclude not only the

possession of private property, but also the existence of any restrictive political authority. But Morris's Anarchism is of a dreamy mediaeval type—literary, aesthetic, artistic, unpractical—a mere protest against convention, equally far removed from bombs and from men. Five years, however, before Morris published in book form his *News from Nowhere*, *i.e.* in the midst of that fermenting period of the 'eighties, a more systematic Anarchist agitation had been inaugurated by the issue of a monthly Anarchist organ entitled *Freedom*.[1] Its contents were marked by intense revolutionary bitterness, by implacable hostility to every government in power, by consuming hatred of all the wealthy and the wise, by frequent incitements to lawless violence. But it never secured a wide circulation, and the majority of those who bought it regarded it as a novel kind of spicy comic paper—a cheap, proletarian, only-once-a-monthly *Truth*. Few except the alien immigrants, who used it as a vehicle for the acquisition of the English vocabulary of vituperation, regarded it seriously. It was generally ignored by responsible politicians and trade union leaders.[2]

So, too, as to Anarchist propaganda of deed. Bombs and barricades, arson and assassination have never appealed to the bulk of the British people as

[1] London, 1886 *sqq.*, 127 Ossulston Street, N.W. 1d. monthly.

[2] Herbert Spencer and the members of the *Liberty and Property Defence League*, although their Individualism approaches the confines of Anarchism, are not really Anarchists at all. It is true that Vaillant in his trial in 1893 claims Spencer as his fellow, and it is true that the leading American Anarchist, B. R. Tucker, proclaims Spencer as his master. But, *politically*, Spencer recognised the state, even though he would reduce its functions to the minimum activities of the night-watchman, while, *economically*, his strenuous defence of private property was poles apart from communism. The question of Herbert Spencer's relation to Anarchism is fully discussed in Part III. chap. vii. of Zenker's *Anarchismus*.

appropriate means for ushering in the golden age of liberty, community, and fraternity. With the exception of certain Celtic irreconcilables in Ireland, and certain Ivernian intransigents in South Wales, the practical and politically-minded proletariat of the United Kingdom have regarded the passive Anarchism of Tolstoy as amiable lunacy, and the active Anarchism of Bakunin as criminal mania. Even since the dawn of the twentieth century brought with it new and revolutionary ideas, it is not the rise of Anarchism that has given cause for alarm, but the drift towards Anarchy ; not the spread of the devil's gospel according to *Freedom*, but the increase of lawlessness, indiscipline, violence ; not formal attacks upon state, society, or trade union, but the inexplicable failure of government to enforce the law, of society to maintain its integrity, of the trade unions to retain control over their own members. I have already, in the chapter on Syndicalism, dealt with some of the disquieting symptoms of this rise of revolt, and this collapse of authority. The incidents referred to there belong to the period prior to the war. Since the outbreak of the war the drift has been not towards Syndicalism so much as from Syndicalism towards Anarchy. The authority which has been successfully defied is not merely that of the government, but that of the trade unions too. Both the political community and the great industrial societies—both the democracy and the organised working classes—have been (thanks to the facilities afforded by the Trades Disputes Act of 1906), delivered into the hands of irresponsible bands of young rebels working through (not controlled by) shop-stewards and other spontaneously-generated agitators who have been thrown

to the top during the processes of rebellion.[1] It would be incredible, had it not actually happened, that the multitudes of a great democratic community —to say nothing about the organised trade unions— should allow themselves to be bullied and blackmailed by small gangs of anonymous Anarchists. It is difficult to find words adequate to describe and characterise the faithlessness and pusillanimity of the government which time after time has betrayed into the hands of the spoilers the nation that has trusted it and given it power. The greatest and most fatal betrayal and surrender occurred in August 1915, when, after the passing of the Munitions of War Act, which prohibited strikes and provided special machinery for settling disputes in industries vital to victory, the South Welsh miners struck, snapped their fingers at the new law, defied the government, repudiated their responsible officials, violated their own agreement, and—secured everything they had come out for, together with complete indemnity for their breaches of contract, entire exemption from the terms of their broken stipulation, and perfect immunity from the penalties of the openly-flouted Munitions of War Act.[2] Rarely has there been seen a more flagrant example of *lèse démocratie* on the part of a section of the community; never a more scandalous abdication of authority on the part of ministers entrusted by a democracy with power. As one contemplates the painful spectacle of triumphant Anarchy and abject Authority, one recalls the solemn

[1] The position of the Anarchist "leader" is well described in the apophthegm: "Ich bin ihr Führer, also muss ich ihn folgen": cf. Adolf Weber, *Der Kampf zwischen Kapital und Arbeit*, p. 369.

[2] The humiliating story of this disgraceful episode is well and fully told by Rev. J. V. Morgan, *The War and Wales*, pp. 292 *sqq.*

words of Sir Henry Maine, uttered in 1885: "If any government should be tempted to neglect, even for a moment, its function of compelling obedience to law—if a democracy, for example, were to allow a portion of the multitude of which it consists to set at defiance some law which it happens to dislike—it would be guilty of a crime which hardly any other virtue could redeem, and which century after century might fail to repair."[1] Subsequent events have confirmed the validity of this grave prophecy, and have revealed the enormity of the surrender of August 1915. The Munitions of War Act has been reduced to a dead letter by incessant and unpunishable strikes; the law has been brought into universal contempt; the government has ceased to govern in the world of labour, and has been compelled, instead of governing, to bribe, to cajole, to beg, to grovel. It has purchased brief truces at the cost of increasing levies of Danegeld drawn from the diminishing resources of the patient community. It has embarked on a course of payment of blackmail which must end either in national bankruptcy or in the social revolution which the Anarchists seek.[2] Thanks to the feebleness of successive ministers—belonging to all political parties and groups—even the Germanic peril begins to pale in comparison with the red spectre of the class war, the exorcism of which has been prevented by the ministers' failure of confidence in themselves, and their lack of faith in democracy.

[1] Maine, *Popular Government*, p. 64.

[2] *The Times* of July 12, 1918, contains, by an interesting coincidence, two significant sets of figures. Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., boasts that during the war railwaymen have secured in wages, bonuses, etc., an additional £47,000,000 a year. A correspondent writes to point out that the miners have obtained an extra £60,000,000 a year.

Never was there more urgent need to insist on the sovereignty of the democracy, the solidarity of the community, the reality of the general will, the authority of the national conscience, the majesty of the law.

Let us turn then from these explorations of " cross ways "—the sectional path of Labour, the class path of Socialism, the anti-political path of Syndicalism, and the fatal mule-track of Anarchism—to survey the straight path along which the community-as-a-whole may advance through self-government to peace and prosperity.

PART III

THE STRAIGHT WAY

CHAPTER IX

THE NATIONAL STATE

"It is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities."—J. S. MILL, *Representative Government.*

"The fortunes of self-government are bound up with the fortunes of nationalism, since it is only in communities unified by national feeling that genuine self-government is possible."—RAMSAY MUIR, *National Self-Government.*

"Without the realisation of the national idea it is hardly possible to conceive of democratic government for any country. The national idea, therefore, precedes the social idea."—H. CLAY, *War and Democracy.*

"To be a useful Internationalist a man must be a Nationalist first."—H. M. HYNDMAN, *The Future of Democracy.*

"The State is for its members the society of societies—the society in which all their claims upon each other are mutually adjusted."—T. H. GREEN, *Principles of Political Obligation.*

"The State is the neutral, impartial, and mediating authority which corrects the individualisms of society in the light of the common interest of which it is the incarnate representative."—E. BARKER, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle.*

"The State is the political personality of the whole community, both in its internal and external relationships."—RAMSAY MACDONALD, *Socialism and Government.*

"The State is the nation in its collective and corporate capacity controlling through government the full swing of its members in the name of the higher reason of all."—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Culture and Anarchy.*

"It is on the theory of the State that everything hinges."—J. MARK BALDWIN, *The Super-State and Eternal Values.*

§ 46. *Need of Community and Government.*

THE Anarchist is essentially an individualist. He may have developed out of a Syndicalist or even a

Socialist; and he may, for the purpose of destroying existing society, consent to co-operate with Syndicalists and Socialists. But when the question of constructive ideals is debated he parts company from them. He will not help to found the proletarian state; he will not enter the authoritarian guild; he retains full sovereignty over himself. He makes the great φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον — the retreat of the solitary upon the eternal solitude—which had so irresistible a charm for the eremites of old. But he is more lonely than the eremites of old. For if they withdrew from the company of their fellow-men, it was in order that they might hold a more intimate communion with a more numerous citizenry in another sphere; if they broke the bands which held them in human society, it was because their conversation was in heaven. The Anarchist has no such refuge: he is without church, and without hope of the celestial city; as he is without family ties, without patriotism, without nation, without state. Of course he holds himself free to form voluntary associations, as, for example, with a woman as wife, or with fellow-craftsmen as co-workers. But he claims that no contract binds him to the association; that he enters into no organic relation with its member or members; that he plays no part in the formation of a common conscience or a general will; that he remains an isolated individual in the midst of his kind.

In practice, happily, it is impossible for any human being to rise to the height, or sink to the depth, of the Anarchist ideal. No man can cut himself off completely from vital connection with his fellows. The isolated individual of the philosophical Anarchist is as remote from actual life as is the economic man

of the Ricardian theorists: he is a mere abstraction.[1] Every man is the creature of community, and without community he perishes. Indeed, so dominant is the influence of community in determining his character and fixing his way of life, that when it is considered in conjunction with the co-ordinate influence of his physical environment, individuality sometimes seems wholly to vanish away. A man grows up, not a solitary soul, but a member of a family, a school, a parish, a village or town, a nation; he becomes identified with many voluntary associations, athletic, intellectual, social, religious, industrial, and commercial; he is controlled by church and state; he is throughout his whole career dependent on groups of his fellows for food, clothes, and all the external necessities of life, as well as for ideas, beliefs, and all the paraphernalia of the mind. Well has it been said that "man has never lived, nor can he live, isolated and alone, neither can any period of humanity be conceived in which man stood outside society; such a condition is absolutely opposed to human nature."[2] Society, in fact, consists less of a determinate number of separate individuals, such as are tabulated in the census returns, than of an incalculable congeries of groups—large and small, simple and complex, conflicting, overlapping, interlacing, related to one another in an infinite variety of ways—each of which has some sort of corporate personality

[1] Cf. Ritchie, *State Interference*, p. 11: "The individual apart from all relation to a community is a negation. You can say nothing about him, or rather *it*, except that *it* is not any other individual."

[2] Pulszky, *Theory of Law and Civil Society*, p. 101. Cf. also Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, p. 75, where we are reminded "that no man is sufficient unto himself alone; that man is by nature a social being, and that he can find his full development as a personality, his truest happiness and most useful activity, only in a society where he can be truly himself—his best self."

of its own. Every individual, no matter how anarchic he may be, no matter how powerful his personality or how extreme his eccentricity, belongs to some, probably many, of these groups; and he is known rather by the associations of which he is a member than by any qualities peculiar to himself. Now each of these groups or associations, however loose or ephemeral it may be—whether it be family, or church, or club, or trade union, or any other of the countless types—is a psychological organism. It has a life of its own which is different in kind from the sum total of the lives of the individuals who compose it; it has a corporate consciousness, a common conscience, an emotional personality, a general will. What is more, it has an organisation and a government. "Every society," truly says Professor M'Kechnie, "implies organisation and government of some sort." [1] It implies organisation by means of which the activities of its members are co-ordinated, their varied faculties made contributory to the common good, their energies enabled to co-operate to the common end. It implies government, because the individual is not wholly merged in the "society" in question. He probably belongs to other groups as well; he certainly possesses a personal life of his own which remains independent of all groups. His interests, therefore, whether as a member of other groups, or as an individual, may clash, or seem to clash, with the interests of the "society." Hence government in the sense of restraint is necessary, as well as government in the sense of organisation. The collective wisdom of the group is bound to overrule the ignorance and folly of the isolated member; the collective conscience of the group

[1] M'Kechnie, *The State and the Individual*, p. 4.

must correct his ethical aberrations; the collective feeling of the group check the excesses of his egoistic temper. Above all, the collective authority of the group must rigorously suppress the disruptive tendencies of individual selfishness and vice. These are the conditions without which communal life is impossible; and without communal life civilisation withers, humanity decays, and the individual himself soon perishes. As William Morris used to say: "Fellowship is Life, and lack of Fellowship is Death."

§ 47. *The Problem of Sovereignty.*

We have, then, before us a picture of the human race, which shows it, as viewed in one light, to consist of so many hundred millions of isolated individuals, each with his own personality; but also shows it, as viewed in another and more penetrating light, to be composed of an incalculable multitude of organic groups of one sort or another. It is the relation of these groups to one another, rather than the relation of the individual to any one of them, that forms the supreme problem of politics. It is not so much the claims of the solitary self as the conflicts of rival loyalties that are so hard to settle. Granted that the communal will is to prevail over the individual will, what community is it whose will is to prevail? Is it the religious community, *i.e.* the congregation of the faithful; or the economic community, *i.e.* the industrial proletariat; or the political community, *i.e.* the national state; or what? To what community must sovereignty be assigned; to which type, if any, can most properly be entrusted the responsibility of securing the conditions of the good life for mankind

as a whole? These are problems of no small perplexity.

The Middle Ages were torn by the clashing appeals of church and state; men like Becket or Langton, and the clergy whom they led, were tortured by agonies of doubt as to whether they should obey the commands of pope or of king. That mediaeval problem is not even yet solved. But more urgent at the present day is the problem of the conflicting loyalties required by syndicate and state — the economic and the political group respectively. Other claims to priority might be urged—and, indeed, have from time to time been urged—as, for example, the claims of family, or clan, or tribe, or race; the claims of caste or social order; the claims of secret society, or political party, or geographical group. Amid this conflict of incompatible loyalties who is to decide which is the Great Society, who is to determine the seat of ultimate authority?

Some modern political thinkers contend that there is no Great Society at all, but that groups of different kinds are independent and equal; they maintain that there need be no seat of ultimate authority, but that each group may be regarded as sovereign in its own sphere. They advocate the theory of "functional division," according to which each association performs its own duties without molestation from the rest. This, however, is but Anarchism raised from the sphere of individuals into the sphere of groups. Groups are no more isolated or isolable than are individuals; they also have their communal life, and they are liable to all the inconveniences and disabilities to which the solitary savage is liable if he is left in the state of nature. And the Anarchism

of groups is even more chaotic than the Anarchism of individuals, since groups overlap and interlace in a way that individuals do not. There is, in fact, urgent need of a mediating and governing power to harmonise the conflicting claims of both individuals and groups, as well as to organise and direct them for the general good. There is urgent need of a Great Society, of which as many individuals and groups as possible shall be constituent members, to exercise supreme and ultimate control. The existence and the recognition of this Great Society need not in any way conflict with reasonable "functional division." The Great Society may well leave to both individuals and groups large powers of self-determination and direct administration. But in the last resort it will, and must, exercise sovereignty over them all, organising their activities, restraining their extravagances.

Where shall we look for this Great Society, this sovereign group, this energising and harmonising power? (1) I suppose that ideally it should be humanity as a whole, the entire race of man; and that the basal principle on which its authority should rest should be that of a common and kindly nature. But, unfortunately, mankind does not at present constitute a society at all; it has no organic unity, no communal consciousness, no general will. The day has not yet dawned when a "Parliament of Man" is possible. Whether a "Federation of the World" or "League of Nations" is feasible, is a question which I shall discuss later. (2) There are some who claim that the Sovereign Society should be religious in its nature, and that the basis of its authority should be the omnipotence of God. That is a fine conception. It dominated the Middle Ages, giving unity to

Christendom for a thousand years, and an unparalleled dignity to the papal monarchy. Mediaevalists, like Rev. W. Temple, dream of its revival; they foresee the reconstitution of a Catholic church, of which all the nations shall be members and to whose moral authority all shall bow.[1] Theirs is a vain illusion. The ages of common faith are gone forever. The political unification of mankind, indeed, is incomparably nearer to the practicable than is the reunion of the sects or the restoration of a Catholicism of any sort to the seat of power from which it was driven at the Reformation. (3) Others, again, imagine a class ascendancy. "Proletarians of all lands unite," cried Karl Marx with tireless reiteration, and the *International* was formed in 1864, and re-formed in 1889, in order that it might impose the will of the cosmopolitan proletariat upon kings and presidents, parliaments and congresses, churches and states. Chief among its sovereign purposes was the prevention of war by means of the general strike. The tragedy of 1914 was the demonstration of its futility.

On no one of these three bases is it at present possible to found the Great Society. None of these is the community on which can be built the Sovereign Democracy. The basis of humanity is as yet too nebulous; the basis of religion is too much rent by schism; the economic basis is too narrow and too treacherous. There remains only the basis of nationality; and fortunately this avails. The nation, indeed, is to-day the only practicable communal and democratic unit; the national democratic state within its geographical limits has an unassailable claim to sovereignty; the league of free nations, or

[1] Cf. Temple, *Church and Nation*, pp 54-7.

rather of national democratic states, gives us the nearest approximation to the ideal "Parliament of Man," which is at present within the range of practical politics.

§ 48. *The Nation as the Great Society.*

Of all the groups into which mankind is divided the nations are at the present day the largest, the most powerful, the most vitally active, the most self-conscious. This was not always so in the past; it may not always be so in the future. In the remote ages of antiquity there were no nations, but only hunting packs and totemistic groups held together by terror of starvation or by superstitious fears. To these inchoate aggregations succeeded in turn the pastoral tribe, the agricultural clan, and the patriarchal family in which, with increasing strength, the tie of kinship was the bond of union. Under pressure of economic necessity contiguous groups of these blood-relatives were welded together into city-states, or else by conquest were absorbed into the unity of one or another of the great, heterogeneous empires of the world—of which the Roman Empire was the vastest and the most enduring. The military and administrative bonds which held the Roman Empire together were subtly transmuted into moral and religious bonds during the early centuries of the Christian era, and when the Roman armies had melted away, and the Caesars had ceased to rule, the Roman church continued to hold the peoples of the vanished empire together, and the popes governed imperially from the palaces of the Seven Hills. For a millennium the *Respublica Christiana* was the Great Society, and the dominant communal unit was

nothing less than Christendom itself. As, however, the Middle Ages progressed, the unity of Christendom, which had never been perfect, became increasingly hard to maintain. It was undermined intellectually by growing disbelief in the unifying Catholic creed; it was weakened morally by the scandals of the "Babylonish Captivity" and the Great Schism; above all, it was shattered by the disruptive rise of the modern nations, by the formation of national states, by the working of the new passion of patriotism. The crisis came with the Reformation, and it is not easy to say whether the Reformation was the achievement of the nascent national state, or whether the national state was the product of the ecclesiastical Reformation. At any rate, the religious schism synchronised with the political reconstruction, and was causally related to it.

From the sixteenth century to the present day, throughout the Western World, the nation has been the dominant communal unit, and the national state the normal sovereign political authority. The transition from Mediaeval Christendom to the modern state-system was neither wholly gain nor wholly loss; but the balance was decidedly to the good. On the adverse side we have to put the destruction of that conscious unity which had been given to the peoples of the West by the traditions of the Roman empire and the authority of the Catholic church. In place of this ordered solidarity we have the "European Anarchy" of sovereign independent states who acknowledge no superior and recognise no common law; whose brawls have kept the world in tumult ever since. In observing this adverse feature of the transition, however, we have to

remember, first, that the unity of Christendom had in fact been extremely imperfect and unpeaceful; secondly, that the mediating authority of the papacy and the mollifying influence of the Catholic church had ceased to be effective long before the close of the Middle Ages; and, thirdly, that the formation of nations and national states, even though it might cause disturbances lasting for centuries, was an indispensable preliminary to the formation of any "League of Nations" or other effective political aggregation of mankind. On the other or positively favourable side of the account there is much to be noted. For, if regarded from the European point of view, the spirit of nationality was a disintegrating force; regarded from the local point of view it was the most potent unifying force that had manifested itself in the world since the days of Mahomet. In this country, for example, it created a single English nation where had once been warring races, heptarchic kingdoms, conquerors and conquered, exclusive social castes, and alien orders. It did much the same in France and in Spain. It tried to accomplish a similar unifying work in Germany and in Italy; but here, unhappily, the antagonistic influences were too strong for it. Both these countries were doomed to four more centuries of chaos and conflict before they also attained to any sort of national unity. So, too, with respect to the new passion of patriotism. As contemplated by the cosmopolitan mind, or as seen from the standpoint of an alien people, it might present the appearance of a "vulgar vice"; but as viewed by those within the magic circle of its power it displayed itself as the pure flame of the larger devotion which consumed the smaller loves of

self or sect, and fused the lower loyalties towards locality or caste or party into one splendid heroism dedicated to the " commonwealth of the realm."

From the sixteenth century, then, the nation has tended to be the dominant communal unit; the national state the normal type of political authority; patriotism the ruling principle among the nobler ranks of public men. Lofty nationalists, like Mazzini, of course recognised the wider claims of humanity; but they perceived the impossibility of organising humanity as a whole, and clearly saw that the best way to serve humanity was to group men in self-governing, mutually serviceable, nations. Sane preachers of patriotism, like Mr. C. H. Pearson, did not deny the cosmopolitan appeal, but they remarked that " patriotism seems to be based on the reasonable acknowledgment of two facts in our nature; that we owe a duty to our fellow-men and that we cannot adequately perform it to the race at large." [1] Since the dawn of the nineteenth century, particularly, has the spirit of nationality displayed its strength. It was stimulated by the wars of Liberation—waged to secure deliverance from the Napoleonic tyranny—which marked the opening years of the era; but still more was it nourished by the zeal for democratic self-government which the French Revolution had excited. For it was found that democratic self-government was possible only among peoples who were organically united, who were consciously one, who had a common conscience and a general will. And the only peoples who fulfilled these requirements were the nations. Thus, nationality came, and rightly came, to be regarded as the indispensable

[1] Pearson, *National Life and Character*, p. 198.

preliminary to democracy. As Professor Ramsay Muir well says: "The unifying force of the national spirit is indeed the only factor which has yet been discovered that can make self-government as real a thing in the large state as it was in the little city-state." [1] Thus, democrats in Italy sought first for the expulsion of the Austrians; democrats in Ireland made Home Rule their prime demand, and called themselves "Nationalists"; and so in all the countries of the world. It is true that in the latter part of the nineteenth century cosmopolitan influences arrayed themselves against the dominant nationalism and its attendant patriotism, and strove to prepare the way for the constitution of the Greater Society of mankind. But the outbreak of the present war revealed how little success they had achieved. One of the most notable utterances of the period of the war is that of the veteran Marxian Internationalist, Mr. H. M. Hyndman, who, in his book, *The Future of Democracy*, admits the collapse of the ideals of his lifetime, and proclaims that "in any attempt to reorganise the faculties of civilised man, the element of nationality must always be taken into account." [2] Even the Socio-Syndicalist Mr. G. D. H. Cole, with all his emancipation from patriotism and his enthusiasm for the world-wide class war, is constrained to confess that "nationality is still the strongest bond which can join men together, and so long as it retains its strength there will remain a great and fruitful province for the national state." [3] Finally, Professor J. Mark Baldwin in his notable Spencer

[1] Muir, *National Self-Government*, p. 9. Cf. also pp. ix and 110.
[2] Hyndman, *Future of Democracy*, p. 61.
[3] Cole, *The World of Labour*, p. 27.

Lecture on *The Super-State and Eternal Values* observes that "even in the most democratic and radical organisations of modern labour, this crisis has shown the vitality, the ineradicable vitality of nationality." [1]

§ 49. *Democracy and Nationality.*

At the present stage of the world's history the nation is the natural and normal communal unit; it is the only society out of which a genuinely democratic state can be created. Where national unity has not been attained, as in Poland, the democratic spirit can find vent only in a ferment of revolution. Where national unity exists, but national autonomy is denied, as in Bohemia, the democratic spirit leads to constant conspiracy and insurrection. In short, where democracy and nationality coincide there is strength and peace; where they conflict there is weakness and incurable unrest. Among ourselves, for instance, at the present moment, one of the gravest sources of trouble is the fact that, whereas the democratic unit is the United Kingdom, there are within the United Kingdom four nations each with a vigorous communal consciousness of its own. In such circumstances, when separation is out of question, federalism provides the way of reconciliation.[2] Reconciliation by some means or other is essential; for, as Sir Henry Maine remarked in the

[1] Cf. also Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, p. 88: "The sentiment of nationality is . . . stronger at this moment than it has ever been. It is one of the strongest forces in our modern life. Few other forms of corporate feeling have a firmer or deeper hold on men's minds. Socialism has not; nor has Internationalism. I doubt even if it can be claimed for religion."

[2] For a fuller consideration of this point, see below, Chapter XIII.

midst of the first turmoil of the Home Rule agitation, in the absence of this reconciliation, "democracies are quite paralysed by the plea of nationality: there is no more effective way of attacking them than by admitting the right of the majority to govern, but denying that the majority so entitled is the particular majority which claims the right." [1]

It remains to ask, first, what is a nation; what is this modern communal unit which has so definitely superseded the ancient tribes, clans, cities, and provinces, and which shows now so decided a superiority of strength to both black and red cosmopolitanism, *i.e.* to both Catholic religion and international Socialism: secondly, what is nationality; what is the nature of this new bond which holds men together by firmer ties than those of mere race or creed or class or economic interest or philanthropy: thirdly, through what organ or organs does the democratic nation realise its personality, display its characteristic qualities, give effect to its general will? The answers to the first two questions must be given briefly and without discussion.[2] A nation, says Professor Ramsay Muir, is "a body of people who feel themselves to be naturally linked together by certain affinities which are so strong and real to them that they can live happily together, are dissatisfied when disunited, and cannot tolerate subjection to people who do not share these ties." [3] He rightly points out that

[1] Maine, *Popular Government*, p. 28.

[2] The meaning of "Nation" and "Nationality" is discussed by Professor Ramsay Muir in his *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 37-57; by Professor H. J. Fleure in his *Human Geography*, pp. 233-38; and by the present writer in his *Main Currents of European History*, pp. 152-57 and pp. 343-47; Mr. A. E. Zimmern in his generally admirable *Nationality and Government* confuses nationality with racialism.

[3] *Nationality and Internationalism*, p. 38.

" its essence is a sentiment," and that the constituents of the sentiment vary in every case, the usual contributory factors being some measure or other of local contiguity, blood relationship, community of language, uniformity of religion, common economic interest, and common historic heritage.[1] The fact that nations differ widely, and that the sentiment which constitutes them is not quite the same in any two cases, makes it a matter of much difficulty to define " nationality." " It is," says Professor Muir, " an elusive idea." In that respect it resembles other of the great formative ideas which have been most potent in the history of the human race—the idea of liberty for instance. Perhaps, however, in the most general terms nationality may be defined as that principle, compounded of past traditions, present interests, and future aspirations, which gives to a people a sense of organic unity, and separates it from the rest of mankind.[2]

It is the third question that most concerns us here. Through what organ or organs does the democratic nation realise its personality, display its characteristic qualities, give effect to its general will? The answer to that question is: the state. But it is not the fashionable answer at the moment with either philosophers like Mr. Bertrand Russell and Mr. C. D. Burns, or guildsmen like Mr. G. D. H. Cole and Mr. A. R. Orage, or ecclesiastical syndicalists

[1] Burke's impressive *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* deals with the making of a nation. He lays stress on what he calls " the discipline of nature," *i.e.* on the long and gradual process of historical development. " When great multitudes," he says, " act together under that discipline of nature, I recognise the People."

[2] Mr. I. Zangwill has a brilliant though perverse lecture on *The Principle of Nationalities*, which well repays reading. It is written from the point of view of the cosmopolitan Jew. (Watts & Co., 1917.)

like Father Figgis, Rev. W. Temple, and the leaders of the so-called "Life and Liberty" rebellion in the church. All these mediaevalists profess to believe in functional division, and urge, some that the nation should resign the control of religion to the sovereign and exclusive care of self-governing churches; others that it should leave industry to the unrestricted authority of autonomous trade unions; all that the state should be restricted to certain specific political duties.[1] The state, indeed, is by most of these reactionaries treated with a good deal of contemptuous disrespect. "Every increase in the strength of the state," says Mr. Russell, "has been a new disaster to mankind." The aim of the state, Mr. C. D. Burns assures us after a study of history, has normally been the facilitation of the "effective exploitation" of some of its subjects by others, combined with the "effective plunder" of its neighbours. Father Figgis protests against what he calls "the idolatry of the state," which he finds inherent in the Austinian theory of law and government. Rev. Richard Roberts, the Independent Anarchist, declares that "historically the state has represented the organised native selfishness of human nature." It is, however, as we should expect, the volcanic Mr. G. D. H. Cole who is most vehement in his disparagement of the state: he speaks of it as merely "the governmental machine"; as but "the political organ of the geographical group"; as merely "one association out of many," and at best "*primus inter pares*";

[1] Mr. A. R. Orage enumerates the duties of the state under the six heads of law, medicine, defence, foreign relations, education, central and local administration: cf. *National Guilds*, p. 259. He unkindly deserts his allies when he says: "To these we might add the church, which, by the way, is a guild."

he condemns it as "the corner-stone of the edifice of capitalism."

§ 50. *The State and its Critics.*

The revolt against the state, so prevalent at the present moment among anti-Hegelian philosophers, anti-Collectivist revolutionaries, and anti-Reformation divines, is not without explanation, and even some degree of justification. On the one hand, the practices of the modern state have not been free from serious moral defects; on the other hand, the theory of the modern state has been pushed to lengths of extreme immorality by political perverts like Treitschke. First, as to the realm of affairs. Not all states are national. Some of them, such as Austria-Hungary and Turkey, are embodiments of the anti-national principle, and exist only in virtue of the ruthless subjection of alien peoples. Again, not all states are democratic. Some of them, such as the German Empire and Russia under the Tsars, are (or were) organised defiances to the general will, implacable foes of genuine popular government. In all these cases the distinction between—indeed, the antagonism between—nation and state is glaring. In none of them is the establishment of a national democracy possible except as the result of the destruction, or at any rate the revolutionary transformation, of the state. But, further, as we have already seen, not even in states which are both national and democratic has state-action always been happy and effective, or have politics always been patriotic and pure. There is no occasion here to repeat what has been already tabulated above concerning the defects of

democracy in such countries as France, Spain, Italy, the South American Republics, and even the United States and the British Empire. Suffice it to recall the story that, when Emerson expressed doubt as to the existence of the Devil, Carlyle took him to the House of Commons on an Irish night. Secondly, as to the realm of theory. Some political thinkers — invariably anti-democratic — have propounded dogmas concerning the state which are definitely immoral and indescribably abominable. Even Plato and Aristotle developed a theory of the state which, if transferred uncritically from the city-state to the national state, gives a too-exalted conception of the nature of the state and a too-extended view of its sphere. But it was Hegel who in modern times was responsible for the perverted doctrine that the state is an end in itself; and it was his degenerate disciple Treitschke who poisoned the German mind with the resultant sophistries of *Realpolitik*. I turn over the pages of Treitschke's *Lectures on Politics*, and I note as they occur the following damnable utterances: "The State is in the first instance Power. . . . Power is the principle of the State, as Faith is the principle of the Church and Love of the family. . . . The renunciation of its own Power is for the State in the most real sense the sin against the Holy Ghost. . . . Every State is in the position of being able to cancel any treaties that it has concluded, for the State has no higher judge above it. . . . An essential function of the State is to make war. . . . Without war there would be no State at all. . . . War is the only remedy for ailing nations. . . . The living God will see to it that war constantly returns as a dreadful medicine for the human race. . . . It will

ever remain Machiavelli's glory that he set the State upon its own feet and freed it in its morality from the Church. . . . States do not arise out of the people's sovereignty, but they are created against the will of the people." Such is the Devil's own dogma of the state which has converted the modern Germans into fiends incarnate, and has outraged both the reason and the conscience of humanity.

It is no marvel that the faults and the failures of existing states, combined with the flagrant immorality of Hegelian political theory, should have led to a reaction against the state, especially on the part of philosophers engaged in creative evolution, ideologues bent on the subversion of society, and churchmen eager for the life and liberty enjoyed by mediaeval inquisitors. But all these unbalanced and unpractical extremists carry their antagonism against the state too far. First, they do not sufficiently distinguish between states based on force and states based on consent; between sovereignties by acquisition and sovereignties by institution;[1] between inorganic polities built up by conquest and maintained by military pressure, and organic polities developed naturally from inner sources of communal life; between autocratic empires and national democracies. Secondly, they exaggerate the defects and underestimate the merits of national democracies, fix their attention on accidental and ephemeral evil and overlook essential and enduring good, ignore history with its record of constitutional progress, and surrender themselves to a profound pessimism concerning human nature. Thirdly, they take the Hegelian theory of the state too seriously. The Hegelian *Staatslehre* is

[1] Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chaps. xviii.-xx.

but the philosophical counterpart of the Prussian autocracy. There is a non-Hegelian conception of the state which is wholly compatible with ordered personal liberty, with freedom of association, with the reasonable independence of groups, with the authority of religion, and with the universal validity of the moral law. Moreover—as Mr. T. H. Green, Professor Bernard Bosanquet, and others have shown—it is possible, and indeed easy, to free even the Hegelian theory from its excesses and absurdities, and to display at its heart a great and splendid truth, viz. that " it is in the life of the state, and only there, that human life in all its ramifications can obtain the nourishment it needs for its appropriate expansion and development." [1] Fourthly and finally, they have themselves a ludicrously inadequate, unimaginative, and really unintelligent conception of the state. Strongly as they assert their own vitality and individuality, vigorously as they exploit Gierke and Maitland in support of the theory of the corporate personality and organic reality of groups, when they come to the state they persist in regarding it as a mere piece of mechanism, as an ingenious contrivance designed by evil men for the suppression of freedom, the plundering of the laborious, the persecution of the holy, the comfort of capitalists, and the maintenance of things as they are. It is to them but an instrument in the hands of governing classes, an instrument framed for purely political purposes, and an instrument so dangerous in itself and in practice so much abused that it ought either to be totally destroyed, or at any rate kept under vigilant control.

[1] Sheldon Amos, *Science of Politics*, p. 456.

§ 51. *What is the National State?*

This false and perverse mechanical theory of the state vitiates most of the anti-political writing of Syndicalists, Sacerdotalists, Sectaries, and Anarchists. It is one of the countless erroneous premisses that invalidate the specious arguments of Mr. Norman Angell's *Great Illusion*. Even so fine and usually sound a thinker as Professor Mark Baldwin falls into the snare of the revolutionary mechanicians when he says: "All the forms of democratic theory issue in a view of the state which assigns to it merely instrumental value. . . . The state is not the nation; it is an organ of the nation." [1] Professor Baldwin is confusing state with government. His words are true respecting what is quite properly termed "the machinery of government." They are not true of the state. It is, in fact, precisely the democratic theory to which he refers that leads one furthest away from the instrumental towards the organic view of the state; for it is precisely in a democracy that state and nation most perfectly coincide. But in respect of no form of state whatsoever is the mechanical conception adequate. Even in the extremest autocracy or the closest oligarchy the state is that organised community, whatever it may be, which exercises the sovereign power: it has a corporate personality with all the distinctive characteristics that differentiate a psychological organism from an administrative engine. In these cases, however, this community is not the nation; it is at most only a small part of the nation; it may be no part at all, but a wholly alien group. Very different is it with the national

[1] Baldwin, *The Super-State and Eternal Values*, p. 35.

democratic state. Even here, of course, state and nation are ideally distinct from one another—as (*pace* Father Figgis) state and church were in the Middle Ages. The nation, as we have seen, is the community of those who are united to one another, and separated from the rest of mankind, by a sentiment compounded of historic tradition, present interest, and future aspiration. The state is the community of those who exercise the sovereign political power. In the national democratic state, however, these two communities, though ideally distinct, tend (like state and church in the mediaeval *Respublica Christiana*) to be practically one and the same. Perhaps the coincidence can never be entirely perfect and complete. There probably must always be, even in the most fully extended democracy, some persons of strong national feelings who neither directly nor indirectly share political control. Similarly there may be—as there are at the present moment in the United Kingdom—some persons who play a prominent part in the life of the state who are devoid of patriotism and totally alien from the life of the nation. Happy the people where nation and state are most nearly identical; where the communal unit and the political unit are coincident; where patriotic inclination and civic obligation lead in one and the same direction! Among such a people the best conditions of peace and progress prevail.

In the case of such a national democracy the state may be defined as *the whole community organised politically to establish and maintain for its members the essential conditions of the good life.* In order to fulfil this purpose it cannot be merely self-regarding and non-moral, like the Moloch-state of Treitschke. It

is bound, on the one hand, to pay due regard to the fact that each individual and each group among its constituent members has his or its own ideal of the good life, and that this ideal demands respect; it is bound on the other hand to pay due regard to the equal claims of other communities similar to itself to enjoy the good life. What the conditions of the good life are is not a matter for precise definition. They are what the community thinks and desires them to be. In other words, the functions of the state are indeterminate, if not unlimited. The organised community can, within its own boundaries, properly do—subject to the universal restrictions of the moral law—anything that the common need requires, the common conscience approves, and the common will dictates. Its prime function, so long as the risk of war remains, must of course be the provision of adequate defence against external foes; for without a sense of security no good life is possible. Its second function, so long as the wicked walk the earth, must be the maintenance of order, the enforcement of law, the administration of justice internally; for amid the uncertainties of anarchy the good life cannot endure. But beyond these two elemental functions—the general protection of life and property—there lie infinite spheres of possible and proper democratic state-action. The appropriate limits of such state-action in any particular case are fixed not by any theoretical consideration respecting the sphere of the individual rights or the rival claims of groups; but by the practical expediency of the case as judged by the communal wisdom. Thus, if the nation is agreed in the matter of religion, it may well convert itself into a church, or may enroll itself (as Rev. W. Temple

hopes it will) as a member of a Catholic church ; [1] if, however, it is *not* agreed, its wisdom will indicate that it should leave its members free to form their own religious associations.

The essential point to note is that the national democratic state is not one association among many equals ; not an organisation established for restricted political purposes, still less a mechanical contrivance ; but the Great Society of the whole community, including all individuals and all groups, exercising authority over all, mediating, harmonising, controlling, securing the conditions of the good life for all. However much it may leave to individuals, to churches, to guilds, to voluntary societies generally, it will remain sovereign over all. " If," says Professor M'Kechnie, " the purpose for which the state exists is no less than the perfecting of the whole community, it follows that nothing can be excluded from the proper sphere which advances it towards that goal. . . . There is no part of the life of man that can claim to lie outside the sphere of the state." [2]

[1] If religion should ever again become the prime bond of the peoples, the resultant Catholic church (whether the present or another) might, of course, itself become the Great Society, the cosmopolitan state, consisting of the whole world-community organised to establish and maintain for its members the essential conditions of the good life. Apparently, to the eye of faith—but certainly not to the eye of political science—such a sovereign church already exists. For Dr. P. T. Forsyth says that the determination of the relation between church and state " is a religious question," and that " the last word is not with the democratic state but with the church, in whose view the democracy belongs to the monarchy, revelation, and obedience of Christ " (*Theology in Church and State*, p. 308).

[2] M'Kechnie, *State and Individual*, pp. 92 and 98. Cf. also Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, pp. 150-51 ; Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 122; Barker, *Political Thought*, pp. 60, 137, 229, 245; Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, pp. 156-57.

CHAPTER X

THE RULE OF THE MAJORITY

"Valentior pars totam universitatem repraesentat."—MARSIGLIO of PADUA, *Defensor Pacis.*

"Democracy is not merely the government of a majority: it is rather the government which best expresses the community as a whole."—HOBHOUSE, *Democracy and Reaction.*

"The term 'majority' is only an approximate one, since even in the widest democracies political sovereignty is in the hands of a fractional part of the entire population."—GETTELL, *Introduction to Political Science.*

"To say that the voice of the people is the voice of God is blasphemous; but to say that the voice of *all* must be more like the voice of God than any other that is heard on earth is neither blasphemous nor foolish."—INGERSOLL, *Fears for Democracy.*

"The minority, indeed, as Cobden said, has only one right, that of using all its efforts to become a majority in its turn."—LOW, *Governance of England.*

"Outvoted minorities must accustom themselves to give way."—GILBERT MURRAY in *Hibbert Journal.*

"The citizen must be taught to think of himself, not as an isolated individual with private interests of his own, but as a member of a great system in which he has a definite place and function."—MACKENZIE, *Dangers of Democracy.*

"The exercise of political power is a function not a right. The beginning and end of it is good government."—HARRISON, *Order and Progress.*

§ 52. *The National Basis of Democracy.*

IT is difficult to say which of the two are the more deadly enemies of democracy—the Hegelian idealists and autocrats who treat the state as an end in itself, proclaim its emancipation from morality, dissociate

it from its constituent members, assign to it a transcendental personality, and pay to it an idolatrous worship; or the Bergsonian Sectaries and Anarchists, lay and ecclesiastical, who pour contempt upon it, regard it as a mere mechanical obstacle in the path of their own creative freedom and irresponsible evolution, and consequently aim either at its total destruction or at its restriction to the narrowest and most menial functions. The national democrat stands midway between the Hegelian iconodule and the Bergsonian iconoclast. On the one hand, he has no mystical illusions respecting the state; to him it is but the politically organised community of which he is a constituent member. On the other hand, he does not despise or hate it or wish to destroy it; quite the contrary, he recognises that it is for him the Great Society, the sphere of his highest secular activities, the institution apart from which he cannot attain either to lawful liberty or to perfect self-realisation. He agrees with Professor M'Kechnie that to-day, as in the time of Aristotle, "the higher nature of mankind, in all its grandeur and complexity, can only be realised through the medium of the state," [1] and with President Butler of Columbia University that "the state is the completion of the life of the individual, without which he would not wholly live." [2] The national democratic state is indeed to him, in the present phase of the world's history—since the church-as-a-whole has lost, and humanity-as-a-whole not yet gained organic unity and corporate consciousness—the supreme community, whose "general will" and "general conscience" it

[1] M'Kechnie, *State and Individual*, p. 30
[2] Butler, *True and False Democracy*, p. 90.

is his highest earthly privilege to help to determine, and whose same "general will" and "general conscience," when determined, it is his highest secular duty to obey. It is the Great Society whose end is not primarily power, but righteousness and peace; it is founded not on force, but on consent; its main strength is moral and not material; its glory is that it unites all classes and interests in the pursuit of a common good; it conserves the loftiest freedom of the individual; it is conserved by the most solemn sanctions of religion and humanity. It is, on the one hand, the only existing sphere within which genuine popular self-government can be developed; and, on the other hand, the only practicable factor out of which, in conjunction with its fellows, that hope of the future—the League of Free States—can be constructed. Those, then, who would destroy the national democratic state—whether they be Prussian militarists or Bolshevist maniacs; whether they be active assailants or passive resisters—are among the worst foes of mankind.

We have already seen[1] that the ideal national democratic state is a community knit so closely together by sentiment, by tradition, by interest, by aspiration, that it is a psychological organism possessed of a corporate personality, a single consciousness, a common conscience, a general will. This is no mere figure of speech; for we are learning now from students of mass-psychology that man in association with his fellows is not the same as man in solitude; that an individual in a crowd merges his personality in that of his fellows, so that the character of a multitude differs from the sum total of the characters

[1] Above, § 9.

of its constituent members; that a community—as, for example, the Christian church on the one hand, or the German nation on the other—tends to develop a distinct type of its own, either higher or lower than that of the average type of its component units; that, in a sense more real and literal than would have been deemed possible but a few years past, the community is organic and sentient. And yet Rousseau, a century and a half ago, with the prophetic intuition of genius, had some conception of the truth when he distinguished the *volonté générale* from the *volonté de tous*.[1] He recognised the reality of the general will, and he rightly assigned to it the sovereignty which theorists for a thousand years had, on one ground or another, been attributing to pope, or emperor, or king. If he had made no other contribution to political science, this alone would have entitled him to immortal fame. It gave its leading idea to national democracy. Its value is such that in Rousseau's final account it more than compensates for the pernicious worthlessness of those "anarchic fallacies" concerning the individual "rights of man" by what it was unfortunately accompanied.

In the national democratic state, then, the sovereign authority resides in the general will, as formed by the general wisdom, under the guidance of the general conscience. In this chapter we are concerned primarily with the problems of how the general will of the nation is determined; how it finds expression; and on what grounds it claims obedience from all good citizens.

[1] *Contrat Social*, ii. 3: "Il y a souvent bien de la différence entre la volonté de tous et la volonté générale: celle-ci ne regarde qu'à l'intérêt commun; l'autre regarde à l'intérêt privé, et n'est qu'une somme de volontés particulières."

§ 53. *The Determination of the General Will.*

The general will may be defined as public opinion expressed in the imperative mood. The formation of public opinion and its formulation in the shape of commands is a subtle and mysterious process. Neither public opinion nor general will can be formed or formulated at all, except in a community conscious of unity; homogeneous, corporate. It implies mutual trust, free intercourse, friendly discussion. Thus, in a region like Alsace-Lorraine, inhabited half by native French and half by imported Germans, not one but two public opinions exist. Similarly Ireland, as shown by the recent Convention, is so heterogeneous and disunited that it cannot be treated as a democratic unit. It has not, and cannot attain to, a single public opinion or general will. A federal type of unification is the highest of which it is at present capable. In a racial cauldron like Macedonia, where not even local homogeneity exists, self-government is wholly out of the question; some form of authoritarian control is inevitable; there is no public opinion whatsoever, but only a chaos of conflicting prejudices; no general will at all, but merely a clash of racial passions. But in homogeneous communities—and England, Scotland, and Wales, in spite of the unhappy presence of a few alien groups, still fortunately are such—there exists a strong, coherent, and permanent body of public opinion, based on long tradition and maintained by constant reflection and debate. In each of these countries it is a noble heritage from a splendid ancestry, kept fresh and pure by the living thought and intercommunion of multitudes of patriotic citizens. This permanent and

stable public opinion is expressed imperatively through such vehicles as common law, statutory enactments, social customs, and rules of etiquette. It is rich in general principles, established standards of honour, and recognised codes of good behaviour. When new problems arise to which its well-defined criteria apply obviously and directly it is able to express itself with promptitude, vigour, and effect: when, for instance, in August 1914 Germany repudiated a solemn treaty as a "scrap of paper," invaded with diabolical barbarity a helpless people whom it was pledged to protect, and began to wage war with a Machiavellian disregard of all the humanitarian mitigations introduced by three centuries of international law — then, without any uncertainty or delay, public opinion entirely concurred in the view of king and ministers that civilisation was threatened as never before during the Christian era; and the general will strongly supported the Government in its resolution to take up arms in the defence of elemental right. In cases, however, where the old criteria do not obviously and directly apply, as for example in modern labour problems; or in cases where new criteria have to be established, as for example in the matter of the league of nations, public opinion is slow to mature, and the general will does not formulate itself precipitately. It does not, indeed, move fast enough to satisfy zealots of any sort, and sometimes it undoubtedly fails to keep pace with the rapid march of events. Nevertheless it is necessary that it should be educated and not stampeded, however slowly the processes of education may drag, and however gratifying the immediate results of a stampede may seem to eager enthusiasts to be.

For slow advance in accordance with the development of enlightened public opinion is sure; whereas reform made in a rush is certain to be followed by reaction.

The education of public opinion in modern democratic countries is constantly going on. The teachers of the sovereign democracy are numerous, and its would-be teachers still more so. It is instructed oracularly by the Press, the infinite variety of whose pronouncements prevents any one of them from being taken too seriously; it is edified by the Pulpit, whose moral influence has on the whole the important result of securing the contemplation of the questions of the moment *sub specie aeternitatis*; it is flattered and solicited by the Platform whose partisan presentation of national policy reveals the painful ease with which eternal principles can be perverted to the service of the sectional interests of the moment; it is informed by Parliament, the educative function of whose debates constitutes one of the most valuable services which this assembly renders to the community.[1] Such are the leading instructors, or would-be instructors of public opinion. There are many others. Never, indeed, have there been such vast multitudes of them as there are now, and never have they been so vociferous, so contradictory, or so insistent. Democracy, in fact, new to its position of power and responsibility, has not yet got quite accustomed to its swarm of counsellors. Their conflicting clamours sometimes tend to confuse and bemuse

[1] Debates in the House of Commons have lost much of their value since the rigidity of the party discipline has rendered the transference of votes in the House a rare and unexpected phenomenon. Debates in the House of Lords have been for some time far abler, freer, and more illuminating than those in the Lower House.

it; they indeed retard rather than expedite the formation of a sane public opinion, and the determination of a deliberate general will. Now and again public opinion is temporarily stampeded, as for example by a person like Titus Oates, or by a newspaper like *John Bull*; now and again it is deluded and deceived by the great illusions of a Norman Angell, or the specious and debilitating fallacies of the cosmopolitan pacificists. But in the long run —and this brings us back to a fundamental article of the democratic creed—public opinion sounds the true note, and the general will settles down to an equilibrium of sanity, moderation, and righteousness. This essential faith in the democracy has been expressed once and for all by Lincoln in his famous aphorism: "You can fool part of the people all the time, and all the people part of the time; you cannot fool all the people all the time." It is a cardinal tenet of the believer in popular self-government that, at the long last, public opinion can be trusted to come to conclusions at once sane and just. Only on the basis of this postulate is it possible to predicate a general will worthy of sovereign authority in a community.

We have seen that in a modern democratic state the democracy is not called upon to govern directly. It has merely to select a government, and to determine the main lines of policy. Hence it follows, first, that public opinion is not required to apply itself to the details of legislation, administration, and adjudication, all of which require expert knowledge, but only to the great guiding principles; secondly, that the general will is under no necessity to issue particular commands to executive officials, but merely to give

clear general instructions to its legislative representatives. These great guiding principles, however, the democracy *must* arrive at, unless it is to fail in its sovereignty as abjectly as a weak-minded Tsar; these general instructions it *must* give, unless it is to abdicate in favour of a "conscious minority" of some sort or other. The question thus arises: By what means can public opinion express itself, and disentangle itself from the multitude of private opinions and group opinions with which it is complicated; by what means can the general will make itself operative as against antagonistic private and group wills? The answer which in almost every working constitution has been given to that question is: By the vote of the majority.

§ 54. *The Principle of Majority Rule.*

Long-continued and widely extended experience has made us familiar with the practice of the majority vote. We are so much accustomed to elect representatives, to appoint officials, to determine policy, to settle disputes, and to transact the miscellaneous business of multifarious societies by means of the decisions of the greater part, that we do not always sufficiently perceive that there is something anomalous in this treatment of a fraction as if it were the whole; something paradoxical in this recognition of the will of a portion as equivalent to the determination of all. Yet it is obvious upon reflection that we have in this generally accepted convention a curiosity of political procedure. The general will is the will of the community-as-a-whole, and therefore it would seem that ideally the whole community should be unanimous

in its decisions. Unanimity is in fact required in the Russian *Mir*, where discussion goes on indefinitely and tumultuously until unanimity is attained, even if in order to secure it the last dissentient has to be slain. Unanimity was required in the Diet of the vanished Polish kingdom, where the *liberum veto* of a single member could prevent the passage of any measure, even though it were approved by all the rest. Unanimity is still required in an English jury, where it is usually obtained by the surrender of the weaker portion (not always the minority) in the interest of peace, freedom, and food. Unanimity was, if not required, at least desired in many ancient and mediaeval assemblies; but experience soon showed, first, that it was rarely attainable; secondly, that the effort to attain it involved endless delays, embittered conflicts, hopeless deadlocks; and thirdly —and this was the most important point—that even when secured it did not as a rule represent the general will at all, but rather some unsatisfactory variant therefrom forced upon the community by an obstinate minority or even a single headstrong individual. The practical alternative to majority rule was, and is, not unanimity, but minority rule. This fact was gradually recognised by both actual administrators and political thinkers. On the one hand, in ruling assemblies—and particularly in ecclesiastical councils and the governing bodies of corporations—it became more and more the custom, in order to get things done, to end otherwise-interminable and inconclusive debate by taking a vote and so deciding the point at issue by the voice of the "better part." For some time efforts were made to estimate votes qualitatively as well as to count them numerically; but

the difficulty of doing so proved to be insuperable.[1] Hence the principle of the rule of the majority established itself as a necessary practical expedient. It did more than that, however. On the other or theoretical side, it commended itself to political thinkers, and was accepted even by defeated minorities, as the best and most satisfactory method of ascertaining the general will. Marsiglio of Padua, for instance, devoted six chapters of his *Defensor Pacis* to the discussion and defence of the principle of the rule of the majority, and he summed up his conclusions in the notable phrase: *Valentior pars totam universitatem repraesentat.*[2] "The majority stands for the whole community"; that was the idea which commended the electoral device of the councils and the corporations to the approval of the mediaeval political philosophers. As we have seen, the conception of community was strong in the Middle Ages, and with it the closely allied conception of the representative or vicarious character of every act of every member of the Christian Commonwealth. Hence the elector who cast his vote in the assembly was regarded not as a private person expressing an individual opinion, but as a member of the society recording his impression of the general will of the community-as-a-whole. Thus the process of voting became not a clash of two hostile aggregations of isolated wills, but the balancing, pro and con, of two alternative policies by a single communal will. And just as an individual man weighs the arguments for

[1] Thus at the papal election of A.D. 1159 the three cardinals who supported Victor IV. declared themselves to be "better" than all the rest of the College who elected Alexander III. Hence the electoral decree of A.D. 1179 which made the numerical test of a two-thirds majority decisive.

[2] *Defensor Pacis*, Part I. chaps. xii.-xvii.

and against a certain course of action, and then decides in favour of one of them *with his whole will*, so, in the mediaeval view of the matter, does a corporate assembly debate by means of its representative members concerning dubious concerns, and then by its majority vote give a *unanimous decision.*

This is a much finer and truer description and explanation of the apparent paradox of the rule of the majority than those which were presented by the individualistic thinkers of more modern times. But it postulated the organic conception of the community which, though to us it is happily once again familiar, was foreign to their habit of mind. Thus Bentham, when he found it necessary to defend the principle of the rule of the majority, could only argue that " as every individual pursued his own happiness, and could do nothing else, a majority of these individuals, if only they could find the right machinery for the expression of their will, would by consequence realise the supreme political end of the greatest happiness of the greatest number." [1] Similarly, Sir James Stephen, when he wished to find some historical and rational solution to the enigma of majority rule, and the still greater enigma of its general acceptance, had to fall back upon the crude supposition that it is a substitute for combat; that, since on a stricken field victory normally goes to the big battalions, so a convention has come to be established according to which the big battalions shall secure their victory without the agony of fighting for it, and without being reduced to the painful necessity of having to extinguish the minority in a blood-bath in order to

[1] Bentham, *Works*, vol. ix. p. 142. Cf. MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, pp. 60-61.

confirm it: "We count heads," he says, "instead of breaking them." [1] Even Professor MacCunn, who usually makes quite the best of the case for democracy and its methods, presents a no better "plea for the rule of the majority" than the apologetic submission that the majority can be trusted to fulfil tolerably well the modest duties that fall to its lot, viz. the duty of choosing decent legislators, and the duty of determining the broad lines of public policy.[2] None of these arguments touches the real issue, which is: What claim has the majority to speak for the whole community; why should the voice of a part be treated as the voice of all; therefore, should a minority submit to be overruled by a majority?

The true and satisfactory answer is to be found along the lines laid down by the mediaeval thinkers. It is a corollary to the proposition that the community is an organic unit, and that its general will is a single and indivisible thing. In the light of this guiding principle let us consider, first, the character of the individual voter, and secondly, the nature of the majority which his vote goes to create. (1) The individual voter is not an isolated unit forming his opinions *in abstracto* and reaching his decisions *in vacuo*. He is a member of a body politic, joined in a vital union with his fellows, sharing their thoughts and emotions, influenced by them in countless ways, and in turn exerting over them the influence of his own personality. Thus, as Professor Dewey of Michigan well says, "a vote is not an impersonal counting of one; it is a manifestation of some tendency of the social organism through a member of

[1] Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, p. 31.
[2] MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, chap. v.

that organism," so that " the voting of the individual represents in reality a deliberation, a tentative opinion, on the part of the whole organism." [1] (2) The majority vote represents in a final and authoritative form what the individual vote represents in this provisional and tentative form. It reveals the prevailing tendency of the social organism; it manifests the public opinion of the body politic; it displays the general will of the community-as-a-whole. For consider how in a homogeneous society like that of England—where civic life is in the main pure, where a wide interest is taken in national affairs, and where discussion is free—the majority is constituted, and how it arrives at its decision. The majority is not a permanent body which exists and votes without any regard to the policy that it is asked to support, or the candidates who are presented to it for election. It is a loosely knit, fluctuating, and ephemeral body, constantly subject to the defections of those who cease to approve of its measures or its men, constantly compelled to maintain and strengthen itself by modifications of its programme and by changes in the ranks of its leaders. Over against it is a minority which by the same means is struggling to enlarge itself into a majority. It offers an alternative policy, made as attractive as possible in order to win over marginal members of its dominant antagonist; it presents alternative leaders whose characters and capacities appeal as strongly as may be to those who are dissatisfied with " the old gang " in office. Thus there is continual give and take, interminable discussion, incessant adaptation of policy and programme, frequent change of personnel; so that,

[1] Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, pp. 9, 11.

when at last the matter is brought to an issue and a vote is taken, the minority has had almost as much influence in deciding it as has the majority. It is a decision arrived at by the whole community. Professor Dewey rightly insists that as a result of this electoral interplay "the minority is represented in the policy which it forces the majority to accept in order to be a majority."[1] He is but echoing the words of an older American writer who expressed the same truth thus: "The minority adopts enough of the ideas of the majority to attract those who are nearest to the line of division, and the majority in struggling to reclaim them makes concessions. The issue is thus constantly shifting with the wavering tide of battle, until the policy which at last prevails has become adjusted so as nearly to represent the average sense of the whole people. In shaping the policy which emerges from the conflict the minority acts a part scarcely less important than the majority."[2] It is because the minority plays so vital and prominent a part in determining the policy of the majority that the majority can claim to speak for the whole community. It is owing to the fact the minority has exercised, and knows that it has exercised, its full legitimate influence in moulding and modifying the programme of the majority that it rightly and readily submits to be overruled.[3]

[1] Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 10.

[2] Tilden, *Works*, i. 290, quoted by Dewey *loc. cit.*

[3] Professor Giddings, *Democracy and Empire*, p. 195, argues forcibly that a majority in order to remain a majority must be moderate and must pursue a course midway between extremes. This is a notably different view from that of Burke, who held that a majority would be violently revolutionary (*French Revolution*, Clarendon Press Edition, p. 110), and from that of Sir Henry Maine, who maintained, on the other hand, that it would display a more than Chinese conservatism and stagnation (*Popular Government*, p. 97).

§ 55. *The Representation of Minorities.*

The principle just enunciated — viz. that the democratic national state is an organic unit with a single and indivisible general will which is best expressed, after full and free discussion, by the vote of the majority—gives the key to the solution of several other problems related to popular sovereignty. Among these the most important is the problem of the representation of minorities.

There are few things that have excited graver apprehension among students of democratic institutions than the possible "tyranny of the majority." This apprehension is not limited to antagonists of democracy like Professor Blackie, Sir Henry Maine, or Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson; it is shared by men of pronounced popular and progressive views. Harrington, the seventeenth-century author of *Oceana*, was a man of advanced commonwealth opinions, yet he expressed dread of the motions of the multitude; Lord Acton was a thinker of a most liberal type, yet he said, "The one pervading evil of democracy is the tyranny of the majority, or rather of that party, not always the majority, that succeeds, by force or fraud, in carrying elections";[1] above all John Stuart Mill displayed the most consuming anxiety lest the great Leviathan, whose claims he had so earnestly advocated, should, when established in power, behave like a brute: "The tyranny of the majority," he confessed, "is now generally included among the evils against which society requires to be on its guard."

[1] Acton, *History of Freedom*, p. 97.

[2] Mill, *Liberty*, chap. i.: cf. also Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la Démocratie*, vol. i. p. 325: "En démocratie il faut partout et par tous les moyens s'efforcer de limiter les pouvoirs de la majorité, afin de protéger la minorité," etc. etc.

It would be difficult to deny that these fears have much justification. Few tyrannies have been more real or more hateful than those of the corrupt majorities of the South American Republics, the venal majorities of Tammany Hall, the conscript majorities of countries like Rumania,[1] the heterogeneous majorities composed of aggregations of log-rolling minorities which have been the curse of France. No one could expect mercy or moderation from any sort of majority at present likely to be thrown up among backward and demoralised peoples like those of Celtic Ireland or Slavonic Macedonia. "It is worse and more unpleasant and more dangerous," says Professor York Powell, "to be ruled by many fools than by one fool or by a few fools. The tyranny of an ignorant and cowardly mob is a worse tyranny than the tyranny of an ignorant and cowardly clique or individual." [2]

Anti-democratic writers, with their pessimistic estimate of human nature, regard this "tyranny of the majority" as an inevitable and permanent feature of popular government. The believer in democracy, who necessarily takes a more hopeful view of his fellows, holds, on the contrary, that it is only a passing if horrible phase, indicative of moral and intellectual immaturity rather than of decadence and decline. All, however, agree in asking how this "tyranny of the majority"—whether permanent or passing—can be obviated or mitigated. The remedy usually recommended is some sort of representation of minorities. Some variety of device is suggested

[1] Cf. D. Mitrany in *The Balkans* (Oxford University Press), p. 287: "No Rumanian Government ever fails to obtain a majority at an election."

[2] F. York Powell, "Thoughts on Democracy," in Beard's *Industrial Revolution*, p. 36.

by means of which a curb can be put into the jaws of Leviathan. The most elaborate of these mechanical contrivances is Hare's scheme which J. S. Mill describes, with enthusiastic testimony to its probable efficacy, in the seventh chapter of his *Representative Government*.[1] Less complicated and impossible is the scheme of proportional representation advocated by men so able and disinterested as the late Earl Grey and the late Lord Courtney.[2] Simplest of all, but the merest palliatives, are such expedients as "fancy franchises" and "three-cornered constituencies." None of these ingenious inventions is the smallest good. A majority that is disposed to be tyrannous will be tyrannous still, however it may be manipulated, however many minorities may be represented before it, and however proportionally its victims may be ranged within its maw. On the other hand each of the proposed remedies has positive disadvantages which render its adoption undesirable. Hare's scheme would abolish our local constituencies which are the very basis of our parliamentary system; proportional representation would involve the disintegration of our great national parties in favour of countless sectional groups; fancy franchises would rouse (as they did in 1867) the most vehement antagonism of the unfancied; three-cornered constituencies would lend themselves (as they did in the 'seventies) with peculiar ease to the machinations of the caucus. Further, all these proposals alike have the more fundamental defect that they derogate

[1] Hare's scheme is explained and commended by Professor Jethro Brown, *The New Democracy*, chap. iii. For a criticism of it see Bagehot, *English Constitution*, pp. 149-58.

[2] There is an able exposition and defence of P.R. in Zenker, *Der Parlamentarismus, sein Wesen und seine Entwicklung* (1914, Vienna).

from the unity of the nation, and tend to substitute for the representation of the general will the chaos of a number of particular wills. We do not want—indeed we want above all things to avoid—what we should get under both Hare's scheme and the scheme of the Proportional Representation Society, viz. a parliament which includes a number of members whose prime interest is not the welfare of the nation as a whole, but the propaganda of some sect or other. We should have teetotal members backed by solid phalanges of teetotal votes; anti-nicotine members sent up by serried masses of non-smokers; pacificist members supported by the cranky battalions of the conscientious objectors; faddists and fanatics of all sorts, representative of the concentrated eccentricities of the electorate. It is not the business of a minority to seek representation on its own account; but to seek, to influence the majority, to mould public opinion, to help to determine the general will. Each elector should regard himself as a microcosm of the Great Society. Parliaments should consist, not of men whose prime concern is the programme of some group or other, but of men who represent in the first instance the nation as a whole in all its varied aspects and activities.[1]

Is there then no remedy for the "tyranny of the majority"? There is none—and there is need of none—save the purification of public opinion, the ennobling of public life, the rousing of public spirit, the education of public conscience, the development of the sense of public responsibility. What is needed is not the accentuation and perpetuation of propor-

[1] On the question of the representation of minorities see Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la Démocratie*, vol. ii. pp. 81 *sqq.*

tional sectionalisms, not the stereotyping of represented minorities, but the emphasising of the unity of the nation and the enlargement of the idea of patriotism. Not in futile efforts by means of subtle devices to curb and check majorities, but in the conversion of majorities to a magnanimous use of their omnipotence lies the way of deliverance.[1]

§ 56. *The Problem of the Franchise.*

One of the latest advocates of proportional representation is Mr. H. G. Wells, who has momentarily diverted to parliamentary reform that errant enthusiasm which during recent years he has successively bestowed upon Fabian Socialism, free love, natural science, national defence, episcopal religion, and various other causes, good, bad, and indifferent. Mr. Wells, it would appear, has been goaded to his furious onslaught upon our present system of majority rule by a sense of his own electoral impotence. He finds by reference to *Whitaker's Almanack* that he is represented in parliament by Mr. Burdett Coutts, and he finds from *Hansard's Debates* that Mr. Burdett Coutts's views and his own do not coincide—it would, indeed, be almost impossible that they should do so for any length of time, unless Mr. Burdett Coutts were subject to very sudden and inexplicable fluctuations of opinion. Mr. Wells rises from his study of *Whitaker* and *Hansard* with the angry ejaculation: "I am more ineffective than a Galician Pole or a Bohemian who votes for his nationalist representative.

[1] Cf. F. Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p. 22: "The various professorial devices for regenerating society by giving votes to minorities, classes, groups, properties, or acquirements, exhibit to my mind only the art of constitution-making in its stage of pragmatical dotage."

Politically I am a negligible item in the constituency of this Mr. Burdett Coutts." [1] Now it may be admitted that Mr. Wells's vote—if he cast it, though apparently he did not, or else he surely would have remembered against whom he recorded it—had but little influence upon the result of the Westminster election. It is indeed a rare phenomenon when any individual elector can attribute to his solitary vote a decisive effect upon the issue of a parliamentary contest. But, even granting this, is it true to say that politically Mr. Wells is a "negligible item" either in the Westminster constituency or in the country at large? Obviously it is not true. If it were true, why has Mr. Wells troubled himself to write *In the Fourth Year*? It is a book that is intended to influence, and one that will doubtless succeed in influencing, multitudes of electors both in Westminster and throughout the kingdom in favour of proportional representation and in favour of the league of free nations. Mr. Wells is an able and persuasive writer, and he almost certainly has a numerous following, especially among those who have not concerned themselves to track his previous eccentric course. Probably his influence is scarcely less considerable than that of Miss Marie Corelli or Sir Hall Caine. Mr. Wells, in fact, like Mrs. Pankhurst, makes a great deal too much of the mere vote. A vote is in reality little more than an instrument for recording public opinion, an indicator for registering the general will. One might indeed vary the well-known aphorism of Fletcher of Saltoun and say: "I care not who has the vote, provided that I control public opinion and the general will." The primarily

[1] Wells, *In the Fourth Year*, p. 153.

important things are, in fact, those forces which mould public opinion and determine the general will, and these are wholly independent of the distribution of the franchise. They are in truth independent of all accidental circumstances; they are unaffected by age or sex, by race or class, by time or space, by life or death. Up to the present, for instance, women have had no votes in the United Kingdom; yet they have from time immemorial exerted a powerful control over British politics by means of their personal influence, their social prestige, their literary ability, their moral example—to say nothing of their recent activity with horsewhips, hammers, and bombs. Now at last they have got the vote, and when they exercise it they will probably be astonished to find how little difference it makes to either themselves or any one else. After each of the three Reform Acts of the nineteenth century—1832, 1867, 1884—it was remarked with amazement how small an effect the electoral and other changes had, either on the constitution of the House of Commons or on the course of British policy. As was observed in the case of the Jackdaw of Reims,

> What gave rise to no little surprise,
> Was that nobody seemed one penny the worse

—or the better! The explanation, of course, is that public opinion does not change with the enlargement of the electorate, and that the general will remains stable amid all the redistributions of the seats. It is a matter of comparative insignificance whether the mandate of the community-as-a-whole is proclaimed by a majority of five million out of eight million electors, or by a majority of ten million out of sixteen. In spite of wide differences between

electoral units, there is in a large multitude such a general cancellation of surds that roughly $\frac{5}{8} = \frac{10}{16}$. What is vital is that the community-as-a-whole, and the whole community, should in very deed be represented. Under the old parliamentary system during the eighteenth century only one person in fifty had a vote, yet a strong defence of that restricted franchise could be made, and actually was made, on the ground that the constituencies and the electoral qualifications were so varied that no important interest and no single class was without its effective voice. The most deadly criticism of that old parliamentary system was, not that the voters were so few, but that they did not as a matter of fact correctly express public opinion, or accurately indicate the general will.

It is desirable that national affairs should be regarded from as many different points of view as possible. It is further necessary for the national well-being that the interests of no class should be neglected: the health of the body politic depends upon the prosperity of all its members. Hence it follows that the franchise should be as wide and varied as possible. But it should be clearly understood that the franchise is not primarily a personal right, but a public trust. The old radical cry of "one man, one vote" was hopelessly individualistic. Those who uttered it approached the franchise problem from a totally wrong direction. No man, apart from his qualifications, has a valid claim to the vote; and of his qualifications the community is the final judge. Mere manhood may justify an unenfranchised individual in asking for the vote, and may require that his request be respectfully considered; but the community's judgment concerning his capacity to per-

form the duties of citizenship is what determines the issue. It is quite proper that infants, imbeciles, and criminals should be excluded from the electoral roll; they cannot, by reason of their mental or moral defects, rightly represent the mind or the conscience of the nation. It is probably, but less certainly, proper that paupers should also be excluded; for their proved incompetence in their own affairs does not commend them as controllers of communal business, while their very impecuniosity may be expected to render them at once predatory and prodigal.[1] It is not often that one can agree with Treitschke, but on this point he is sound. "The right to vote," he says, "is not an individual right but rather a civic duty to be exercised for the good of the community and the welfare of the state: consequently the question who is to vote must be a matter to be decided by the state."[2] Mr. J. A. Hobson says the same thing in the words: "Political power ought to be distributed in proportion to ability to use it for the public good."[3] Even Mr. Ramsay MacDonald echoes Treitschke quite sensibly when he says: "Nor should the state grant the 'right' to the franchise unless by doing so it is promoting its own ends."[4] In similar vein M. de Laveleye argues that the exercise of the vote is not a natural right

[1] *Fabian Tract*, No. 11, p. 6, argues that "the paupers must vote because, since if the laws were just there would be no paupers, the paupers have the first right to a voice in altering the unjust laws by what they are the greatest sufferers." Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson effectively replies: "It might perhaps be plausibly maintained that if the laws were just there would be no criminals and lunatics. Would it follow that criminals and lunatics should have a vote?"—*Development of Parliament*, p. 152.

[2] Davis, *Political Thought of H. von Treitschke*, p. 143. Of course Treitschke's conception of the state is very different from that of the democrat; but that is another question.

[3] Hobson, *Crisis of Liberalism*, p. 79. Cf. also p. 80.

[4] MacDonald, *Socialism and Government*, vol. i. p. 11.

but a public function: "C'est prendre part au gouvernement et à l'administration des intérêts de tous." [1]

§ 57. *Conclusion.*

One of the strongest arguments why, in the interests of the community, the franchise should be extended as widely as is compatible with the general well-being, is that so long as there are large unenfranchised classes there can never be permanent political peace or enduring constitutional stability. "They won't be happy till they get it" is as true of the democratic vote in the case of these unenfranchised classes as it is true of national independence in the case of subjugated peoples. And until the peoples are happy in the possession of both external and internal autonomy the conditions of progress in all spheres of communal activity will be wanting. The most important thing about the franchise is to get it permanently settled and out of the way. "For almost two generations," wrote Mr. Frederic Harrison in 1875, "political activity has exhausted its resources in promoting or resisting projects for the redistribution of power. In the meantime the efficiency of government itself has too often been neglected by both parties alike, and the things which the government ought to do have been commonly forgotten, while all have been contending as to how political rights should be shared." [2] Since Mr. Harrison wrote, another generation has passed, and even now, after an agitation of a most deplorable and demoralising nature, the question is not quite settled: for the differences

[1] Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la Démocratie*, vol. ii. p. 49.
[2] Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p. 3.

which in the Act of 1918 distinguish male from female voters cannot be regarded as likely to be tolerated permanently by the majority. There can be no final rest now until all sex disabilities are removed, and an equal and universal suffrage established. There is no logical reason for entrusting the vote to a woman of thirty and withholding it from a woman of twenty-one. The women trained in the twentieth century are as a matter of fact more, and not less, likely to be fitted for public life than their Victorian aunts. The sooner anomalies are swept away from the Act of 1918 and bed-rock bottom reached the better.[1] There alone will constitutional stability and repose be found.

Although it is probably true that, provided public opinion and the general will remain unchanged, the doubling of the electorate will not immediately have any marked effect upon either the personnel of the House of Commons or the policy of the British Empire, yet it must be admitted that there is one new element of uncertainty in the enlarged electorate. Never before has political power been entrusted to masses of people so entirely ignorant of public affairs, so inexperienced in all matters of administration, so lacking in organisation, so emotional, so liable to be misled by blandishments, plausibilities, and sentimentalities. If Britain were a direct democracy in which the actual conduct of affairs were in the hands of the enfranchised citizens, the granting of votes to women would be certainly and speedily fatal. But, as Britain is not a direct democracy, but merely an indirect one in which the function of the possessors

[1] The arguments in favour of universal suffrage, and the considerations for and against the granting of votes to women, are lucidly presented by Laveleye, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 50 and 60. Cf. also Holt, *Study of Government*, pp. 117-19.

of the franchise is not to govern, but only to choose a government and to indicate the main lines of policy, no harm need result. On the contrary, the result may be decisively good. But it will be so only on the condition that all the electors, new and old, clearly recognise the limitation of their functions; *i.e.* distinctly understand that the members whom they choose are representatives and not delegates; resolutely abstain from intermeddling with the details of affairs of state; fully realise that the community-as-a-whole has entrusted them with the power of the vote primarily in order that they may the more effectively interpret public opinion and indicate the general will. On this condition—the fulfilment of which is unfortunately far from assured—the establishment of a genuinely universal suffrage may have a result most decisively good. For it ought immensely to strengthen the position, and increase the power, of such ministries as under it may be placed in office.

Now, one of the most disquieting features of recent British politics, as we have already remarked, has been the feebleness of the successive governments which have nominally ruled the kingdom. Ministers who ought to have been strong in the consciousness that they represented the sovereign people, and drew their authority from the sources of its indefeasible right and its inexhaustible power, have, one after another, vacillated and cringed before illegal strikers, Sinn Fein rebels, turbulent ecclesiastics, conscientious objectors, syndicalist shop-stewards, and indeed any group of antagonists possessed of political influence and capable of offering organised resistance. The spectacle of impotence in office and successful lawlessness in power has in truth been one of the most

humiliating and disgraceful phenomena of our recent history. The causes of this intolerable state of semi-anarchy are broadly two. The first is the fact that there are considerable groups of men who are ready to use their electoral power for sectional and selfish, rather than for national and patriotic, ends. Hence they are able to threaten, and they do in fact remorselessly threaten, with "hideous ruin and combustion" any ministers who may courageously and equitably enforce any law that they happen to dislike. The second cause is that ministers have been too much mere party leaders and representatives of sectional caucuses; too little the servants of the community-as-a-whole and representatives of the sovereign people in its integrity. They have taken too narrow and debased a view of their position and their dignity. They have looked upon themselves too exclusively as the nominees and the dependents of the fluctuating and incalculable aggregation of individual voters whose momentary support has placed them in power. They have trembled too readily before the frowns of the whips and the wire-pullers.[1] If only they could have realised that the vote of the majority to which they owed their elevation was the resultant of the interplay of all the influences operating in the whole Great Society; if only they could have believed that they were the supreme agents and executors of the general will, then surely they would have faced their responsibilities and have done their duty with greater courage and fidelity. The immense influx of new electors, coupled with the vast changes of all sorts effected by the war, will shake old conventions

[1] Cf. Godkin, *Problems of Modern Democracy*, p. 201: "To the mind of the ordinary legislator of to-day, the duty of pleasing the voters is even more obligatory than the duty of furnishing them with good government."

to their very base. If but the ministers of the new democracy can grasp the fact that they represent not merely the party that places them in office, but the whole sixteen millions of the new electorate; and not merely the sixteen millions of the new electorate, but the whole community of the British peoples whose general will the electors indicate—then, indeed, will they bring to the task of government a loftier sense of responsibility, and a firmer resolution; then will they face rebels and revolutionaries with a sterner determination and a more worthy confidence in the cause of national sovereignty and common law.

CHAPTER XI

DISCIPLINE AND DUTY

"The essence of democratic rule is that the voice of the majority should prevail."—LORD CROMER in *Spectator.*

"In a democracy indiscipline is general. Men in authority can request but not command."—J. ELLIS BARKER, *Foundations of Germany.*

"A true democracy is only possible when Society, a true organism, becomes conscious of its intelligence and will, and thus is capable of that self-control which is the essence of Democracy, and which contains the only liberty and equality that are worth the names."—J. A. HOBSON, *Crisis of Liberalism.*

"Democracy and discipline are not incompatible at all. They are complementary, and each can be at its best only when it is sustained by the other. Only a disciplined and self-controlled people can be free to rule itself."—A. E. ZIMMERN, *Nationality and Government.*

"What alarms me most among the phenomena of our industrial life is the growing irresponsibility of the working classes. By this I mean not only their failure to recognise obligations to any class but their own; but the failure to recognise their own interests as part of a co-operative commonwealth. . . . The working classes suggest to me a long disciplined army which has suddenly discovered that it can coerce its officers."—W. SMART in *Spectator*, September 6, 1913.

"When all submit to law imposed by the common will for the common good, then law is not slavery but true liberty."—PHILIP SNOWDEN, *Socialism and Syndicalism.*

"A co-operative commonwealth must have a common will which it enforces, to some extent or other, on the individuals in the commonwealth."—RAMSAY MACDONALD, *Socialism and Government.*

"Feebleness in its Government is the most frightful calamity that can befall a nation."—*Maxims of Napoleon.*

§ 58. *Indiscipline and Passive Resistance.*

THE obverse side of that ministerial feebleness which has just been noted is the tendency on the part of

numerous groups of the population to achieve their sectional purposes not by methods of persuasion but by methods of lawlessness. It is difficult to say which is cause and which effect; for action and interaction are instantaneous and cumulative. Just as in a class of schoolboys a weak master is at once detected by the instinct of the rowdies, so in a state is a weak government discovered intuitively and immediately—no matter how loud its bluster or how vehement its bluff—by the rebels and the anarchists. "There can be no doubt," says Sir Arthur Clay, "that the most efficient ally of the forces of revolution is the appearance of irresolution and timidity in the administration." [1] In the case both of the microcosm of the school and the macrocosm of the state weakness breeds disobedience, and disobedience exposes weakness, until, after a short period of acerbating conflict, there is a swift descent into chaos.

The recent drift towards lawlessness in Britain has already been noticed in this book,[2] but it is necessary here and now to consider it again from another point of view. It has been regarded and depicted above as one of the distinctive features of the most dangerous of all the cross-roads along which democracy is being lured to self-destruction—the cross-road of Anarchism. It remains in this place to observe that disobedience, lawlessness, indiscipline, whatever form they may take, are entirely incompatible with that sovereignty of the general will—that self-determination of the whole community by means of the rule of the representative majority—which is the essence of true democracy. One of the

[1] Clay, *Syndicalism and Labour*, p. 30.
[2] See above, § 45.

gravest dangers, indeed, that confronts the British peoples at the present time is the danger lest, having assumed the supreme authority once held by kings and lords, they should in turn be overthrown by turbulent minorities among themselves. Britain is by Mr. H. G. Wells rightly included among countries which "are all slipping about on that same slope down which Russia has slid." [1] That able administrator, sincere democrat, and notable political thinker, Sir Charles Lucas, has described the perilous situation in the words: "The most widespread evil in Great Britain is—or was till the war came upon us—the decline in the habit of obedience, impatience of discipline in all phases of life, in all grades of society. The many choose the few, but will not obey the few when they have chosen them." [2]

There are three main varieties of this anti-democratic indiscipline. They may be named respectively passive resistance, impertinent interference, and active rebellion. Let us consider each in turn.

The passive resister is one who refuses to do something which the law orders him to do, on the ground that he has some moral or other objection to it. He sets his personal will, or the will of a group to which he belongs, against the general will of the community; he opposes the conscience of himself or of his group to the general conscience. Thus in 1902 a small company of Nonconformists declined to pay part of their education rates because they objected to the religious provisions of the Education Act of that year; thus again in 1915 a No-Conscription Fellowship was formed consisting of men who were

[1] Wells, *In the Fourth Year*, p. 111.

[2] Lucas, "The Empire and Democracy," in *Lectures on the Empire and the Future*, p. 22.

resolved on pacificist grounds to resist every demand of the state for their military service. These two examples out of many must suffice. In each case the act of the resisters, or prospective resisters, was one of definite rebellion; for, as Sir Frederick Pollock well says, "the citizen who sets himself against the authority of the state is thereby, so far as in him lies, dissolving civil society." [1] Now I am far from wishing to contend that rebellion against the state is never justified; for to urge that plea would be to condemn the long and noble line of our ancestors who won for us the liberties which we now enjoy; it would be to go to Treitschkean lengths of state-idolatry.[2] Rather than subscribe to the immoral tenets of that Moloch-creed, which has done so much to transmute the once kindly and semi-Christian German folk into fiends incarnate, I would go to that splendid extreme of anarchic individualism which F. W. H. Myers eulogises in his *St. Paul*:

> Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
> Cannot confound, or doubt Him, or deny;
> Yea, with one voice, O World, though thou deniest,
> Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

If one is to keep at all in touch with the facts of life; if one is to remain on the side of the saints and martyrs; if one is to hold with Christ rather than with Pontius Pilate, one must admit that the state may err in judgment and may sin in practice. This is even true when the state is democratic in its constitution. It is all too possible for public opinion to be (at any rate temporarily) mistaken; for the general will to

[1] Pollock, *History of the Science of Politics*, p. 66.
[2] Cf. Treitschke, *Politik*, i. 196, for a total denial of the right of resistance.

be (at any rate momentarily) misdirected; for the general conscience to be (at any rate for a period) perverted. The majority, especially in these days of its inexperience and immaturity, is liable to gusts of passion, to hasty generalisations, to rash resolutions, to malignant tempers, to wicked surrenders to the Devil. In cases where the individual conscience is convinced that the democratic state—that is, the community-as-a-whole acting through its representative electoral majority—is gravely wrong, and is going the way of wickedness, it has to decide between two courses. It has to decide whether it is right to continue to retain membership of the community, to obey the obnoxious law under protest, and to limit opposition to the proper constitutional means provided, such as arguing, petitioning, canvassing, voting, and so on; or, on the other hand, whether it is right to withdraw from the community, to refuse to obey the law, and to carry opposition any length of resistance that may be necessary. To rebel or not to rebel, that is the question: to remain a member or not to remain a member, that is the alternative. It is a question of the utmost gravity; it is a question to be answered by the individual conscience; it is a question not of personal right but of communal duty, for there can never be a personal right to rebel unless there is a communal duty to rebel. Rebellion, even in the form of mere passive resistance, is a challenge to the very existence of the state, and no one should embark upon it unless he is prepared to face all the consequences involved in the break up of the Great Society which he resists and defies. In the case of a modern democratic state such as Britain, when a man remembers all that he and his fellows owe to it; when

he realises what its destruction would mean;[1] when he takes into account the numerous constitutional methods that are provided by means of which he can make his protest and use his influence to secure repeal, he will hesitate long before he takes the irrevocable plunge into anarchy. I am not here concerned to consider in detail the rare circumstances in which it may be justifiable—or, to speak more correctly, morally obligatory—to rebel against the authority of the democratic state. Those who wish to consider them will find them discussed in the works of Green, Ritchie, Bosanquet, and MacCunn.[2] I agree with all these writers that they are so rare and exceptional as to have little more than a casuistical, or theoretical, interest. The point that I wish to emphasise here is that there is a clear alternative before the conscience-stricken objector, and no third course. He must either obey the law, so long as it is unrepealed; or he must recognise the fact that in refusing to do so he is rebelling, is separating himself from the Great Society, and linking himself with those who conspire for its destruction. He cannot at one and the same time be a member of it, sharing its common life, enjoying its protection and its corporate privileges, helping to mould its general will, claiming its franchise; and also at the same time its antagonist, standing outside it, proclaiming it hostile to him, declining to recognise the authority of the general

[1] Cf. Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 153: "The destruction of the state would mean a general loss of freedom, a general substitution of force for mutual good will in men's dealings with each other, that would outweigh the evil of any slavery under such limitations and regulations as an organised state imposes upon it."

[2] Note especially Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, pp. 110-53; Ritchie, *Natural Rights*, p. 243; Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, pp. 71-151; MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, pp. 77-83. The present writer also has an essay on the subject in his *Freedom in Service*.

will which he has helped to mould, refusing to obey the laws enacted by the enfranchised, whose majority-vote he has assisted to determine. It is impossible to be both a good citizen and a passive resister. The supreme issue at the present day among progressive peoples is between reform and revolution, between Democracy and Bolshevism; and the passive resister, whatever may be his intentions and whatever he may think about the matter, is placing himself on the side of the Bolshevists. It is open to a conscientious objector who wishes to remain a reformer to use countless constitutional means to influence public opinion, to change the general will, to secure the repeal of an obnoxious law—but meantime he must and will obey. If he does not obey, he is no longer a reformer, but a revolutionist. He must, of course, as a revolutionist, be prepared to face the consequences of his rebellion. He must not repine, or whine, or display monstrous indignation—as some of our present-day passive resisters do—if he has to suffer some of the minor inconveniences of martyrdom. For the state (*i.e.* the politically organised community) also has a conscience, also has a will, also has a claim to protect itself. In the interest of all it cannot allow the law to be broken. The state in maintaining its cause against the passive resister, and in compelling him either to submit or depart, is not opposing physical force to moral force; for the state itself is a moral being whose prime concern is justice. Still less is it opposing secular authority to religious authority; for the fundamental political doctrines of the New Testament are the divine right of rulers, and the duty of Christian obedience to the powers that be.

It is necessary to lay great stress upon the fact that the resister is a rebel and a revolutionist, because unfortunately it is not always sufficiently recognised either by the resister himself or by the government which represents the outraged and flouted community. If it were clearly recognised, we should not have before us the anomalous spectacle of men who thus cut themselves off from the common life of the nation still claiming to share, and being allowed to share, all the advantages of good citizenship—and even special privileges in addition; of men who refuse to obey the law being permitted to enact laws for others; of men who decline to employ their individual force in the defence of their country being able to demand—and with the grossest inconsistency actually demanding—the protection of the police for their individual lives and property. The government has been far too tender with passive resisters of all sorts. As it shut its eyes to the German menace and played at military preparation until the war burst upon it; as it shut its eyes to the Sinn Fein peril and temporised until the Irish rebellion broke out; so it shuts its eyes to the threats of incipient Bolshevism and tolerates violation of the law in the vain hope that rebels may be conciliated and revolution avoided. The supreme interest of every community is the reign of law, which in a democratic state means the maintenance of the supremacy of the general conscience and the general will. The government is the trustee for the community in respect of this cardinal concern. Nothing can excuse failure in the exercise of its trust. "No community," says Mr. C. H. Pearson, "can allow its citizens to take part against itself on the ground that they belong to

an ideal realm of duty, religion, and the like." [1] Each case of passive resistance should be judged on its own demerits; but one and all should obviously be regarded as involving removal from the electoral roll. Only a very muddle-headed or unreasonable resister could possibly expect both to elect legislators and to refuse to obey laws; only a very feeble government would permit him to do both. The more extreme and serious cases might logically require further withdrawals of civic privileges, until finally recourse might have to be had to denationalisation and deportation. The democratic community should do everything in its power to render its laws equitable and to avoid giving offence to sensitive consciences; it should allow to all alike the utmost freedom of discussion and the largest scope for influence; but when at last the law is made it must, until it is repealed, at all costs be enforced with impartial firmness.

§ 59. *Freedom of Discussion and the Duty of Obedience.*

"Dissentient minorities," said Professor Henry Sidgwick, one of the most broad-minded and tolerant of men, "must either submit or depart." [2] This at first sight appears to be a harsh dictum; and it would actually be harsh if one were to lose sight of the process by which a democratic majority becomes such, and a democratic minority remains such. As we have already seen, the vote which decides the question of majority and minority, and indicates the general will, comes at the end of a long course of discussion and debate—on platform, in press, from pulpit—

[1] Pearson, *National Life and Character*, p. 198.
[2] Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, p. 611.

during which the minority has had the amplest opportunity to make its voice heard, and to bring to bear the full legitimate weight of its moral influence upon the community-as-a-whole. In the final result the minority is represented by the modifications of policy which it has compelled the majority to make in order to become or remain a majority. The essence of this process, however, is freedom of discussion, and if as a matter of fact freedom of discussion has been denied, then the minority has a real grievance, and the majority may be regarded as exercising a real tyranny.[1] In such a case there is no genuine democracy; there is a dominance of one portion of a community over another. There is no unitary communal life, but a sectional schism inconsistent with democratic nationhood. The two things, majority rule and freedom of discussion, are indeed co-relative to one another; the one implies the other; both are essential to true democracy. In order that minorities may really be represented there must be full freedom of discussion; in order that the majority may really rule there must be full and complete obedience to the law. Minorities that, after they have enjoyed full freedom of discussion, refuse to submit to the general will which they have done so much to determine, may be without harshness considered to have separated themselves from the body politic; and hence may without undue severity, if they persist in their refusal, be required to depart. By their own act they have severed themselves, and have made themselves alien.

Examples have not been wanting in recent years

[1] Cf. a notable passage in MacCunn's *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 80, beginning: "The sting of tyranny comes when a man feels that he has not been consulted."

of cases in which each of these co-relatives has existed without the other; that is to say, of cases in which by one of the two means indicated genuine democracy has been destroyed. We have had on the one hand cases of ruling majorities suppressing freedom of discussion; and on the other hand of recalcitrant minorities who have enjoyed freedom of discussion refusing to obey the law. Majorities which suppress discussion cannot complain if silenced minorities refuse to submit; minorities which refuse to submit cannot complain if outraged majorities suppress their freedom of speech. What is utterly anti-democratic and tyrannical is that majorities should both suppress discussion and also enforce submission; what is utterly anti-democratic and anarchic is that minorities should claim the right both freely to discuss and also conscientiously to disobey. The first may be described as the vice of Prussianism, the second as the vice of Bolshevism. Prussianism consists of discipline without self-determination; Bolshevism consists of self-determination without discipline. They are the two deadliest foes that Democracy has to fear—the Scylla and the Charybdis between which it must pass with unswerving steadiness if it is to escape irremediable destruction. Democracy implies both self-determination and discipline in equal measure; the harmonious union of the two being connoted by the term "self-government."

Examples of the suppression of legitimate freedom of discussion on the part of ruling majorities abound in the earlier history of Britain; but they belong for the most part to the period before the great Reform Acts. During the nineteenth century liberty of speech, freedom of the press, and right of public

meeting were developed and established so fully that never before and nowhere else has so large a scope been provided for the exercise of all sorts of lawful influence. Minorities, quite properly, have taken full advantage of this condition of things, and they have been able to exert a power in British politics quite disproportionate to their numerical strength. The Fabian Society, for example, has less than 3000 members; yet it has guided the course of British labour for twenty years. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb have been counted arithmetically as but two, and electorally as but one; yet they have held the Fabian Society in the hollow of their hands. All this is exactly in accordance with what should be in a true democracy. Public opinion, as we have already seen, is determined not by quantitative but by qualitative forces; not by weight of numbers but by the spiritual and imponderable influences. With free discussion, a prophetic minority of one, if that one be a Socrates, a Christ, a Paul, or a Mohammed, can attain, and does attain, more power than the massed multitudes of the unilluminated. Similarly the general will can often in the same conditions be determined by the zealous exhortations of one or of a very few. In short, where democratic freedom of discussion obtains, minorities have the amplest possible scope for all reasonable exercise of control. They can secure representation for themselves to the utmost limits of their powers of persuasion and appeal. It is true that the issue is finally decided—and it is right that it should be so decided—by a majority-vote in which each elector counts but as one. Thus Mr. Sidney Webb hitherto has had but a single vote, and Mrs. Webb none at all. It is, however, I imagine, a matter

of supreme indifference to Mr. and Mrs. Webb whether they personally have votes or not. Their great influence and controlling power is exerted not by means of their individual votes, but by their immense hold over public opinion. Tens of thousands of votes all over the country represent the opinion which the Webbs have formed, and indicate the tendency of the general will which they have determined. A vote, in fact, is not the measure of a man's or woman's political influence; it is the measure of the effective political influences that have been brought to bear upon him or her. But that these influences all may have fair play and an open field, freedom of discussion is the essential condition.

On the other hand, where democratic liberty of speech, freedom of press, and right of public meeting exist as they do in Britain in normal times, there is a corresponding obligation of the strongest kind on unsuccessful minorities to submit to the decision of the prevailing majority. They have had their opportunity of exerting influence, and they have used it to the full. If they had been successful, they would have enacted laws obnoxious to their opponents, which nevertheless they would have expected their opponents, both as a point of honour and under penalty, to obey. They will continue to agitate by constitutional means against measures which they dislike and think wrong, and if they secure their repeal they will not tolerate for a moment any conscientious objections on the part of those who would wish to retain them. They cannot have it both ways: they cannot as a minority refuse to obey, and also as part of a majority demand to be obeyed; they cannot claim and exercise freedom of speech for

the express purpose of securing a majority of their way of thinking—a majority which shall enact laws such as they desire and enforce them on their opponents—and at the same time decline to recognise the authority of a majority of which they do not form a portion. To revert to the two examples of passive resistance already given. Nonconformists generally strongly dissented from the terms of the Education Act of 1902. Their dissent, ably voiced by Mr. Lloyd George, who laid the foundations of his parliamentary reputation in the debates respecting that measure, secured (although they were in a minority) many and important modifications of the Bill as it passed through Committee. Nevertheless when it was finally enacted it did not satisfy them. The bulk of them, however, honourably and constitutionally recognising that for the moment they were beaten, accepted the measure as the law of the land and without demur obeyed it, knowing that they possessed their unquestioned right to speak against it, write against, canvass against it, and employ for its repeal countless lawful means. This was the genuine democratic attitude. The little band of irreconcilables led by Dr. John Clifford were without a shadow of democratic justification in taking up an attitude of passive resistance. They were rebels and anti-democrats whose suppression was a matter of urgent public necessity, whose exclusion from the franchise would have been a measure of obvious public justice. Similarly in 1915 no persons had a larger liberty of discussion than the Pacificists. They flooded the country with their books, pamphlets, and periodical. Their influence, in spite of their numerical insignificance, was sufficient to secure from a too-

conciliatory parliament a number of concessions whose unfairness to the rest of the community greatly outraged the general conscience. Nevertheless they remained irreconcilable and rebellious. Nothing would persuade them to submit to the general will on the matter of military service. Yet having refused in any circumstances to submit to the general will, they continued to demand full freedom of speech in order that they might win the general will over to their side, and might impose their views upon their opponents; having defied the authority of the state, they continued to demand its aid to prevent their meetings from being broken up; having expressed the most vehement objection to the use of force against the Germans, they continued to demand the services of the police force on their own behalf. When the law is against them they refuse to obey it; when it is on their side they proclaim its majesty and demand its instant enforcement. It is difficult to plumb such depths of inconsistency and unreason. It ought not to be necessary, but apparently it is necessary, to emphasise the elementary fact that freedom of discussion and its concomitants are not natural rights inherent in the individual, but communal rights conferred and maintained by the law of the land for the common good. They are not rights of anarchic Man, but rights of law-abiding citizens. No passive resister, or any other type of rebel, has any claim whatsoever either to enjoy them or to be protected in their enjoyment. The intimate and inseparable connection between the right of free speech and the duty of full obedience in the democratic state is well expressed by Bentham, who asked the question, "What is the motto of a good citizen?"

and answered it in the words, "To censure freely; to obey punctually."

§ 60. *Impertinent Interference and Open Rebellion.*

A second type of anti-democratic indiscipline which has lately been rife in this country is what I have termed "impertinent interference." I use the word "impertinent" in its strict etymological sense, as meaning unauthorised, unwarranted, intrusive, improper; I do not in the least wish to imply that it is rude in manner or insolent in behaviour. The difference between impertinent interference and passive resistance is that the one is active, the other passive; the difference between impertinent interference and open rebellion is that the one is pacific, the other belligerent. What I call impertinent interference is the doing of things by an individual, a group, or a section of the community which ought to be done, if done at all, by the community-as-a-whole in its political capacity as a state, and through its representative government. Examples have been numerous during recent years in most democratic countries. In America the most flagrant instances of these illegitimate incursions into the sphere of government are to be found in the history of the great trusts, and the huge commercial, industrial, and financial corporations which have sprung up on that continent. So great is the illicit influence which these powerful economic organisations have secured in the world of politics that in many matters of tariffs and currency the general will of the community has been rendered of no effect by their secret and sinister action. They carry on negotiations with foreign

governments; they ignore the regulations of their own state; they terrify some legislators, they bribe others; they behave with such entire independence and such complete disregard of legal regulation that in certain departments of state supreme control is exercised not by democratic laws but by plutocratic "pulls." [1] In our own country the maintenance of the policy of free trade has prevented the formation of any such gigantic monopolies as have developed a political power so menacing to democracy in America. Nevertheless, it would be possible even from recent British history to mention cases in which both foreign policy and domestic policy have been profoundly affected by the independent interventions of great financial or commercial houses. But the most striking and ominous examples of this independent intervention in political affairs in Britain are to be found in the later records of the Labour Movement. My note-books are congested with instances culled from various newspapers. Two must suffice as typical. On May 22, 1918, *The Times* printed the item: "Northumberland Miners' Council have recommended a 'down tools' policy by miners, railwaymen, and transport workers if coal-mines are not nationalised within six months after the war." Now there is much to be said both for and against the policy of the nationalisation of coal-mines; it is a subject peculiarly suitable for discussion by a Miners' Council; it is one on which they may quite properly form and express strong opinions; and it is one concerning which they are entitled to use all their own immense electoral power, and all their great moral influence over railway and transport workers.

[1] Cf. Godkin, *Problems of Modern Democracy*, pp. 143 *sqq.*

It is, however, a question of policy which profoundly affects not only miners, railwaymen, and transport workers, but also the community-as-a-whole, and every member of it. It is a question which in a democratic state must be settled by the general will of the whole society, operating after careful consideration through constitutional channels. It is intolerable that it should be determined by the irrational pressure of an interested section of the community. In a democratic state matters of public policy are decided by force of argument applied by the vote of the whole body politic; attempts to decide them by the argument of force applied by the strike of a conscious minority is the distinctive characteristic of Bolshevism. Such attempts, and such menaces, are the negation of democracy. Less flagrantly Bolshevist, but equally intolerable and anti-democratic, are the recent efforts of Mr. Arthur Henderson and his associates of the Labour Party to enter on their own account into negotiations respecting the war with "the Labour and Socialist organisations of the Central Powers," and in consultation with them arrive, if possible, at terms of peace which International Labour may impose upon all the belligerent governments. Much as labour is interested in peace, labour is not the democracy, but only a part of it; important as the Labour Congress is, it is not the Parliament of the nation; properly influential as its Committee is in industrial concerns, it is not the channel by means of which the British people as a whole have arranged to conduct peace negotiations or to control foreign policy.

Illicit incursions of this sort into the proper sphere of government must almost inevitably lead—unless

government weakly abdicates the office entrusted to it by the community—to open conflict between properly constituted authority and the interloper, and hence to overt rebellion on the part of the latter. The democratic state cannot allow such policies as that of nationalisation to be imposed upon it by the pressure of a group of trade-unions ; it cannot accept terms of peace formulated behind its back by congresses of International Socialists, and dictated to it by a handful of its own Labour members. The attempt at such imposition and such dictation must lead, and ought to lead, to rebuke and repression on the part of the sovereign community and its duly accredited representatives. This necessary discipline tends to provoke resentment and resistance on the part of the interloper, and thus open rebellion results.

How easily and speedily impertinent interference passes into overt rebellion is exemplified in the scandalous record of the Coventry munitions strike of July 1918. The point at issue was a regulation of urgent national necessity drawn up and promulgated by the proper constitutional authority representative of the people as a whole (including the strikers). The Coventry munition workers—or rather a Bolshevist section of them—demanded its withdrawal with revolutionary menace, and on the government's refusal to withdraw, came out on strike themselves and strove to bring out with them the munition workers all over the country. The extreme aggravation of the case was, of course, the circumstance that their success in this treasonable endeavour would have paralysed our armies faced by the German hordes, and would have delivered to destruction both these armies and the nations whom they were defend-

ing. But even apart from this aggravation of the crime, the offence itself was that of overt rebellion—of open defiance of the Munitions of War Act and the Defence of the Realm Act, of deliberate repudiation of the properly constituted authority of the democratic state. Happily, on this occasion, the government, thus challenged in the eye of day, took the right course of maintaining its position; but it did so in a manner so slow, so hesitating, so apologetic, that before it acted the rebellion had been encouraged to spread from Coventry to other Midland centres, and even to Woolwich itself. Instant and decisive action was clearly indicated; and is clearly indicated in any future cases of a similar sort that may arise. The very existence of the democratic state is at stake.

Two other examples of open rebellion against the authority of the democratic state—the one not consummated, the other actually achieved—are those provided by the two Irish factions. On the one hand we have the Ulster volunteers who armed themselves to resist the Home Rule Act; on the other hand the Sinn Fein Nationalists who proposed by force and with German aid to break the Act of Union. In each instance the government of the day displayed culpable and almost incredible weakness in allowing the illegal gathering of weapons, in winking at unauthorised military training, in watching inertly elaborate and patent preparations for the precipitation of civil war.

But the most remarkable and curious case in recent times of defiance of law and flouting of both parliament and administration is undoubtedly that of the militant suffragists. The peculiarity of this case is not their use of horse-whips, hammers, and bombs; not their brawling in churches and their

breaking up of public meetings; not their escapades in the Houses of Parliament and the homes of ministers; not even their hunger-striking in prison. It is that they did all this in order to secure admission to the franchise. They violated the law in order to become legislators; they defied and discredited parliament in order to be enrolled as parliamentary electors; they did their best to destroy the authority of government in order that they might obtain a share in conferring that authority. In their reckless determination to get the vote, they went the way to render it valueless when got. For of what use are votes, or elections, or parliaments, or governments, if political questions are to be decided by methods of lawless violence? The ultimate admission of women to the franchise was both just and inevitable; but it would have been better that it should have been postponed for a generation rather than it should have been hastened by the means employed by Mrs. Pankhurst and her associates. Whatever good results may flow from the new feminine influences introduced into the electorate, they cannot for many years compensate for the damage inflicted upon the democratic state by that importunate widow and her satellites; they cannot compensate for the degradation of womanhood which they have accomplished, for the contempt for constitutional procedure which they have inculcated, for the indifference to the general will which they have encouraged, for the lowering of the prestige of parliament and ministers which their wild antics have entailed. In respect of the militant suffragists, as in respect of the other rebels mentioned above, the government lamentably failed in its duty to the community whose sovereign authority it

wielded. No concession whatever should have been granted to persons who thus presented themselves in the guise of armed terrorists; no misplaced compassions should have allowed hunger-strikers to evade the proper penalties of their crimes of *lèse-démocratie*.

§ 61. *Strikes, and the Limits of their Legitimacy.*

Another flagrant case of open rebellion exhibited during the period of the writing of this book has been the point-blank refusal of Irish Nationalists, led by Members of Parliament and supported by bishops, to obey the provisions of the Military Service Act passed in respect of Ireland. In their resistance to "conscription" the victory of the Irish rebels over the timorous government seems to have been complete. Were it not that Ireland is the land of unreason, where nothing that is expected ever happens, and where logical cause and effect are suspended in favour of the incalculable chances of caprice, one would say that organised political society in that island could hardly survive so severe and humiliating a rebuff. If indeed political society does at all survive, thanks are due not so much to the merits of the imperial administration as to the defects of the Irish character, which is as incapable of exploiting a victory as it is irrational in selecting a subject to fight about. I do not wish, however, to descant upon this successful rebellion of the Irish, and this debilitating if not fatal surrender of the government. Its moral is too patent to require elucidation. It is disquieting to think that at this late day ministers should have to learn the elementary New Testament lesson that no one should embark upon a project

without counting the cost, and that, having counted the cost and embarked, he should pursue the project to the end, and pay the estimated price without demur. I wish to revert to the less simple and less easily soluble problem of the labour strikes which have been so marked and ominous a feature of the industrial world during the course of the twentieth century. How far is the use of the strike weapon compatible with that peaceful and constitutional rule of the majority which is the essential characteristic of representative democracy ?

Now, on the one hand, every one will admit the right of any workman in normal circumstances to withhold or withdraw his labour. There is no treasure which Britons of all grades value so highly as personal freedom ; and the very names of slavery, serfdom, and " industrial conscription " are odious. This right of refusing to work which the individual labourer possesses is not diminished when he associates himself with his fellows in a trade-union : it is equally possessed by all the members of the union, and by the union as a whole. Hence no one would dream of denying the right of a trade-union in normal circumstances to proclaim a strike and to call all its members out. I insert the qualifying phrase " in normal circumstances " merely because it is necessary to bear in mind that this particular " right to strike," like all other British liberties, is held subject to the law of the land ; that is to say, it can be limited by contracts voluntarily entered into, and it can be suspended (as during the present war) by special legislation. But, in the absence both of these voluntary surrenders in return for valuable consideration, and of these legal restrictions due to temporary emergency,

the "right to strike" is unquestioned and unquestionable. It is indeed because of its possession, and by means of its occasional exercise, that the old trade-unions built up their power of collective bargaining, and secured for their members such notable improvements in rates of wages, hours of labour, and conditions of employment. In their rare strikes, induced by real grievances, entered into only when methods of negotiation had failed, and carried through peacefully and constitutionally, though with dogged resolution, they commonly had the sympathy of public opinion on their side, and they commonly achieved success because of the public support which their righteousness and their moderation secured. But the old and wise trade-union leaders had no love of strikes. They regarded them as the weapon of the last resort, and at best "a regrettable necessity."[1] They recognised them as acts of industrial war, realised that they destroyed those good relations with employers which they were anxious to cultivate, and regarded them as an undesirable means of squandering the union funds which were urgently required for other purposes. Moreover, they freely admitted that, if they and their fellows had the right to strike and to withhold their labour, those who disagreed with them and were not members of their union had an equal right *not* to strike, and to continue their work. They not only claimed, they also conceded, liberty.

Even the "new union" leaders at first professed to look upon strikes with disfavour. Thus Messrs. Tom Mann (the present leader of English Syndicalists) and Ben Tillett in 1890 said: "Respecting strikes we are fully aware that they should be avoided

[1] Osborne, *Sane Trade Unionism*, p. 57.

whenever possible, and only entered into after other efforts at a settlement have failed." [1] But the new unions were, as we have already seen, essentially fighting machines; their *raison d'être* was the organisation and conduct of strikes; they could offer to their members no benefits or advantages except such as they could extort by force from the employers or the community. Hence their leaders were compelled to reconsider their attitude towards strikes, and, instead of trying to avoid them, to concentrate their energies on ordering them, and guiding them to speedy victory. The need for rapidity and decisiveness of action, owing to lack of the funds necessary to maintain a prolonged offensive, led to a new ruthlessness in industrial war. Strikers were no longer content lawfully to withhold their labour; in the very spirit of Prussian militarism and Bolshevist terrorism they began to defy law, to violate contracts, to repudiate agreements, to persecute non-unionists, to picket with ferocious menace those who wished to continue their work, to commit acts of sabotage, and to hold the community to ransom. Still even the new unionists limited their use of the strike-weapon to industrial purposes, and they preferred to gain their ends, when possible, merely by rattling the weapon and brandishing it, rather than by actually employing it in doubtful combat. It was reserved for Guild-Socialists and Syndicalists—inveterate enemies of democracy—to adopt the strike as the prime instrument of proletarian activity, and to glorify its use almost as though it were an end in itself.

Says that youthful firebrand, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, speaking of strikes: "The aim of every right-minded

[1] Mann and Tillet, *The New Trade Unionism*, p. 6.

person should be to stimulate and direct them" for "the strike is labour's expression of free will" and "labour must at all costs preserve its right to strike."[1] In the diseased imagination of M. Sorel and the Syndicalists, as we have already seen, the conception of a general strike became a mythological obsession. It acquired an occult significance, like the river Jordan in Christian theology. It grew to be emblematic of the death through which society would have to pass in order to reach the visionary paradise beyond.[2] In the Syndicalist system the strike entirely supersedes legislation; the conscious minority by means of its terrors coerce the inert majority of the community; the few by violence impose their will upon the many. Bolshevism, the negation of democracy, prevails.

Now it is quite evident that however consonant with popular self-government strikes of the old type may be—that is to say strikes which consist simply of the resolute withholding of labour until better terms are considered—strikes of the new-unionist and syndicalist order are totally incompatible with all sorts of constitutional rule. Public opinion is flouted,[3] the general will is defied, the majority (although composed preponderantly of work-people) is exploited, law is violated, government is displaced by anarchy. Again, however appropriate the strike may be for settling mere industrial disputes which concern only the strikers and their employers, it is an utterly

[1] Cole, *World of Labour*, pp. 288 and 319.

[2] Cf. Lewis, *Syndicalism and the General Strike*, p. 54: "It is the great value of the general strike that it overturns society absolutely, and leads to an unknown future entirely different from the past."

[3] Cf. Cole, *World of Labour*, p. 34: "In this country at least it is useless to invoke public opinion, because it is selfish, unenlightened, and vindictive." The great British public is marked by "narrowness, egoism, and intellectual indolence."

intolerable and anti-democratic means of dealing with questions that affect the community-as-a-whole —such questions, for example, as the nationalism of land and capital, the conscription of wealth, the terms of military service, the conditions of war or peace, all of which have lately been suggested as proper subjects for the application of the "direct method" of summary settlement. Further, it is insufferable and totally inconsistent with representative government and the ordered development of society that strikes of any sort should be allowed to succeed if they depend for their success upon the inconvenience and peril in which they place the community-as-a-whole, rather than upon the merits of the strikers' case. Such are the recent strikes in connection with the various public services, and pre-eminently the scandalous Metropolitan Police mutiny of August 1918. The police may have had, and indeed seem to have had, real and serious causes of complaint; and there may have been, and indeed seem to have been, vexatious delays in dealing with them. But when they mutinied there was not, and could not be, any discussion either of grievances or of causes of procrastination in removing them. The mutineers calculated—and unfortunately calculated rightly—that they could get anything they asked for, by the simple expedient of leaving the metropolis to the mercy of its criminals. Such procedure, especially on the part of the sworn protectors of the public, is rebellion *in excelsis*; it marks the abandonment of reason for violence; the exploitation of the community for the benefit of a class.[1]

[1] The *Observer*, September 1, 1918, uttered the well-justified condemnation of the police strike: "Nothing can disguise the features of moral

All too many of the recent strikes in this country, particularly those that have taken place since the passing of the fatal Trades Disputes Act of 1906, have been of this Bolshevist type. They have aimed at deciding by "direct methods"—that is, by sectional violence—problems which ought to have been referred to the decision of the whole body politic through its various constitutional agencies. Hence the question arises: What ought to be done in cases where strikes of this order break out; when contracts are set aside, law violated, methods of terrorism and sabotage employed, the community deliberately held up? The answer is simple. Such strikes should at all costs be broken, and broken by the co-operative determination of the community-as-a-whole. The things which the strikers demand may or may not be inherently reasonable and just. They probably are not, or else they would be more ready to trust to democratic methods to secure them, since the manual workers form the bulk of the democracy. But the question of the justice and reasonableness of the demands becomes irrelevant. It is the method of asking that is fatally and anti-democratically wrong. Just as a child at table quite reasonably and justly expects to have bread-and-butter and cake, and yet is not allowed to have them if he snatches; so no body of citizens should be allowed by the government, which represents and is responsible to the whole community, to secure even its legitimate ends by illegitimate

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delinquency that attach to such an outbreak. It is a violation of formal pledges, and of all the implicit obligations of good citizenship. The mainspring of such a strike is the assumption that it will expose the community to perils rather than confront which it must surrender. It is next door to mutiny, and first cousin to blackmail." The *Observer* need not have qualified its substantives: it is veritably mutiny; it is blackmail itself.

means. If it is allowed to do so, the licence generated is speedily fatal both to the democratic society as a whole, and to the lawless section in particular. Successive governments, by weakly surrendering to Syndicalist violence during the past twelve years on countless occasions have laid up a heritage of woe for their successors. For it is much easier to relax the bands of discipline and duty than it is to tighten them again when they have become slack.[1] But hard though the task may be, if democratic self-government is to survive, it must be accomplished. Strikes must be limited to their proper sphere and to legitimate methods. Strikes which transgress these limits must at any cost to the community be broken. In no case must the "sympathetic strike"—that most flagrant example of violent log-rolling—be tolerated. In all cases must non-strikers be protected in their lawful right to work; violence must be prevented or punished; contracts must be enforced; the reign of law must be maintained. Sooner or later those who at present are possessed by the strike mania will realise the criminal folly of their obsession. They will perceive that, in the long run,

[1] Most fatal of all the surrenders of the government to violence was that displayed in the case of the police mutiny of August 1918 already referred to. This mutiny was no ordinary industrial strike: it was a revolt of part of the protective forces of the community. The only sound course open to the government was to call and commission all law-abiding citizens to maintain order, and then to disband the rebels. They should have been reinstated and reconstituted only after unconditional surrender. A police force which is a trade union affiliated to the Labour Party is worse than useless to the community. It is a death-trap. At the very crises of Bolshevist attempts at the social revolution it is liable—and indeed certain—to stampede to the enemy. As well might the army and the navy become trade unions. The main effort of Syndicalist and Anarchist propaganda is, indeed, directed to undermine the loyalty of the armed protectors of law and order. The community should not for one moment maintain a police force in whose pledged fidelity it cannot have confidence. Far better that it should frankly trust to its own resources for security.

for first one section of the working-class then another to endeavour to gain advantage for itself by exploiting all the rest is about as rational a procedure as it would be for those islanders who "earned a precarious livelihood by taking in one another's washing" to struggle to improve their position by increasing their laundry charges.

In order, however, that the community may as soon as possible be delivered from this fatal economic disease—marked by many deadly symptoms of softening of the brain and hardening of the heart—it is obviously necessary that more effective constitutional machinery for dealing with industrial grievances than at present exists should be invented and set up. This machinery must be strong enough not only to remove real wrongs, but also—as apparently no authority is at present—in the name and with the support of the community to resist and reject outrageous demands.

§ 62. *The Need of Strong Government.*

I sometimes think that it would be a good thing if there were fewer lawyers and more schoolmasters in the parliament and the government of this country. Lawyers have many and obvious qualifications for becoming expert legislators; but as administrators they suffer from the disability that they live in an atmosphere of conscienceless compromise rather than of moral principle; that they are more familiar with legal fictions (according to which lies are assumed to be true) than with inevitable facts; and that they are accustomed to arenas where issues are decided by nimble wits and facile words, rather than

to the fields of life on which realities come into conflict. Schoolmasters, on the other hand, come into close and constant contact with primitive human nature. Round them perpetually are "the young barbarians all at play." They are called upon daily to apply simple but inflexible moral principles, and the rules of a plain but commanding code of honour. For them there are no compromises, but clear calls to duty; no doubtful struggles of words, but the prompt, decisive arbitrament of deeds; no meanderings in realms of fiction and illusion, but an abiding conversance with fact; above all, no playing with lawlessness and disorder, but a strong and righteous discipline. It might be objected—and no doubt would be objected by Mr. Edmond Holmes, Signorina Montessori, and other advocates of infantile self-determination, or incipient educational Bolshevism—that the schoolmaster is an autocrat, and that such a magisterial rule as he exercises is incompatible with democratic self-government. The objection would be invalid. The school is the miniature of the society in which it is found. However despotic the master may have been in days of despotism, in these democratic times he is so limited by the public opinion and the general will of his pupils, backed by the support of parents and governors and the community at large, that he can govern his "little commonwealth" successfully only by common consent. The schoolmaster keeps order not by his own arbitrary will, but in accordance with the real will of his class. He maintains discipline not merely that his own life may be worth living, or that the business of teaching for which he was appointed may be accomplished; but because he knows that his class does not really

desire disorder, and that even the rowdies at the bottom who are quick to take advantage of weakness are at heart relieved when smooth effective authority is established. Both schoolmaster and class know that the alternative to strong government is not liberty, but the hateful domination of a handful of unintellectual bullies; and even the bullies know that they are infinitely happier under firm rule than as kings of chaos. It is, indeed, in the interest of the bullies, and with the real consent of the better nature of the bullies themselves, that the schoolmaster asserts the rule of law; for he recognises that in the heart of the bullies themselves a conflict is going on between the powers of good and the powers of evil, and that the powers of good—which are on his side—are struggling for ascendancy. It is for him to aid them and guide them to victory. "The normal boy," says Mr. J. A. Fort of Winchester, after a quarter of a century of distinguished success as a schoolmaster, "is essentially a moral creature; I have not known more than two boys, or perhaps three, who did not wish to do what was right." [1] That is most cheering and munificent testimony in the ears of a democrat, whose creed compels him to postulate the essential goodness of human nature. It leads to the conclusion that a schoolmaster who does his duty is an ally of the angels; but that a weak and cowardly indisciplinarian is an accomplice of the Devil.

What is true of the microcosm of the school is true also of the macrocosm of the state. The supreme interest of the community-as-a-whole, and of every part of it, is the maintenance of the rule of law. Only when the rule of law is maintained can true

[1] *Spectator*, January 12, 1918.

liberty flourish. Well says Mr. Ramsay MacDonald—who might with advantage have impressed the truth upon some of his disciples during the recent strikes—"The law and order first of all established by democratic means, and then enforced by the coercive power of the state, is the only condition under which the individual can retain his freedom." [1] For if the law prevents the individual in his feebleness from doing some things that he would like to do, on the other hand it prevents his fellows in their multitude and might from molesting him in all the rest of his legitimate activities. So heavily is the balance in favour of the individual that one may rightly say that the state of law is the state of liberty, but that the state of anarchy is the state of slavery. So far is it from true that all men are by nature free and equal, that it is nearer the truth to say that until civil society is established and the rule of law set up no man is free, but is subject to innumerable and hopeless tyrannies; and that no two men are equal, but are graded one above another by countless shades of unadjustable difference. As in the "little commonwealth" of the school, so in the larger commonwealth of the democratic state, the alternative to the reign of law is the reign of force, whether it be the despotic force of the Prussian militarist, or the anarchic violence of the Bolshevist fanatic. Under both Prussianism and Bolshevism liberty is destroyed.

In this country we are in no peril from anything that even remotely resembles Prussian militarism.

[1] MacDonald, *Socialism and Government*, p. xxii. Similar statements respecting the vital and inseparable connection between law and liberty will be found in Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, pp. 23-26; M'Kechnie, *State and Individual*, p. 23; Snowden, *Socialism and Syndicalism*, p. 176; and Barker, *Political Thought*, p. 171.

The outcries of such bodies as the National Council for Civil Liberties are ludicrous in their absurdity. It is the feebleness and not the strength of government in Britain that is the source of danger. Even Mr. G. D. H. Cole, who now professes to be so terrified at the tyranny of the state, said in 1913, when he was advocating direct action on the part of trade unions: "The state that cannot save itself is not likely at present to save the worker, who is therefore forced to find his salvation in the development of his own institutions." [1] "The state"—by which term Mr. Cole means what throughout this book I have called "the government"—is, indeed, so far from being in a position to establish a despotism, that it has work enough to defend itself and the community by which it has been placed in authority from the insidious and harassing attacks of resisters, intruders, rebels, and revolutionaries of all sorts. It is not Prussianism but Bolshevism that is at the present moment the grave menace to British freedom. It is not the encroachment of the government upon the sphere of individual liberty that is to be feared; the real and serious peril is the failure of the government to maintain its authority in spheres which are properly its own. For it cannot make surrenders to lawlessness and violence, such as it has lately made, without jeopardising the reign of law, without diffusing a sense of insecurity, and without inflicting actual wrong upon the law-abiding majority of its subjects. It cannot, for example, remit its just demand for military service from the Irish without placing an inequitable burden upon the loyal people of Great Britain; it cannot keep on yielding to the insatiable

[1] Cole, *World of Labour*, p. 14.

clamour of engineers, railwaymen, and miners for increases of wages, out of all proportion to the increases obtainable by other sections of the community, without levying a new and unrighteous tax upon the rest of the nation; it cannot condone the treasonable offences of violators of the Munitions Act who raise the cry (analogous to the German "Kamerad") of "No victimisation," without exciting a feeling of intense indignation, and a sense of gross injustice, in ordinary criminals who (merely because they do not belong to a powerful group) are required to pay the full penalty for their misdeeds. If the government is not strong enough to do impartial justice, then, indeed, is it—together with the community whose agent it is—in a parlous case. "Should a government be sufficiently weak to allow itself to be coerced, it will be but a swift descent from constitutional government to mob rule." So, just prior to the war, wrote Mr. W. V. Osborne, who had suffered much both from the oppression of a Socialist group and from the failure of the government to render adequate protection to its persecuted and law-abiding subjects.[1] The government has too much excused itself for its weak partiality and its unequal discrimination on the ground of "expediency"; it has not put enough communal conscience into its work. Too closely has it modelled its conduct upon that of the "bold gendarme" in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera, who was vigilant and effective in respect of "little boys who do no harm," but who was careful to be elsewhere when potent law-breakers were about. It is easy, and it may seem to be momentarily prudent, to follow the "expedient" course of least resistance,

[1] Osborne, *Sane Trade Unionism*, p. 208.

irrespective of the fundamental issues involved, when unexpectedly formidable opposition is met with from Irish bishops, ancient Hibernians, amalgamated Engineers, Federated Miners, and other strongly organised groups. So, no doubt, it seemed expedient to the government of Ethelred the Unready to pay Danegeld rather than to do its duty; but the appropriate penalty which ultimately fell upon it, without possibility of evasion, was destruction. Thus will it be again. For the forces of disorder grow stronger with each victory; and the issue between law and violence, between equal justice and iniquitous privilege, between the general will and the will of rebellious minorities, between the rule of the majority and the tyranny of self-determining groups, between Democracy and Bolshevism, cannot be indefinitely postponed. In the long run strength and justice are the higher expediency. The schoolmaster's ideal of duty is better and wiser than the lawyer's ideal of compromise.

§ 63. *The Bases of Political Obligation.*

In the early period of the present struggle Mr. W. Trotter wrote an interesting study in social psychology entitled *The Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.* Its opening pages formulated some cogent "reasons for regarding the stability of civilisation as unsuspectedly slight." Since Mr. Trotter's book was published the tragic events which have happened in Russia have added a series of grave confirmations to his disquieting diagnosis. All thoughtful observers realise, as never before, how easy it is for societies which have been formed by slow centuries of painful

amalgamation to be dissolved in a day; how readily institutions laboriously constructed by generations of able men can be destroyed instantaneously by a handful of incapable fanatics; how near to the surface of civility rage the volcanic fires of barbarity.

Although in our own country—thanks to its democratic constitution, its long tradition of orderly progress, and its sound and equitable system of law—the menace of "the revolution" is less formidable than it is in less favoured lands, nevertheless it is sufficiently serious to demand the most careful preventives and precautions. The rapid political, social, and economic changes which have taken place in recent years—to say nothing of those which have resulted from the war—have caused a vast volume of unrest which tends to become explosive. This unrest, much of which is due to genuine grievances and to really intolerable conditions of life, demands the most urgent attention of statesmen and reformers. But meantime it is being exploited by revolutionaries, fostered by ideologues, fomented by alien immigrants, aggravated by false sentimentalists, and—treated by the government almost as though it did not exist. By the government, indeed, the menace of "the revolution" is being dealt with precisely as the menace of war with Germany was dealt with prior to 1914; that is to say it is being dealt with after the manner of the ostrich. One of the most ostrich-like documents (other than theological) which it has ever been my lot to see is the *Report on Industrial Unrest* issued after a series of supposed enquiries into the causes of the strikes of 1917.[1] Among the

[1] *Commission of Inquiry into Industrial Unrest* appointed June 12, 1917. Summary of Report issued in *Times*, July 23, 1917, and in fuller detail, August 3, 1917.

causes to which prominence is given are such trivialities as food prices, profiteering, lack of holidays, shortage of drink, the tactlessness of officials, the over-centralisation of control, and a dozen other things, all no doubt contributory, though of minor importance: but there is what looks like a conspiracy of silence as to the most formidable of all the causes, viz. the ferment of revolution.[1] It is a ferment due to the deliberate and active propaganda of a numerically insignificant band of Marxian Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists; but it is formidable, partly because of its appeal to the criminal classes, but mainly because of its working in the masses of the misinformed who do not realise the disastrous nature of the upheaval which it portends. That the government is not unaware of the existence and peril of this revolutionary ferment is shown by the extraordinary timidity which it manifests whenever it is called upon to deal with labour problems. *Inquieta non movere* seems to be its motto; and the policy based upon it is to pretend to believe that each industrial crisis as it occurs is due to such superficial causes as heat-waves, infelicitous expressions in proclamations, trivial misunderstandings; and to ease it off by installing electric fans, issuing new notices, holding fog-producing conferences. It is a pitiful postponing of an inevitable issue. This policy of make-believe is, indeed, as certain to end by precipitating the outbreak of the Social Revolution as the analogous policy pursued in foreign affairs ended by precipitating the German War. Three things above all others are needed in the circumstances;

[1] *The Times* had a series of most able and important articles bearing this title in its issues of September 25-28, 1917.

first, that government should face the facts; secondly, that it should inform the community; thirdly, that it should deal faithfully with the would-be revolutionaries, *i.e.* should firmly punish all breaches of law, should recall the misguided rank and file to discipline and duty by showing them the true enormity of their projects, and should do its best to remove all genuine causes of disaffection.

The obscure protagonists of "the revolution"—the spiritual, or rather anti-spiritual, brethren of Lenin and Trotsky—are probably beyond the reach of argument or appeal. They are the "irreconcilables" concerning whom Sir Henry Maine wrote prophetically over thirty years ago.[1] They are for the most part honest fanatics of unbalanced mind, acerbated temper, and disordered conscience, whose dour and deadly furies are unappeasable. They have to be recognised as the implacable enemies of both the national state and also political democracy, and their propaganda has to be energetically combated. But, since freedom of discussion is vital to the effective working of popular self-government, so long as their propaganda is confined to words the proper way to combat it is, not by repression, but by general education and by reform—education which shall enable the people to perceive the folly of the revolutionary dogma, reform which shall remove genuine causes of social unrest.[2] The masses of the democratic peoples,

[1] Cf. Maine, *Popular Government*, pp. 25-26: "There can be no more formidable symptom of our time and none more menacing to popular government than the growth of irreconcilable bodies within the mass of the population. . . . They utterly refuse to wait until a popular majority gives effect to their opinions. Nor would the vote of such a majority have the least authority with them, if it sanctioned any departure from their principles."

[2] Of course there is a point when words become deeds. This is recognised

especially the British, are not at all disposed to venture upon the risky gamble of revolution; and they will be less than ever disposed to do so now that they have seen the results of the venture in Russia. Even the deluded sections of the peoples among whom the ferment of revolution is powerfully working are anti-national and anti-democratic largely because they do not realise their membership of the Great Society; do not recognise how great a political power they actually possess in the democratic franchise; do not understand what they owe to the ordered civil life of the community; do not perceive the irreparable folly and wrong which they would be committing if they were to attempt to subvert the state. All alike, however, need to be instructed in the elements of their civic rights and duties; need to be shown the splendour of the heritage which is theirs as citizens if they will but enter upon it; need to be inspired with that sane and lofty patriotism which realises that service to one's country is normally the most effective service that one can render to the cause of humanity at large; need to be helped to feel why it is that in the present stage of the world's development the national democratic state rightly claims an allegiance superior to that of any other group whatsoever.

The true ground of political obligation in the national democratic state is not any of those which commended themselves to older thinkers in other forms of polity. It is not that *compulsion*, divine or human, which seemed to theologians like Filmer,

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by our laws of libel, blasphemy, and sedition. If propaganda by word were carried to the length of definite incitement to rebellion, the community in self-defence would be compelled to require its restriction.

or philosophers like Spinoza, to be the real bases of the duty of obedience; it is not that *contract*, explicit or tacit, by which Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau in one way or another tried to explain the origin of civil society; it is not even that enlightened *consciousness of self-interest* which seemed to Hume and Bentham to be an adequate foundation on which to raise the edifice of civil obligation. It is rather that fact of *community* on which T. H. Green and his disciples, going back to the Greek fountain-head of political thought, have laid such just and effective stress. The state which claims the supreme allegiance of all is but the community-as-a-whole politically organised for the maintenance of the conditions of the good life. Like any and every other organic association, it is a corporate unit possessed of a public opinion, a communal conscience, and a general will. But it claims precedence of all other associations, whether they be churches, or parties, or industrial syndicates, because in the present dispensation of the world it provides the environment of law and order without which none of them could exist at all.[1] It is not only Power, embodying the material might of the community; it is also Justice, representing its highest moral standard; and Peace, maintaining in virtue of its mediating and reconciling authority the equal liberty of all. It claims the first loyalty of the individual citizen because directly or indirectly it has conferred upon him all that he has, and alone has made possible to him all that makes his life worth living. It is the Great Society, in vital union, with which fulness of self-realisation is alone attainable. Thus there should be no consciousness of separation,

[1] Cf. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, pp. 156-7

still less of conflict, between the state and the individual, between the citizen and the community of which he is an integral part. The well-being of the one is the well-being of the other. Where there is lack of harmony there is weakness and loss to both. It should be the supreme endeavour of the citizen to keep his will in unison with that of the community, whether he do so by subduing his own impulses or by using his influence to modify the general will. Similarly it should be the first concern of the state to maintain that civic unity without which there can be no healthy communal life; whether it do so by devising means whereby every individual and every group can exert its proper influence to the determination of the general will, or by asserting the authority of the general will over the recalcitrant. For, as Professor Dewey finely says, the end both of politics and ethics is "such a development of the individual that he shall be in harmony with all others in the state, and shall possess as his own the unified will of the community."[1] When this harmony is attained, discipline becomes self-government, and duty self-realisation.

[1] Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 19.

CHAPTER XII

REFORM

"The one great danger of democracy—the only danger that it need ultimately fear—is that it may fail to be true to itself, that it may forget its own ideals."—J. S. MACKENZIE, *Dangers of Democracy.*

"The difficulty for democracy is how to find and keep high ideals."—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Essays.*

"La démocratie après des tâtonnements plus ou moins longs, finira par s'organiser."—E. SCHÉRER, *La Démocratie et la France.*

"The main problem for the twentieth century will be how—while preserving the democratic form of government—so to rein it in and coerce its eccentricities of orbit, that it shall not only be a means of morality, but an efficient instrument of government as well."—J. B. CROZIER, *History of Intellectual Development.*

"Where the well-being of our fellow-men is concerned it is not enough to be well-meaning. Government is an art, not an aspiration; and those who are concerned with it, whether as rulers or voters, should have studied its problems, reflected on its possibilities and limitations, and fitted themselves to profit by its accumulated experience."—A. E. ZIMMERN, *Nationality and Government.*

§ 64. *The Need of Reform.*

THAT ideal of the harmonisation of the individual and the community which we have just contemplated is a very high one. It implies the identification of the real will of the citizen with the general will of the body politic, and the recognition on the part of the citizen of the cardinal fact that his real well-being is identical with the well-being of the Great Society to which he belongs. The attainment of the ideal puts an end to that duality of Man and the State

which is the common article in the hopeless creeds of both Herbert Spencer and Michael Bakunin. It reconciles the conscience of the One with the conscience of the Many, and reveals to the once-lonely objector the truth that the power which makes the people's laws is not a power external to himself but a power of which he himself is an integral part, his larger and more potent self.

It must be confessed, however, that this ideal harmonisation and reconciliation of the free man with the democratic state has not as yet been anywhere attained, although its attainment is perhaps nearer in the British Commonwealth than in any other existing polity. The obstacles to its attainment can be classified under three main heads, viz. first, the moral and intellectual imperfections of the individual; secondly, the excessive claims to allegiance and service made upon the citizen by secondary groups and associations to which he may belong; thirdly, the defects of the democratic state itself. Individual, group, state—all display urgent need of regeneration and reform. Only when regenerated and reformed can their co-ordination be complete.

In the democratic state the standard of individual merit needs to be exceedingly lofty, if the ideal of citizenship is to be realised; and it is, as we have seen, the distinctive virtue of democracy, as compared with aristocracy and monarchy, that it provides an unparalleled stimulus to the pursuit of this civic excellence. The citizen is called upon to deal with complex problems; hence on the one hand he requires the widest possible knowledge and the most fully developed faculties; but on the other hand he is rewarded by finding a large scope for his talents,

and by being transported beyond the narrow limits of the circle of his private activities. He is called upon to face heavy responsibilities; hence on the one hand he requires a high degree of fidelity and honour—that *exacta diligentia*, or exalted standard of active and vigilant faithfulness, which the Romans regarded as characteristic of the *bonus paterfamilias*; but on the other hand he is rewarded by a consciousness that he is exercising an effectual influence (which has no relation at all to the occasional and fitful influence of his vote) in moulding a sound public opinion and in determining a righteous general will. He is, further, called upon to play a curious double part in politics—a part much more difficult to play than that assigned to the citizen in any other polity. He is required to act both as sovereign and as subject. As a member of the sovereign community he has to assist in appointing, controlling, criticising, and if necessary dismissing the government; as a subject he has to obey the government, and to assist the government in maintaining its authority over all persons and in all causes. Difficult, indeed, is the task of so adjusting the two relations that the one does not overbalance the other. It is easy so to criticise and control—especially in countries where the referendum and recall prevail—as to reduce the government to impotence and contempt. It is possible so to obey and support the government as to abdicate the free man's sovereignty. Happy the democratic state in which the average citizen has attained to this exact adjustment. It would be idle to pretend that he has as yet done so, even in Britain. Education is still wholly inadequate; the sense of moral responsibility is still but imperfectly developed;

self-seeking is still too rife in politics; there is still too great a tendency for the strong to defy the government and for the weak to cringe to it, if by any means personal advantage seems likely to accrue. Much has yet to be done to raise the standard of civic education, exalt the code of civic honour, and show how the right of democratic control can be reconciled with the duty of democratic obedience.

The second obstacle to the harmonisation of the individual and the community-as-a-whole is that caused by the excessive claims to allegiance and service made upon the citizen by the various groups and associations to which he may belong. These groups and associations are numerous and of infinite diversity; but the only three that impose a serious barrier between the individual and the community-as-a-whole are political parties, trade unions, and churches. Concerning the first two it is enough to say here in the forceful words of Mr. A. E. Zimmern: "The state takes precedence of the party or the trade-union, because, however idealistic in their policy these latter may be, the state covers all, not merely a section of the community, and is able not merely to proclaim but also to enforce the rule of law and justice"; and further that "but for the existence of the state and the reign of law maintained by it, none of these associations could have been formed or be maintained."[1] The claims of the religious community cannot be so lightly dismissed. The Christian Church is anterior to the modern state, and if there were still, as there was in the Middle Ages, a single ecclesiastical organisation to which all men paid allegiance, that universal body would no doubt be

[1] Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, pp. 156-7.

the Great Society, which would rightly claim the supreme and primary loyalty of all its members. There is, however, no such body to-day: but merely a number of sects which even in their totality include but a fraction of the community. No one of them, nor all together, can possibly "enforce the rule of law and justice" generally, or even establish the conditions of the good life for Christian folk themselves. All the churches, even the most venerable and august, have become, through their own schisms and their own failure to convert the world, mere "voluntary associations" dependent on the state for the protection which enables them to exist. In spite of this, however, and even in this the day of their humiliation and disintegration, they might properly claim an allegiance superior to that due to the state, if it were true that they, or any of them, represent the will of God, while the state represents merely the will of man. But this is not the case. To maintain this it is not necessary to draw attention to the many elements of human wilfulness and frailty that have marked the witness of the churches. It is enough to repeat, what has already been noted, that the state itself has sanctity; that *it*, as well as the church, embodies the highest moral and religious ideals which prevail in the community out of which it is constituted; that its public opinion is moulded by all the ethical and ecclesiastical influences that are operative within it, in proportion to their unfettered power; that its laws are the expression of a general will which the churches themselves have done incalculably much to determine. Hence the distinction between church and state is not the distinction between divine and

human; but between two types of communal organisation, each in its machinery devised by man, each in its function representative of God. Since at the present day no church, nor all the churches together, can by any possibility perform the essential duties of the Great Society, it is necessary for the churches to revert to their attitude of apostolic times; that is to say, to recognise and support the authority of temporal rulers, admitting that these are ordained of God for purposes divine, and be content for their own part to exercise the prophetic office of directing the conscience of the sovereign community.

The third obstacle to the harmonisation of the individual and the community-as-a-whole is that which arises from the defects of the democratic state itself. How grave these defects are was shown in the early sections of this book, and it was admitted that, if these defects were inherent and inevitable in democracy, then democracy is no fit polity for men. But it was there urged that these defects are the vices and extravagances of ignorance, inexperience, and youth; and that faith in human nature requires us to believe that they can and will be remedied. Remedied, however, they must be, if democracy is to be worthy of preference to either Prussianism or Bolshevism, and if it is to be able to maintain a valid claim to a superior authority to the individual conscience or the sectional will. It is the purpose of this chapter to indicate the nature of the reforms which seem to be the most urgently necessary. A mere indication will in most cases have to suffice, for to enter into detail or discussion would involve volumes of controversial writing.

§ 65. *Moral and Religious Reform.*

As we have already seen, in the world as it exists at present, strong government, " over all persons and in all causes supreme," is essential, if the conditions of the good life are to be maintained, if there is to be a possibility of continuous progress, and if an equal freedom is to prevail for all. In the interests of the community-as-a-whole, and ultimately in the interests of every group and individual of which it is composed, it is necessary that government should effectively suppress crime, eliminate passive resistance, prevent impertinent interference, and crush open rebellion. The need for strength is greater now than it has ever been before ; for there is no doubt that the tendency to lawlessness is increasing. Prior to the war the standard of violence was set by Mrs. Pankhurst, and the standard of infidelity to engagements by Mr. James Larkin. Since the outbreak of the war a new standard in each branch of *lèse-démocratie* has been established by the Kaiser and his minions, and there is grave fear that into domestic disputes something of Germanic brutality and Germanic faithlessness are being introduced. But just in proportion as there is need for decisive vigour on the part of government in the suppression of all kinds of lawlessness, so is there also need, on the one hand that the community should realise that the government is its agent acting on its behalf, and on the other hand that the government should be supported by the consciousness that both the moral and physical might of the community is behind it in its measures. It is necessary that the sense of the duality of governors and governed, where it exists, should give place to

the true democratic realisation of their identity ; for, as Professor Dewey points out, in a democracy " the governors and the governed are not two classes, but two aspects of the same fact—the fact of the possession by society of a unified and articulate will." [1] What would be a tyranny if it were exercised by an external authority over an unwilling people, becomes self-discipline and self-control when it is exercised by a community, through its duly elected government, over itself. And the government which would be weak and hesitant if it were acting on its own behalf, or on behalf of a party or a class, becomes firm and courageous when it realises that it is ruling as the representative of the whole people : for, as another writer says, " there is something in the inarticulate voice of vast multitudes which is calculated, like the voice of the many-sounding sea, to awe the minds of the better class of statesmen, and to steady them for great designs, deepening their sense of responsibility and fixing their minds on great moral issues—an impetus not to be had by any governments resting on a restricted range of class-interests, fancy franchises, or the like." [2]

It is not enough, however, that governors and governed should realise their identity the one with the other. It is equally necessary that both alike should be purged from moral faults, should be filled with a sense of responsibility, should make and keep themselves worthy of the high and sacred tasks which in the polity of the modern democratic state they are called upon to perform. There is grave danger lest politics, especially when they become

[1] Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 16.
[2] Crozier, *History of Intellectual Development*, vol. iii. p. 145.

contentious, should breed what Professor MacCunn calls " a certain energetic secularity of spirit, a hardness and unscrupulosity, which blunt the edge of honour, habituate the mind to compromise and trickery, and cause it to forget the more distant ends in the short-lived triumphs of faction." [1]

In order that high ideals may be maintained, moral reforms, involving in some cases little less than a regenerative change of heart, are essential. First, there is urgent need that the standard of public honour should be raised. Corruption is the easily besetting sin of all who possess political power ; and it is specially rife in democracy, since in this form of state power is widely diffused and responsibility heavily diluted. Unless the standard of public honour is made and kept high, the temptation to use political power for personal or sectional ends is irresistible. Office comes to be looked upon as a prize rather than a trust ; and its tenure as a fleeting opportunity, not to be missed, of accumulating spoil, rather than an occasion of communal service. Similarly the vote, which should be regarded as an instrument put into the hands of the elector for the registration of the general will in the interests of the common good, comes to be treated as a weapon for securing from complacent candidates personal advantages, class privileges, local benefits. Professor York Powell rightly includes among the deadliest enemies of democracy " the person who tries to persuade the voter that dishonesty is not always the worst policy, and that a bit of boodle for himself cannot hurt him or any one else." [2] All such electoral appeals as " nine-

[1] MacCunn, *Making of Character*, p. 106.
[2] Powell, *Thoughts on Democracy*, p. 35.

pence for fourpence," all such arguments as "your beer will cost you more," need to be utterly repudiated as insults by an enlightened and honourable democracy: they incalculably lower the tone of public life, and degrade politics to the level of huckstering. All such means of obtaining party funds as the notorious "sale of honours" are fatal to clean and pure administration. Secondly, closely akin to this need of meticulous purity in public affairs is the need of strict and honest observance of the rules of the "game of politics." Just as the Germans have destroyed international society by their cynical repudiation of treaties and conventions; just as they have reduced war to the unmitigated barbarity of the seventeenth-century conflicts of religion, by violating all the humane agreements into which civilised peoples have entered during three centuries: so do those go about to destroy democratic self-determination who refuse to "play the game" in political contests. It is of the essence of the game that the majority rules, and that the minority gives way. Only if this rule is rigidly observed is popular government possible. The conscientious objectors, the passive resisters, the mutinous strikers do not observe this rule; they do not play the game; they violate the very spirit of democracy; they act on the grossly unfair principle of the sharper who says, "Heads I win, tails you lose." There is need that in this serious "game of politics" the healthy and noble spirit of true sportsmanship should be maintained. It is the spirit of friendly rivalry, the spirit of mutual respect and reciprocal trust, the spirit of a worthy and elevating contest as to who shall have the honour of serving the nation, and of determining the means

by which the public good shall be increased. Thirdly, there is need that this same spirit of chivalrous honour should be applied to the fulfilment of all engagements and contracts. One of the most disastrous features of that deplorable *Trades Disputes Act* of 1906 was its recognition of the Germanic principle that private codes of morality do not apply to public affairs; it declares it to be lawful for a trade union to break any contracts into which it may have entered; it permits it to commit torts with impunity. Rarely has a more mortal blow been struck, even in Prussia itself, at the very heart of national integrity. Its results have been manifested in the long series of lawless strikes which have subsequently and consequently ensued.[1] Solemn agreements, even those made as treaties to end industrial wars, have become mere "scraps of paper," to be torn up with reckless disregard of good faith whenever the interest of the moment may seem to be promoted thereby; terms of employment, binding on the employers, have been treated as though they had no existence for the employees. Sacredness of contract lies at the very foundation of civilised life; and unless it can be taken for granted that engagements will be kept, society must be utterly disintegrated, the possibility of co-operation destroyed, a state of truceless conflict created. "*Serva pactum*" is a motto which no democratic community can disregard, and yet continue to exist. It is imperatively necessary that the simple and universal code of fidelity be restored, and that the law be brought into conformity with it.

Finally, in order that all these difficult tasks may be made easy, and all these exalted ideals of morality

[1] Cf. Osborne, *Sane Trade Unionism*, p. 195.

may become realisable, it is needful that the high spirit of religion should be breathed into the life of our democratic politics. Well says M. Laveleye: "Plus les institutions d'un peuple deviennent démocratiques, plus il est nécessaire qu'elles aient pour base un sentiment religieux, sincère, profond et éclairé." [1] We must come to look upon our citizenship as a form of divine service, and as the chief appointed means by which we can advance the cause of humanity. If only we can realise the essential brotherhood of all men, irrespective of class or condition, questions of purity, fidelity, and honour will solve themselves. In politics as in private life love is the fulfilment of the law. As Emerson finely and hopefully puts it: "There will dawn ere long on our politics and on our modes of living a nobler morning in the sentiment of love. This is the one remedy for all our ills, the panacea of nature. We must all be lovers, and at once the impossible becomes possible."

§ 66. *Political Reform.*

(*a*) *General Principles.*—The day may be far distant when men generally will be so fully enlightened and so highly exalted that they will be able to realise the human brotherhood which will solve political problems by the panacea of love. But the actual working of democracy demands and postulates mutual trust, widespread respect, common confidence. It also requires general agreement on fundamental political and constitutional principles. Such basal matters as the unit of government, the form of the administration, the authority of parliament, the rule

[1] Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la Démocratie*, vol. i. p. 312.

of the majority, cannot be called in question without suspending and possibly destroying that solidarity of the community which is essential, if there is to be a single public opinion and an operative general will. That is why it is so important to get the problem of nationality settled before the problems of democracy are dealt with; for unsatisfied national aspirations are fatal to democratic unity. That also is why the doctrine of the class war is so deadly a disintegrant of present-day democracy; for it aims at the destruction of the communal basis on which the democratic superstructure is reared. Those who call fundamentals in question are not reformers, but revolutionaries. It may, of course, be necessary to call fundamentals in question, and to carry through a revolution. I am not disputing that. What I am pointing out is merely the truth that until these fundamental questions are settled, and until there is a general and tacit acceptance of the constitution and the principles which it embodies, there can be no ordered political life of any sort. The analogy of the organism holds good. Members cannot be at conflict among one another on vital concerns without endangering existence itself. Burke was the political thinker who saw this truth most clearly, and expressed it most vigorously. As against the revolutionaries he contended that radical changes involving breach of historic continuity meant death. But on the other hand, as against the reactionaries, he maintained that the principle of life implied power of adaptation to a changing environment; that is to say, in respect of the body politic it implied constant regeneration and reform. He rightly pointed out that not to permit the carrying out of necessary progressive

reforms is to precipitate, and even to justify, revolution. It cannot be doubted that the rapid and far-reaching social and economic changes of recent days have made many political reforms necessary. Let us briefly survey some that have appeared to various modern observers to be important in relation to democracy.

(*b*) *The Question of the Monarchy.*—The monarchy in this country happily lies outside the range of controversial politics, and it is mentioned here merely to indicate its relation to democracy. In a sense it is the most democratic, because the most popular, institution in the land. When recently Mr. H. G. Wells sent up in the press a republican kite, it descended with such rapidity and force upon his injudicious head that on recovery he thought it better to turn his attention to themes less dangerous to himself and his reputation. Since 1688 the monarchy has been purged of its unpopular claims to be a hereditary possession held by divine right, and it has been administered as an exalted office held on behalf of the people and regulated by law. Although the monarch has ceased to take part in the actual government of the kingdom, he plays an exceedingly important part in the constitution. It is, indeed, just because he is raised above the tumult of party strife, just because his throne is established on heights beyond the reach of political conflict, that he is able to render such invaluable services to the community. He dwells in regions where there is no fear of conflict with democracy. The heir of the venerable House of Cerdic,[1] oldest of the royal lines of Europe, the

[1] How incomparably finer is the ancestral designation "House of Cerdic" than the recently invented "House of Windsor"—a merely topographical appellation which carries the historic memory back only to 1345!

king represents the ancient traditions of the peoples over whom he reigns, incarnates the continuity of their institutions, stands for national unity amid party schisms, calls forth a loyalty which takes precedence of all sectional allegiances, enables the abstract sentiment of patriotism to associate itself with a personal devotion that gives it passion and power. But he does more than this. He exercises in domestic politics a reconciling and moderating influence; he smoothes over changes of ministries, and makes it possible for radical reconstructions to be accomplished without blood, and sometimes without tears; he plays a great part in foreign affairs, not as a determiner of policy, but as a healer of wounds and as a disseminator of friendship and goodwill among the nations; above all, he stands as the great unifying head of the British empire, the one majestic and symbolic figure to whom all the peoples of all the dominions beyond the seas can look in a common veneration, as emblematic of the ties that make them one. The German Kaiser may affect to despise the English monarchy as dignity divorced from authority; and it is true that the king is no longer able to rule irrespective of his people's will, or to send them as sheep to the slaughter without their own consent. But the English monarchy plays a part infinitely nobler than that of the *Kaisertum* of the upstart and semi-barbaric House of Hohenzollern. It stands at the head of a commonwealth of free nations, supported by the loyal devotion of all, serving all, and linking all together in the common service of Man.

(*c*) *The Cabinet System.*—The effective powers of government have passed from the king into the hands

of the cabinet—still nominally the ministry of the king, and still bound by oaths of fidelity to him. The Cabinet, however, is in reality the supreme executive agent of the sovereign democracy, and the crucial issue of each general election is fundamentally the question who shall hold the chief offices in the administration. The democracy exercises its control over the cabinet through the medium of parliament, and particularly the House of Commons. That control at present is, however, far from complete. Ministers can act far too independently; can refuse far too bureaucratically to inform the House of what they are doing; can continue far too long to ignore public opinion. It seems desirable that in connection with each department of state a parliamentary committee should be formed which on the one hand might be the means whereby democratic control could be directly exercised over the administration, and on the other hand might be the means whereby the strength of the sovereign people could be made operative in support of the government.

(*d*) *The Second Chamber.*—There are some who think that if democratic control is to be made effective over the administration in this country the most necessary reform is not the institution of parliamentary committees, but the abolition of the House of Lords, and indeed of any and every sort of second chamber.[1] There is much plausibility and some force in the argument that if the will of the majority is to prevail it can best do so by means of the unchecked vote of its elected representatives. It may even be

[1] Cf. Snowden, in *The Second Chamber Problem*, p. 36: "The Labour Party is opposed to a second chamber, no matter how such a chamber may be constituted."

admitted, indeed, that in the ideal democracy there would be no need for, and no room for, a second chamber. But, unfortunately, democracy in no country has as yet realised the ideal stage; and in every country the sovereign people—wiser than its academic advisers—has decided that a second chamber is desirable. It has so decided because it recognises the fact that legislation is a matter of such grave importance that it is well to have every proposed measure, before it becomes law, subjected to careful independent criticism and revision; because it realises that in a single chamber as at present constituted hasty, passionate, unjust, or immature decisions might be made; because it perceives that its elected representatives do not always remember that they represent the community-as-a-whole, but frequently form themselves into sectional groups addicted to the practice of log-rolling; and because it rightly believes that "there would scarcely be a limit to the mischief a demoralised collection of self-seeking and ambitious groups might do, if there were no second chamber to compel reflection and reconsideration."[1] Therefore the sovereign democracy decides that it will appoint or maintain a second chamber, in order that it may "correct and delay, revise the mistakes of haste, postpone the designs of unscrupulous partisans until such time as public opinion can be tested by extra-foraneous discussion."[2] To call such a second chamber, even if it be the House of Lords, "undemocratic," when it is so maintained, is an abuse of language, and of something more important than language, viz. popular credulity. It

[1] Low, *Governance of England*, p. 231.
[2] Baumann, *Persons and Politics*, p. 228.

is to confuse democracy as a form of state with democracy as a form of government.

In this country, however, the question arises whether the House of Lords does in fact adequately perform the functions of a second chamber. Mr. Walter Bagehot in 1867 thought on the whole that it did;[1] much more enthusiastically confident on the point was Mr. Lowes Dickinson in 1895;[2] even in 1916 Mr. A. A. Baumann seemed satisfied.[3] But this complacent view is now shared by very few observers of current politics. Whatever it may have been possible to believe up to 1906, since that date, under the pusillanimous, injudicious, and disastrous leadership of Lord Lansdowne, the House of Lords has demonstrated its incapacity, as at present constituted, to act as an effective second chamber. It is at once too timid and too partial. It stands in urgent need of reconstitution and reform. The *Parliament Act* of 1912, of course, dealt with the problem of the House of Lords: but it dealt with it in a vicious temper and in quite the wrong way. Instead of reforming the House of Lords and increasing its legitimate authority, it left it unreformed and merely humiliated it, deprived it of responsibility, and rendered it more ineffective than ever. Into the various schemes for the reform of the House of Lords it is impossible to enter here.[4] It must suffice to say (1) that it is vitally important to maintain the historic connection between the old House and the new; (2) that the obvious means to do so is to extend the

[1] Bagehot, *English Constitution*, chap. iii.

[2] Dickinson, *Development of Parliament*, pp. 181-2.

[3] Baumann, *Persons and Politics*, pp. 221-37.

[4] The latest and most important is that issued by the Conference presided over by Lord Bryce. It is published as a Parliamentary Paper (Cd. 9038). Summaries appeared in the press, April 25, 1918.

principle of representation already applied to Scottish and Irish peers to peers of England and the United Kingdom; (3) that the new members should be provided by means of election; and (4) that the best electoral bodies would seem to be, first, the county and borough councils, and, secondly, the great organised groups into which the nation is divided, in proportion to their numbers.[1]

(*e*) *The House of Commons.*—The House of Commons, not less than the House of Lords, requires renovation and reconstruction. It is in its present state a very inadequate representative of the democracy, and also an extremely defective legislative chamber in itself. During the past quarter of a century it has on the one hand lost touch with the constituencies, and become too much the slave of the executive, incapable of independent action; on the other hand, owing partly to congestion of business, partly to faulty procedure, and partly to deliberate obstruction by Irish and other irreconcilables, it has ceased to be able to perform its duties of criticism and legislation. In order that it may more truly represent the people, it would seem to be necessary that appeals to the constituencies should be much more frequent than they have been lately. Personally I incline to the "annual parliaments" of the Chartist programme; but, failing that, I should be glad to see machinery set up by means of which any constituency could reconsider its representation every year, on its new register, if it should wish to do so,

[1] The whole problem is discussed in Ramsay Muir, *Peers and Bureaucrats*; M'Kechnie, *Reform of the House of Lords*; Temperley, *Senates and Upper Chambers*; and Marriott, *Second Chambers*. The solution of the problem will, of course, be profoundly affected by the nature of the solution which

and if it should be prepared to pay the expense of doing so. At any rate it must be admitted that events move so rapidly nowadays, and political issues change so suddenly and frequently, that effective democratic control is unobtainable with either the Septennial Act of 1716 or the quinquennial arrangement of the Parliament Act of 1912. And effective democratic control of every department of state is essential, if we are to escape the evils of bureaucracy. It will be remembered, however, that effective democratic control, which is the characteristic of the democratic state, does not mean interference in the details of either legislation or administration. It merely means the choice of legislators, and the determination of the broad lines of policy. Members of parliament must remain, in respect of their constituents, representatives and not delegates. But in order that they may be sure that they do really represent, and that they continue to represent, the general will of their constituency, their commission of agency must be frequently and regularly renewed. It would also seem to be desirable that, if members of parliament are to be paid for their services, the payments should be made by their constituencies and not out of the national exchequer.

But not only has the House of Commons lost touch with the electorate and become subject to the executive, it has also ceased to perform adequately its duties of criticism and legislation. The immense increase and hopeless congestion of its business would appear to demand an extensive disburdenment; and the fact that within the United Kingdom, nations, localities, churches, and industrial corporations are all very much alive, and intensely conscious of cor-

porate personality, suggests the directions in which devolution can be made. Separate sub-parliaments for the purely national affairs of English, Scots, Irish, and Welsh would seem to be clearly indicated;[1] large delegation of local government to county and borough councils; generous concessions of self-government to churches, including the Church of England or the sects into which it would certainly split were it not for the cohesive pressure of the state; wide grants of internal self-determination to industrial and commercial groups—such are the signs of the times. But, together with this extensive devolution of powers, there is also need of radical reform of parliamentary procedure; so that non-controversial bills may be enacted more easily; so that private proposals may have more chance of consideration; so that fewer measures may be lost through lack of time to complete their process; so that discussion may not be prevented by obstruction.

(*f*) *The Franchise.*—The question of the franchise has already been dealt with.[2] One problem alone remains to be noted here, viz. the problem of the equality of electoral districts. The general democratic principle, of course, is that "one vote" should have "one value" all over the United Kingdom. This notoriously is not the case now. Ireland, for example, is grossly over-represented; London is seriously under-represented. A vote in Kilkenny is equivalent to over thirty votes in the Romford division of Essex; all sorts of anomalies exist. The problem is how an approximate equality can be

[1] Ulstermen should be allowed to say for themselves to which of the four nations they belong and to which of the four sub-parliaments they would send representatives.

[2] Above, § 56.

established and maintained. There are two main methods available. One is periodically to adjust the geographical limits of the constituencies. This was the method adopted in 1885, and it is thoroughly vicious. It destroys that strong sense of local community on which the English parliamentary system has been built. The other, and incomparably sounder, method is to fix and retain, so far as possible, the old local limits—sanctified as they are by tradition and by immemorial loyalties—and to vary the number of members according to fluctuations of population, making the necessary changes at each decennial census.

(*g*) *The Party System.*—A graver question, however, than that of the equalisation of voting power, is the question of the regimentation of both voters and members of parliament in political parties. We have traced the rise of the two historic parties, and have noted how the great enlargement of the electorate in 1867, together with the introduction of three-cornered constituencies, led to the formation within the parties of the "caucuses," and the application of militarist methods to political conflicts. We have further observed the entrance into the arena of new groups, calling themselves "parties"—the Irish Nationalist group and the Labour group—whose presence has seriously disarrayed the strategy and tactics of the older combatants. The war, together with the coalition governments which its necessities have generated, has completed party disorganisation, and it is now openly asked whether the party system can be restored, and whether its entire abolition is not desirable. Meanwhile fresh groups are coming into existence—*e.g.* the so-called "National Party,"

the " Women's Party," and the " Trade-Union Labour Party "—and the political chaos seems beyond reduction to any sort of cosmos. What is the way out ? Now it may be freely granted, and indeed strongly affirmed, that the old party system entailed many inconveniences, and some grave perils. Party interests too often took precedence of national interests ; party discipline destroyed independence ; party catchwords obfuscated judgment ; party funds corrupted character. Nevertheless, in spite of the truth of all this, the party-system—by which I mean the old two-party system—is absolutely and essentially necessary if parliamentary government is to be carried on at all. There *must* be a responsible administration, and also a responsible opposition vigilant to criticise the administration while it is in office, and ready to take over the control of affairs when it resigns office. Responsibility is the indispensable requisite. It is the irresponsibility of the Irish Nationalists that has made them such an unmitigated curse in the parliament of the United Kingdom ; they have been free to wreck and destroy, without any corresponding obligation to construct and rule. When they have been asked to formulate any scheme, even for their own self-government, their incapacity has been manifest. Similarly, it is irresponsibility which hitherto has caused the Labour group to propound its wild and visionary programmes of " social reform " ; it has known that it would never be called upon to carry them into practice. Responsibility sobers. The Labour leaders who patriotically joined the war cabinet have done magnificent work and have shown conspicuous ability ; but they have practically severed their connection with their

separatist group, and they have wholly abandoned the Utopian follies of their intransigent comrades. If only the Irish leaders had had the saving common-sense (to say nothing of loyalty and humanity) to do the same, then there would have been good hope for the reunion of the British peoples—good hope for their re-fusion in the crucible of this war waged on behalf of freedom and democracy. When the war is over, it will no doubt be found that the two political parties have undergone a complete transformation. The old names—such as Whig and Tory, Liberal and Conservative—will have lost their old meanings. Nevertheless it will be necessary to reconstruct the two parties on some lines or other, however novel. They correspond to fundamental principles in human nature: the one is the party of progress, the other is the party of order. Both are requisite for the successful development of representative democracy —on the one side His Majesty's government, on the other side His Majesty's opposition which hopes some day to become His Majesty's government. What is wanted is not the destruction of the two-party system; but its deliverance from the tyranny of the caucus, and its purification from the corruption of the secret fund. For the alternative to the two-party system is the group-system, such as obtains in France: and the group-system is the Devil's own device for the destruction of democracy. It opens the flood-gates for the entrance of log-rolling, intrigue, bribery, self-seeking, debased bargaining, falsehood, treason. It eliminates responsibility; puts an end to all continuity or calculability of policy; and brings to the front in politics the crank, the charlatan, and the knave. What is needed for the prevention of the

formation or perpetuation of intransigent groups, and for the purification of party, is, first, the development of a strong and sound spirit of patriotism which shall regard the community-as-a-whole, and shall place its interests above those of all sections ; secondly, the existence of a large body of well-informed and independent electors who keep themselves free from party ties, who, while recognising that party is a necessary and important element in democratic machinery, perceive that it needs a good deal of keeping in order, and a lot of jealous supervision ; thirdly, the adoption of various checks upon party corruption, such as the publication of accounts giving sources of income and modes of expenditure, and the issue together with each list of honours of an apologia stating the reason for bestowal.[1]

[1] I should have liked to deal much more fully with the party system, but lack of space and the claims of proportion do not permit. Hence I must content myself with referring my readers to sources of information. The classic defence of party is, of course, that of Burke in his *Present Discontents*. Modern statements of the case, with clear pronouncements to the effect that the existence of two, and no more than two, organised parties is essential to the successful working of representative government, are to be found in Low, *Governance of England*; Muir, *Peers and Bureaucrats* and *National Self-Government*; Bryce, Introduction to Ostrogorski's *Democracy and Political Parties*. Ostrogorski himself takes a less favourable view of parties, but his book is invaluable as a history of recent developments in party organisation. Few writers are so enthusiastic concerning the party system as the American, Nahum Capen, who in his *History of Democracy* (pp. 1-29) speaks of party as "the great engine of human progress," and contends that "a world without party would be incapable of progress." The diametrically opposite view, viz. that party is the supreme national peril, is expressed with vigour by F. S. Oliver in his *Ordeal by Battle*. Graham Wallas in *Human Nature in Politics* discusses with penetrating insight the psychology of party. Sir Henry Maine in *Popular Government*, and Robert Michels in *Political Parties*, connect the party system with the primitive fighting instincts of the race. Among French writers Laveleye, *Le Gouvernement dans la démocratie* (ii. 87), does the same : he further regards the party system as necessary and indeed inevitable, but holds that its perils should be guarded against by representation of minorities, secret voting, etc. M. Faguet, *Le Culte d'incompétence*, condemns the system and gives many instances of its vicious workings. Among German writers the Prussianised Treitschke, of course, condemns party, together with democracy in general : see especially *Politik*, i. pp. 150-54. The Heidelberg professor J. C. Bluntschli

(*h*) *The Question of the Referendum.*—The group-system has, as we have seen, been making of late years insidious encroachments into the British constitution. It is not too much to say that one of the gravest problems in the domestic politics of the immediate future is the problem whether it has come to stay, or whether the groups can be re-absorbed into two responsible parties of any sort. It is vital that they should be, whatever be the names of the parties, and whatever be their programmes. With the advent of the irresponsible groups have come some of the inevitable evils of the group-system. Chief among these is the practice of log-rolling—a practice fatal to the principle of the rule of the majority. According to this practice, minority groups combine to roll one another's logs, that is to say, to support one another's pet hobbies without any regard to the issues involved. Thus, for example, the Irish group agrees to support the Labour group's "right to work" bill, although it has no interest in it, since but few Irishmen claim the right to work; in return for this assistance the Labour group pledges itself to Home Rule, about which it cares little, and further consents to refrain from pressing what had been one of its avowed principles, viz. secular education. It is corrupt bargaining of this sort that is

has a useful study of the *Charakter und Geist der politischen Parteien*, which begins with the words: "Wo irgend in einem Staat sich politisches Leben mit Freiheit bewegt, da zeigen sich politische Parteien." The publicist Friedrich Rohmer, treats of the *Lehre von den politischen Parteien* in a work (never completed) relating primarily to German parties. He agrees with most political thinkers that parties are inevitable: "Sie sind; und keine Macht der Welt kann sie unterdrücken"; they are "der nothwendige Ausdruck des Staatslebens." Brilliantly written, amusing, but wholly unbalanced attacks on the party system are contained in the numerous manifestoes of that crusading trio, Hilaire Belloc and the brothers Chesterton—the modern Don Quixote with his two Sancho Panzas.

fatal to democratic self-determination. In place of a homogeneous majority you behold a conspiracy of concurrent minorities; instead of government in accordance with public opinion and the general will you have a government controlled by a combination of sectional fanaticisms.[1] The preventive of log-rolling is the two-party system; and if only the two patriotic national parties can be constituted on any basis, and can be kept healthy and pure by a sound public opinion and the existence of a strong independent electorate, no more is needed. If, however, the sectional groups refuse to be co-ordinated into national parties, and if they persist in their log-rolling proclivities, then the remedy of the referendum may be necessary. But it is a remedy only less bad than the disease; for it introduces into the body politic that method of direct democratic government which we have seen cause to condemn as almost hopelessly obscurantist and inefficient. Nevertheless the referendum is better than log-rolling. Curiously enough, the Rev. Sir Robertson Nicoll, who usually represents the saner section of the Nonconformist Conscience, does not think so. His great *objection* to the referendum is that it would eradicate the practice of log-rolling! With extraordinary naïveté he says: "A Welsh Nonconformist's heart burns within him against religious inequality; a Scottish crofter votes enthusiastically for a Land Bill. Submit each as a separate issue and it is by no means certain that the Welshman will vote for the Land Bill and the Scotsman for disestablishment." But get them to roll

[1] An excellent description of "log-rolling," with an account of the origin of the term, is given in a letter of Lord Penzance to the *Times* newspaper, August 29, 1894: it is reprinted in Charley's *Crusade against the Constitution*, pp. 431-3.

one another's logs and both will arrive![1] It would be difficult to find a stronger argument in *support* of the referendum. Does the British democracy as a whole desire to have land-nationalisation and disestablishment imposed upon it by an alliance of Welsh Nonconformists who care nothing for the one and Scottish crofters who care nothing for the other? And does not the writer of these words perceive that the unprincipled and anti-democratic means by which these innocent Celtic doves hope to secure the overthrow of a privileged church, and the expropriation of a landed aristocracy, could and would be used with infinitely more skill and effect by the venomous serpents of all the corrupt interests in the country? It is by means such as this that Tammany holds sway in New York.[2] These alliances, whether holy or unholy, are the very negation of the rule of the general will of a homogeneous and organic democratic community. It is therefore surprising to find Mr. J. A. Hobson, that ardent exponent of the theory of the socio-psychological organism, defending the sectional and essentially anti-democratic practice of log-rolling, as he does when he says that "if democracy is to have a chance of winning it can only be by the union of all those genuinely progressive forces which have hitherto acted apart."[3] He then draws a picture of "the single-taxer, the temperance reformer, the educationalist, the free trader, the trade-unionist, and the socialist" combining to impose the collected mass of their respective hobbies upon the reluctant and helpless country. Why did he not add the

[1] Introduction to Stoddart's *Against the Referendum*.
[2] Cf. Godkin, *Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy*, p. 121.
[3] Hobson, *The Fight for Democracy*, p. 11.

vegetarian, the anti-vaccinationist, the non-smoker, the pacificist, the faith-healer, *et hoc genus omne*? Why should they not all come, and introduce the maniac's millennium in one great combined operation? If the referendum is necessary to save us from the imposition of the fool's paradise, then let us have it. But not otherwise. The referendum is direct democracy with all its grave dangers: but any sort of democracy is better than this conspiracy of concurrent minorities. No doubt some of these minorities advocate excellent things, the adoption of which would be an enormous advantage to the country. But it is their business to persuade the majority of this fact, and not to force their panaceas upon it by the anti-democratic method of log-rolling. In view of the appalling possibilities of the tyranny of concurrent minorities, one realises that there is some serious meaning in the jibe of Mr. Bernard Shaw, that "the great purpose of democracy is to prevent your being governed better than you want to be governed." The referendum is the effective democratic device for achieving this purpose. But in a homogeneous community there should be no need to adopt it. For its adoption implies the abandonment of representative government; and a homogeneous community has no cause to dread being governed too well.[1]

[1] The referendum in Switzerland is accused by M. Schérer (*La Démocratie*, p. 43) "d'avoir tué chez les autorités, du haut en bas de la hiérarchie gouvernementale, tout esprit d'initiative, tout courage civique et tout sentiment de responsabilité." The Italian Syndicalist, Arturo Labriola, who is naturally opposed to democratic control of all sorts, emphasises (*Contro il Referendum*) the conservative tendencies of the referendum; *e.g.* p. 14, "Nessuna prova migliore dei fatti; vediamo quali siano questi fatti. In Isvizzera il referendum diviene soltano un diritto di veto e, come un simile diritto esercitato dal capo dello stato nei sistemi rappresentativi si riduce ad una irrisione, tale è pure se esercitato dal popolo. E (curiosa

§ 67. *Industrial Reform.*

(*a*) *The Present Situation.*—Political reform is, of course, the matter of prime concern to a community; because it is upon the organisation of the state, and the efficiency of the government, that the maintenance of favourable conditions for every sort of social and individual activity depends. But, in our own country and at the present moment, second only to political reform in interest and importance is industrial reform; for upon the question of economic organisation, and the mode of industrial government, the health and happiness of the major portion of the British people hang. It would obviously be beyond our province in this book to consider industry itself with its many problems and perplexities. We are concerned only with industry on its administrative side, and with industry in its relation to the democratic state. To all who contemplate the present extremely unsatisfactory and disquieting condition of the industrial world it is evident, first, that for some reason or other self-government in industry is much less fully developed than it is in politics; secondly, that existing industrial organisation causes grave unrest and widespread revolt among the rank and file of the workers —a resentment and a rebellion which manifest themselves by means of incessant strikes, inflammatory manifestoes, turbulent indiscipline, vexatious interference with management, restriction of output, sabotage, intimidation, and all the devices which malignant antagonism can invent; thirdly, that unless some

coincidenza !) come il diritto regio di veto è essenzialmente conservatore, poiche si suppone essere il capo dello Stato il rappresentante più puro della tradizione stabilitata, cosi lo è pure il diritto popolare di veto."

means can be discovered for restoring tranquillity to the industrial world, reconciling labour and its leaders, harmonising the relations between the captains and the rank and file, not only will British industry be destroyed, but even the fabric of the British constitution itself will be imperilled.

(*b*) *Causes of Unrest.*—The present industrial unrest is due partly to real and partly to imaginary grievances. To dispose of the latter first. Not a little of the widespread spirit of revolt is attributable to the false doctrines of Marxian Socialism and to the pernicious propaganda of anarchic Syndicalism. The errors disseminated by the half-educated alumni of the Central Labour College, and by other agitators nourished upon the dyspeptic illusions of continental revolutionaries, are responsible for a good deal of the windy fury of the misguided working man. The gravest disservice has been done to the cause of both industrial peace and industrial efficiency by the gross but plausible fallacies that have thus been perpetuated —long after they have been slain and buried in the intellectual world—concerning such matters as the true nature of capital, the meaning of competition, the functions of the business-manager, the determinants of wages, the legitimate claims of undirected labour. And yet not all, or nearly all, the unrest is traceable to the mere ferment of false doctrine. Much is due to industrial conditions that have become intolerable. It is not, of course, true that these conditions are worse now than they have been in past days. On the contrary, they are, on the whole, incomparably better: wages are higher, security of tenure is greater, hours are shorter, work is lighter. But even these improved conditions have become

unbearable, because the standard of living has been raised relatively very much higher still. Elementary education has opened up vistas of new possibilities; the possession of the franchise has conferred the consciousness of power; trade-union organisation has fostered dreams of conquest; the vision of the pleasures which wealth and leisure make accessible has stimulated new and justifiable desires for gratification. Hence there is a natural revolt against the sordid limitations of the workman's life; against the monotony of his toil, the hideousness of his surroundings, the squalor of his dwelling-place, the length of his day, his lack of holidays, his deprivation of opportunities for the cultivation of the graces and amenities of life; above all, revolt against the subjection under which he finds himself in the workshop, against the inhuman tyranny of factory routine, against his reduction to the status of a "hand," against the uncertainties of his employment, against the total absence of self-determination which marks his lot. He feels, and says, that political democracy means little or nothing to him, so long as industrially he is crushed beneath an autocratic *régime*.[1]

(c) *Self-Government in Industry*.—There can be no doubt that one of the most urgent questions of the present moment in this country is the question of the extension of the principle of self-government from the sphere of politics into the sphere of industry. It is not an easy question to deal with or to settle. In industry even more than in politics the demands of efficiency seem to conflict with the demands of self-determination. Efficiency must at all costs be

[1] Cf. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, pp. 263 *sq.*; and Weyl, *The New Democracy*, pp. 276 *sq.*

maintained, or else the work which we show ourselves incapable of performing will be taken from our hands, and we shall all sink into well-merited unemployment and penury. And efficiency hitherto has meant scientific management, that is to say, the skilled and autocratic control of the able business-manager who, like the commander-in-chief of an army, has been able to co-ordinate information, to develop invention, and to conduct operations with decision and promptitude. If we ask why the democratic principle has not up to the present made greater headway in the economic world, the answer is that in this economic world of keen and constant conflict—a conflict which is but the natural and healthy expression of the competition between the different wants of our insatiable human nature—the defects of democracy have been displayed so glaringly in decisive disaster that democratic experiments at production have generally perished of their own demerits—stifled by their own waste-products. They have perished of indiscipline, ignorance, incapacity, mutual jealousy, unprogressiveness, lethargy, loquacity, self-indulgence. Industrial democracies have perished as armies perish that are led by debating societies. If we ask, further, why employers are obviously reluctant at the present moment to embark on experiments at self-government, *i.e.* to admit workmen to a share of effective control, the answer is that the term " self-government in industry " in the mouths of Syndicalists like Mr. Tom Mann, and Socio-Syndicalists like Mr. G. D. H. Cole, has come to have a sinister and revolutionary connotation. It does not stand for true democratic control by the whole industrial community—masters, foremen, and hand-workers ; it does not mean cordial co-operation

between capital and labour for the securing of good conditions of work on the one side and increased efficiency on the other. On the contrary it means remorseless obstruction, incessant interference, unintelligent meddling, reduction of output, culminating in efforts at violent expropriation. It means the admission into the very citadels of successful enterprise of the destructive mobs of the social revolutionaries. There are no worse enemies of genuine industrial democracy than these deluded preachers of the class-war, these proclaimers of the false doctrine of the irreconcilable antagonism between capital and labour. It is largely owing to them that "shop stewards" have become synonymous with fomenters of industrial anarchy; and "shop committees" but another name for organisers of chronic mutiny. Before any sound and successful self-government in industry is possible the fatal virus of the dogma of the class-war must be purged from the body economic. For in the industrial democracy both capital and labour are necessary; both brains and hands; both money and toil; both skilled captains whose commands are promptly obeyed, and a laborious rank and file who in return for willing service may justly claim—with a certainty of securing—a full share in the determination of the conditions of their work.

(*d*) *The Way towards Industrial Democracy.*—The first step, then, towards the attainment of genuine industrial democracy is the cleansing from the body economic of the poison of the dogma of the class-war; for with it will go all those feverish and disordered dreams of Syndicalist pandemoniums and Guild utopias which distract the mind of Labour from the serious and hopeful business of its future course. The

second step is the introduction of genuine democracy into the trade unions themselves. At present they are controlled by "conscious minorities" of extremists, who, though they speak in the name of all, are really irresponsible and unrestrained oligarchies. The internal organisation, and particularly the method of voting, needs to be completely overhauled in the light of democratic principle.[1] The third step is the establishment of those joint-committees of employers and employed which are recommended in the generally admirable *Whitley Report*; that is to say, joint-committees based upon the joint-recognition of the fact that capital and labour are allies and not enemies in industry, that business-managers and hand-workers are equally necessary and equally honourable, that authority and discipline are essential, and that with good will and sound sense they need not conflict with reasonable freedom and real self-determination.[2] The fourth step is the great development of co-partnership, co-operative production, and even, within the narrow limits where it is applicable, that system of industrial guilds which still appeals so seductively to the mediaeval mind.[3] If only labour would use its

[1] The so-called "card-vote" is a ludicrous travesty of the rule of the majority. *The Times* of January 24, 1916, gives a most instructive example of the totally false impression which these mass figures give. It appears that three Lodges of the South Welsh Miners' Federation voted against the Military Service Bill and that their adverse vote was registered as that of their total aggregate membership of 2700. The actual voting, however, was:

Lodge I.:	for the Bill	16;	against	17:	Majority 1.
„ II.:	„	6;	„	8:	„ 2.
„ III.:	„	5;	„	11:	„ 6.

Thus the total majority against the Bill, out of 63 persons actually present and voting, was 9! Well may Rev. J. V. Morgan say, "The Miner's Federation of South Wales does not rest on a democratic basis" (*The War and Wales*, p. 327).

[2] Cf. E. J. S. Benn, *Trade Parliaments and their Work*.

[3] Cf. R. E. Wilkinson, *How to start a Local Guild*—an innocent little book.

immense accumulated funds to start businesses of its own, instead of squandering its capital on the ruinous processes of strikes, it might soon—to the immense advantage of both itself and the community—develop a capacity which would enable it to dominate the industry of the country as well as to determine its own conditions of work.

(*e*) *The Question of Nationalisation.*—Although at present labour shows but few signs of developing that healthy independence and that proper spirit of co-operative self-determination which would lead it to erect its own factories, purchase its own coal-mines, acquire its own railways, farm its own land, and become its own master generally—it does advocate with a good deal of vehemence and unanimity the nationalisation of what it calls "the means of production." The policy of nationalisation, indeed, is so prominent an item in the programme of the Fabian Socialists and the Independent Labour Party that by many people it is regarded as almost synonymous with Socialism itself. It has, however, as I have already remarked, no necessary connection with Socialism at all. It is mere Collectivism, and it has to stand or fall on its own merits, without any regard to the entirely irrelevant theories of Socialism proper. It is, further, a question of policy which has no essential relation with democracy. If the community-as-a-whole wishes to own and manage its lands, and mines, and railways, and factories, as well as its own postal, telegraph, and telephone services, there is no reason whatsoever, outside the realm of expediency, why it should not do so. Of course, if it wishes to take over already existing concerns it is morally bound to see that the present owners suffer no loss. There are,

however, strong prudential reasons why the community should *not* unduly extend its direct industrial activities. One is that the civil service is not a good conductor of businesses in which vigour, initiative, boldness, and enterprise are required; another is that it is extremely undesirable in the interests of the purity of politics to have too many electors who are also state employees.[1] During the war the collective control of industry has been vastly extended, in some instances successfully, in others at a cost of appalling inefficiency and extravagance. It is unlikely that when peace conditions are restored there will be anything like a general reversion to the former private control. Some great and prosperous businesses have, indeed, been so entirely ruined by concessions to employees made under pressure that it will be no longer possible to carry them on except by means of subsidies at the expense of the community at large.

(*f*) *The Nationalisation of Trade Unions.*—The question of the nationalisation of land, mines, railways, and other means of production and distribution is, then, a mere question of possibility and expediency, involving no general democratic principle. Very different is the question of the nationalisation of the trade unions. These powerful bodies—once discountenanced, then tolerated, finally fostered and favoured by the law—have now become *imperia in imperio* which can successfully challenge the authority of the democratic state itself. The majority of their members, indeed, are patriotic and law-abiding citizens, whose devotion to their country and whose

[1] See an instructive and ominous example, drawn from the history of the Belgian National Railways, given in *Edinburgh Review* for January 1917 and commented on in *Spectator* for January 27, 1917.

high sense of duty have been amply manifested in both field and factory during the present war. But the trade unions are not controlled by their loyal majorities; they have been allowed too often to fall into the hands of "conscious minorities" of Syndicalists and rebels. The community-as-a-whole is no longer master in its own house. It is liable at any moment, and without warning, to be coerced, first by one section of its members then by another, until its sovereignty and its self-determination are reduced to mere empty formulae. Nothing at the present moment is more imperative than that the state should reassert its proper authority over the trade unions. There is no suggestion of tyranny in its doing so; for the members of the trade unions themselves—who in 1914 numbered 3,959,863—form the dominant part of the democratic electorate.[1] Thus the assertion of the proper authority of the state over the trade unions means little more than the assertion of the authority of the majority of lawful trade unionists over lawless and recalcitrant minorities. The trade unions themselves stand to gain incalculably in the long run by the equitable enforcement of justice: it is upon trade unionists as citizens and upon trade unions as benefit societies that the chief burden of industrial conflict falls; for instance, the illegal miners' strike in 1912 drained the funds of the National Union of Railwaymen of £94,000, in return for which they received nothing at all.[2] There is, however, a further and still more

[1] *The British Citizen*, August 31, 1918, says: "The Trade Union Congress is a federation of organisations nominally representing four millions and a half of the manual wage-earners of the country, who with their wives and families can scarcely be supposed to stand for less than twenty millions out of the forty-five millions of inhabitants in the United Kingdom."

[2] Cf. Mr. R. Smillie in *Labour Year Book*, 1916, p. 104.

important consideration which leads to the same conclusion, viz. that it is imperative that the trade unions should be nationalised. It is this. The present policy of the trade unions is to stamp out non-unionism, and to compel every workman to become a member of his appropriate society.[1] This is "industrial conscription" of a very drastic type: it allows of no exceptions, and it makes no concessions to conscientious objectors.[2] Thus trade unions are ceasing to be "voluntary associations," and are becoming coercive corporations. This is a formidable transmutation, and it is made all the more so when these coercive corporations enter into politics, run parliamentary candidates, and exact from them pledges so strict that the members so bound can no longer be regarded as representing at all the local constituencies which elect them. Now it must be laid down as a fundamental axiom that the only coercive power tolerable in a community is that of the state and its delegations. It follows, therefore, that if compulsory unionism is to be insisted on, then the unions must become departments of state, branches of the civil service—the means by which the state regulates industry, or permits it to be regulated—and their members must be allowed entire political freedom. If, on the other hand, the trade unions as such persist in corporate political activity, and insist on running parliamentary candidates, then they must

[1] Cf. Greenwood, *Theory and Practice of Trade Unionism*, p. 38: "Trade Unionism must be regarded as a state within a state, and just as in the state political every adult man is compelled to assume the burden and responsibility of citizenship, so in the state industrial every adult worker may rightly be subjected to influences which irresistibly urge him to associate himself with the organised body of his fellow-workers."

[2] Perhaps the National Council for Civil Liberties, of which Mr. R. Smillie of the Scottish Miners' Federation is President, will take cognisance of this matter.

be prevented from imposing compulsory membership; they must remain voluntary associations. It is quite incompatible with civil liberty and with the elementary duties of citizenship that any man should at one and the same time be forced to join a union, and also be compelled to promote the political programme of the union.

(*g*) *The Recovery of Efficiency and of Joy in Work.*—One reason why it is so important that genuine democratic control over industry should be restored, as well as genuine self-government in industry established, is that the whole economic future of the country is at stake. Industrial peace must be secured and maintained, unless the whole community is to be involved in economic ruin: and no industrial peace is possible except on condition that the principle of the class-war be abandoned; that capital and labour are reconciled in cordial co-operation; that masters and men combine to conduct industry so as to obtain the maximum of efficiency on the one side, and the maximum of liberty and comfort on the other; that both federations of employers and unions of employees fully recognise the unifying sovereignty of the democratic state, and acknowledge themselves servants of the community-as-a-whole. The need for efficiency is great. As Professor York Powell told us so long ago as 1905: "In the competition for trade that is upon us—nay, in the very struggle for life—we can only hold our own by greater physical and intellectual power: we must put ourselves in training; we must throw off anti-social habits that hinder our efficiency."[1] The fatal and demoralising

[1] Powell, *Thoughts on Democracy*, p. 42. Cf. also H. E. Morgan, *Munitions of Peace*, passim.

practice of deliberate restriction of output, which prevails so widely even at the present moment, must at all costs be got rid of. By whatever means every person, in every grade of industry, must be encouraged to produce his fullest and his best. The disastrous device of "ca' canny" must be repudiated as a source of all manner of evils. There can be no possibility of a general betterment of the social conditions of the people unless the gross national wealth is vastly increased. Something, of course, can be done by redistribution of wealth; but, as Mr. J. A. Hobson tells us, "even had the whole pre-war national income been equally distributed throughout the nation, there would not have been enough to secure for the average family the full requirements of a civilised modern life": it would have yielded but "£34 per person." [1] There can be no doubt—for the period of the war has demonstrated it—that by means of scientific management, mechanical invention, and honest labour, the national income can easily be doubled or even trebled. It is national madness not to double or treble it. Further, not only are restriction of output and the practice of "ca' canny" bad for the community; they are degrading and debasing for the workman himself. If the industrial life is to be worth living, there must be a joy in work and a pride in productivity that are wholly incompatible with lounging and lazing, and with the camouflaging of inactivity by means of ingenious similitudes of motion. It is not easy in these days of the "great industry," with its minute sub-division of labour, to make all necessary tasks

[1] Hobson, *Fight for Democracy*, p. 24. Cf. also Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, p. 215.

interesting; but much can be done where good-will exists. And where dulness and monotony are insuperable, compensations can be provided in pleasant surroundings, short hours, high remuneration. But nothing can be done except where unity and good-will are found. With national unity and communal good-will all things are possible.

§ 68. *Social Reform.*

With cordial good-will, with honest co-operation between capital and labour, with the great increase in the national income that could so easily be effected, and with the union of all classes in the guidance and control of the democratic state, vast and beneficent schemes of social reform could speedily be carried through. It would not be relevant to the subject of this book to enter into the details of the extensive possibilities. Enough to mention some of the chief problems, and to say that, though they are urgent and complex, they are by no means insoluble, if only that spirit of mutual trust and sincere fellowship can be maintained which on the whole has linked all classes of the community together during the course of the war. There is pressing need that the question of the housing of the people should be grappled with; that slums should be cleared from our cities, and hovels from our villages; that homes should be provided in which the conditions of the decent life are possible. There is need that improved facilities should be made available for both physical and mental development; that recreation grounds and playing-fields, gymnasia and swimming-baths, clubs and debating societies, schools and colleges, should

be established in every neighbourhood, so that no citizen should lack the means of self-realisation. There is need that the health of the people, and especially of the young, should receive more careful and scientific consideration. There is need that the problems of unemployment, pauperism, and old age should be dealt with in a spirit of prudent and sane philanthropy, with full recognition of the fact that injudicious amiability and indiscriminate charity may do more harm than good. There is need that those blighting curses of the country, gambling, intemperance, and impurity, the causes of more than half our social woes, should be stamped out by means of the cordial concurrence of reformers and victims alike. There is need that, while the law is rigidly enforced and crime sternly repressed, the discipline of our prisons and reformatories should be more deliberately directed to the recovery and regeneration of the offenders. There is need, no doubt, of many other reforms of the same type.

We are not, however, concerned in this study of democracy to make a complete catalogue (if such a thing be possible) of needed social reforms; but rather to consider one aspect of the problem of social reform as a whole which directly affects the business of democratic administration. How far should the community carry out these reforms itself; and how far should it limit itself to providing the conditions in which the individual citizens can carry them out on their own behalf? The answer of the Socialist and the Collectivist is well known. Taking a materialistic view of history, and laying excessive stress on the influence of environment, they attribute social diseases mainly to external causes, and maintain that

if only the community will provide improved conditions of existence, all will be well with the individual man. It is the gross over-emphasis which they lay on the effect of circumstances and surroundings upon character and destiny that, as we have before remarked, vitiates the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commissioners of 1909, and makes it so inadequate and misleading a diagnosis of the problem of pauperism. The influence of environment, no doubt, is great; and much can and must be done by the community, acting as the state, to improve social conditions and to make the good life possible. But when the state has finished its work, true and enduring social reform has yet to begin. For, as Horace Bushnell used to insist, "the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." There is need of a generous and assiduous cultivation and betterment of the mind and the heart of the individual citizen in every rank and walk of society. It is useless to promote social salvation by giving high wages, or permitting immense profits, to the unregenerate; they do but squander them in animal gratifications. It is useless to sweep away slums, if the defects of character—whether in owner, builder, or dweller—which originally created them remain: there are myriads of people in existence in this country who if they were transferred from their present tenements to Park Lane would convert it into a slum within a month. It is useless to provide playing-fields for Prussians, or recreation-halls for Bolsheviks; the one will be speedily transmuted into parade-grounds, the other into hotbeds of anarchist conspiracy. Efforts at temperance and other reform by means of changes in institutions are ineffective,

unless they are accompanied by a corresponding elevation of communal character, purification of public opinion, regeneration of general will. The past futility of Socialists and Collectivists has been largely due to their neglect of the moral and intellectual factors in reform. Side by side with much-needed improvement in conditions must go still-more-needed improvements in character and education.

§ 69. *Educational Reform.*

We have already considered some of the moral changes which are necessary, if democracy is to prove itself equal to the task of self-government. It remains to devote a few moments' attention to needed educational reforms.

There can be no doubt that two of the root causes of the troubles which to-day beset democracy are ignorance and intellectual error. "Ignorance," says a recent writer, "in all its forms is the most expensive luxury in which nations can indulge." [1] It is ignorance which keeps classes and peoples apart, fostering prejudices and obscuring mutual interests. It is ignorance which depresses the standard of life, perpetuates inefficiency, destroys the joy both of work and of play, leaves the mind of the citizen empty, swept, and garnished, to be possessed by any evil spirits that may be prowling round in search of lodgment. Even worse than ignorance is intellectual error; it is a positive source of peril and not merely a negative condition of danger; it is an infectious plague as opposed to a state of low vitality. Intellectual error is consistent with the possession of a

[1] *New Europe*, August 22, 1918.

good deal of information; it flourishes most, indeed, and persists longest, among the half-educated. "You can convince the wise," says M. Faguet, "and you can convince, though with more difficulty, the ignorant: the half-educated never. No one," he unkindly adds, "ever convinces the elementary schoolmaster."[1] It is the half-educated—the plausible college-trained agitators, the facile journalists, the superficial omnivorous readers, the members of propagandist societies—who are the disseminators of the germs of the worst intellectual diseases. The deadly fallacies of Marxian Socialism, for instance, would long have perished of inanition, had they merely presented themselves to the well-educated to whom they are absurd, and to the uneducated to whom they are unintelligible. It is among and through the half-educated, who think they understand them and have no standard by which to correct them, that they work such havoc in the body politic. There is sanity both in the well-educated who know that they are ignorant, and in the uneducated who know how much they have to learn; but the half-educated—unteachable in self-complacency and dictatorial in self-sufficiency—are the bane of the community.

It is generally recognised at the present day that the system of instruction—if system it can be called—established in this country is nicely adapted to produce little else than the most pestilent type of the half-educated. The standard is set by the teachers in the elementary schools, and these teachers, through no fault of their own, are as a body quite incapable of even preparing the way for the production of an educated proletariat. They are drawn from the

[1] Faguet, *Culte d'Incompétence*, p. 192.

illiterate classes, filled with rudimentary information in the schools where they will later teach, sent untrained or inadequately trained to their great task, overworked, underpaid, deprived of the stimulus of competition by the rules of their trade-union, doomed to a life of drudgery, monotony, and penury. They would be more than human if they could acquire and maintain a fine and inspiring enthusiasm for learning amid circumstances so discouraging. That they have done so much as they have is a tribute to their honesty of purpose and their devotion to duty. Then, again, as though to make their task still more hopeless, their pupils have been crowded into their class-rooms, thirty, fifty, even seventy at a time—a multitude whom few could keep quiet, and none instruct. Finally, as though to crown all their efforts with futility, their pupils have been removed from their care altogether at the age of fourteen, and have been turned adrift in the world with—on the average—little more than a capacity to calculate rates of wages, to write the minutes of shop-committees, and to read the weekly issues of the *Labour Leader* or the *Herald*. It has been a travesty of education. On the one hand, it has taught but little; on the other hand, and a much more serious thing, it has done nothing to impart a love of knowledge, or to give a start on the upward path of learning.

There is thus need of a thorough overhauling of our whole educational organisation; and happily the newly-constituted Board of Education has set itself with great energy and ability to the task. There is need of the improvement in the status of the teacher, an increase in his emoluments, a brightening of his prospects; there is also need that he should emanci-

pate himself from the deadly equalitarianism imposed upon him by his National Union, and should insist upon the reopening of the career of advancement to superior merit. There is need that the school-leaving age should be universally shifted from fourteen to sixteen, and that for those over sixteen evening continuation schools and technical institutions should be provided, so that all special abilities may be discovered and fully developed. There is need that secondary and university education should be made available for all who show capacity to profit by them. Above all, there is need that the aims of education should be reconsidered and clearly stated, so that every one may know what is the object for which the system of schools and colleges is established, and why he is made to pass through the educational mill.

It is a curious thing that while many persons are so keenly interested in education that they read the *Times Educational Supplement* every week, very few people seem to have any idea what is the object of education, or indeed whether it has one at all. It is as though many persons were keenly interested in a factory, but had no sort of notion what it was intended to turn out. Yet it may confidently be affirmed, in the one case as in the other, that unless the ultimate purpose of the institution is clearly realised and precisely defined, it can never perform effective work. Educationists in old days were in no such uncertainty as to their aims: the Spartan system aimed at producing the warrior; that of the Athenians the politician; that of the Romans the administrator; that of Mediaeval Christendom the saint: Leonidas, Pericles, Caesar, Aquinas may be regarded respectively as their supreme

achievements. The Renaissance and the Reformation brought disintegration and uncertainty. The individual emerged and began to seek his own ends in education, and these often diverged widely from the old communal ends. Moreover, even as to these individual ends there was no general agreement. Hence chaos supervened.

At the present time there are four main schools, three of which concern themselves primarily with individual aims, but the fourth of which reverts to the larger ideals of the older world, and proclaims that the aim of education—at any rate in the democratic state—should be what Aristotle declared it to be, viz. the production of the ideal citizen. With the individualists we are not here concerned. Suffice it to say, (1) that they are divided from one another by the emphasis which they lay respectively on the training of hand, head, and heart — the first insisting on technical education, the second on general mental equipment, the last on the development of character; (2) that all of these types of education have their communal importance, since it is a matter of urgency that all citizens should be efficient for their individual life-work. In a democratic state, however, it is the definite training for citizenship that counts; and it should be the specific aim of public education from the earliest stage to the latest to equip the pupil for the part which he will be called upon to play in the life of the community. The crown and summit of this civic education can, from its nature, be imparted or attained only in those maturer years which follow the brief span of the days of our existing elementary schooling. It is to the secondary school, the continua-

tion school, the training college, the adult class, the Workers' Educational Association, the university, that we have to look to build upon the foundation which the elementary school should well and truly lay. The subjects that specially relate to citizenship are, first, ethics; secondly, economics; thirdly, law and politics; fourthly, history. Whatever subjects of individual significance, whether technical or professional, an advanced student may be pursuing, all these should be included in his curriculum. He should study the elements of ethics in order that he may be able to discern and reverence the basal principles of righteousness; he should study the elements of economics in order that he may be prepared to criticise the specious fallacies of the false prophets of all schools; he should study the elements of law and politics in order that he may be acquainted with the working of the constitution under which he lives, and the nature of the government which he helps to control; he should study the outlines of history, in order that he may be able to view the problems of his own time in their true perspective.

It may confidently be predicted that one of the earliest and most salutary effects of sound civic education on these lines will be a negative effect. The educated citizen will learn that "the problems of society and government are more difficult and complex, less easy of understanding by the plain man, than ever before in human history." [1] He will learn that all-important lesson of representative democracy, *not* to meddle with details of administration; *not* to extend the scope of democratic control from its legitimate sphere of general principle to

[1] Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, p. 133.

the sphere of particular application, where it can only work disaster. Just as one of the most valuable lessons which the individual learns from his private study of anatomy and physiology is the lesson that he is *not* capable of being his own doctor, and that he can *not* afford to treat his own ailments with implicit faith in the advice offered to him in patent medicine advertisements ; so one of the most valuable lessons which the citizen will learn from his study of civics will be the lesson of the limits of his own knowledge and capacity.

PART IV
THE GOAL

CHAPTER XIII

THE FEDERATED BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

"Democracy, in the best sense of the word, means the self-government of a people; and this is the highest possible conception of government."—J. S. MACKENZIE, *Dangers of Democracy.*

"A Commonwealth is a community, designed to meet the common needs of men, founded on the principle of the service of each for all."—A. E. ZIMMERN, *Nationality and Government.*

"If I had to distinguish the British Empire from the empires of the ancient world, I should be inclined to say that her supreme distinction lies in this: she is the nursery of freedom."—J. H. MORGAN, *The Unity of the Empire.*

"If we seek to consolidate and strengthen the realm of Britain, it is not mainly because of its size, it is because we believe it to be not only a great empire, but a good empire; because on the whole we think it may become the most potent instrument ever forged by human hands to promote the order, the progress, the freedom, and the peace of the world."—Sir SIDNEY LOW, *King's College Lectures*, 1913.

§ 70. *Democracy as an End in itself.*

THE main part of my task is now accomplished. I have discussed, however superficially and incompletely, the democratic principle, pointing out the important differences between democracy as a form of government, a form of state, and a form of society. I have examined the merits and defects of democracy, as they have displayed themselves to a large number of men of affairs and philosophical thinkers, expressing on my own account the view that the numerous and grave defects whose existence cannot be denied are

remediable, and that, on the other hand, the merits of the democratic polity are so great that it may well claim to be the final goal of the civic evolution of man. I have traced, though of necessity only in broadest outline, the history of the chief experiments in democratic government that have been made in ancient and mediaeval times, and have followed down to the present day the course of that novel attempt, by means of representative government, to adapt democratic control to the administration of the modern national state. I have, next, tried to show how the proper progress of representative democracy has been seriously hindered, and its whole future advance gravely jeopardised, by all-too-successful efforts on the part of false leaders and mistaken guides to lure it down the side-tracks of Sectionalism, Socialism, Syndicalism, and Anarchism, the end of all of which is destruction. I have finally attempted to indicate what seem to me to be the lines of the straight path along which it should make its way; the chief of which are, first, the recognition of the sovereignty of the national state; secondly, the acceptance in the fullest sense of the principle of the rule of the majority; thirdly, the maintenance of the firmest self-discipline and the establishment of the highest standard of communal duty; fourthly, the carrying out of a comprehensive system of reform, based on the general principle laid down by Burke that, while historic continuity should be jealously safeguarded as essential to communal life, there should be that constant adaptation of organism to changing environment which is essential to communal health.

There I might very well stop; and the inordinate length to which this book—originally planned as an

essay—has extended suggests other potent reasons for making an end. Nevertheless, the simile of a road, which I have adopted as the unifying idea of this study, implies a destination and a terminus; and I feel compelled to make some effort to discern and portray that democratic City of Man which lies beyond the horizon of present vision, even though to do so involves the abandonment of both the solid ground of history and the navigable air of philosophy, in order to venture upon a voyage of aethereal speculation. But this prophetic excursion is not so unpractical as it might at first sight appear to be. For, since the way of the future is unexplored, and since those who pursue it are pioneers, it is desirable to have not only a general sense of direction, but also some sort of an idea of the nature and situation of the goal. Fortunate is the traveller who can hitch his wagon to a star; happy the speculator who can perceive reflected in the distant sky the light of that ideal city towards which the peoples are slowly wending their way.

It has already been remarked that, in the opinion of some very sober and capable political thinkers, democracy may be regarded as almost an end in itself. When purged of its imperfections, when completely developed, when universally prevalent, it would seem to be the polity in which mankind must ultimately find the fulness of life. On the one hand, it best supplies that imperative need for community without which the individual starves and dies: in democracy all men are bound by the closest, most honourable, and most equal terms to all their fellows the communal life is most vigorous and most healthy the powers of all are most harmoniously united in

the service of all. On the other hand, it best provides that sphere for individual self-determination without which community may become restrictive and oppressive: in democracy rightly realised each man has the largest liberty that is compatible with the common good, and no man is sacrificed merely that other of his fellows may enjoy the ampler possibilities. The democratic state is the most truly organic; the democratic citizen is the most fully free.

The active principle of social democracy is, as we have seen, equality. There can be no doubt that the perfect realisation of this principle will involve some radical changes in the structure of our present society, as well as some considerable modifications in our conventional ideas. The attainment of equality will not mean, it is true, that all men will have the same amount of wealth, that all will exercise the same power, that all will enjoy the same honour, that all will reap the same rewards. Such deadly equalitarianism could be achieved only by so iniquitous and persistent a handicapping of ability and genius as would not only be fatal to progress, but would be the negation of equality itself. It would mean unfair discrimination, jealous partiality, envious repression at every step. You can place people level either at the beginning of a race or at the end of a race, but not at both. The equality which is implicit in social democracy is equality of opportunity. It means that no one will be debarred by accidents of birth, or sex, or antecedents, or status, from entering upon any career whatsoever. It means that hereditary differences of rank will cease to have any significance, and that every one will be judged by his personal qualities, and honoured according to the services which he

strives to render to the community. It means that those subtle, absurd, and invidious social distinctions that depend on the nature of a man's or a woman's occupation will be obliterated; that the doctor's wife will no longer disdain to take tea with the chemist's; that the secondary schoolmaster will no longer refuse to associate with the elementary; that —dare one breathe it?—the kitchen as a separate social establishment will be swept away. All citizens will co-operate in equal effort for one common end Competition will still survive; for it is the salt of all activity, without which industry flags, energy stagnates, enterprise dies. But the true nature of healthy and health-giving competition will manifest itself. It will display itself as a noble rivalry not to secure emoluments but to render service; a struggle not to get but to give; an effort not to exploit the community but to confer upon it such benefits as the competitor is best able to bestow. Work will recover its joy where it has lost it; it will regain honour, irrespective of its nature, where honour has been wrongfully withheld. Such appear to be some of the features of the community in which the social ideal of democracy is realised.

The principle of democracy on its administrative side—whether political, ecclesiastical, or industrial—is the rule of the majority. The application of this principle, as we have seen, does not necessitate the giving of the vote to every man, woman, and child in the community. On the contrary, it is compatible with a small franchise, provided that this franchise is really representative. For electors are themselves elect. They are the chosen to whom is entrusted the high prophetic function of declaring what is the

general will. Their vote is not anything of their own, which they can claim by natural right, or use on their own behalf; it is a communal instrument placed in their hands for the furtherance of the common good. Nevertheless, in the fully developed democracy, where freedom allows the full fruition of individual manhood, there will not be many who will be permanently excluded from a share in political power and responsibility. It will, of course, always be necessary for the community to fix an age limit below which the average infant is regarded as incapable of interpreting public opinion; it may be desirable for the community also to fix an age limit above which the average old gentleman is regarded as having ceased to be capable of interpreting it. Criminals and lunatics, if such there continue to be, must obviously be disfranchised. But the tendency will be for the electoral roll more and more closely to approximate to the roll of citizens.

§ 71. *Two Stages towards the Ideal City of Man.*

A realised democratic equality and an established democratic franchise, when existing together, will provide conditions in which the good life can be lived as nearly without let or hindrance as is possible in this imperfect world. The one will allow the fullest practical outlet for individual ability; the other will enable corporate activity to reach its highest degree of efficiency. Freed from the inequitable handicaps that have hampered the development of so much genius in the past, strengthened by the co-operation and stimulated by the competition of so large a fellowship, man will be able to turn his main energies

to the higher interests of life. He will learn by labour-saving appliances to eliminate the drudgery of existence; he will discover means by which disease can be stamped out and length of days assured; he will cultivate arts that will teach him how to convert the hideousness of his present surroundings to beauty; he will read and think at leisure until he is able to face intelligently the problem of his relation to the Universe and to God.

There are no limits to the possibilities of progress in a world where the individual is free and the community organically one. These two conditions of progress—liberty and solidarity—are not really separable; for full liberty is attainable only in perfect fellowship, and a true solidarity must necessarily be sought in a communion of the free. Now perfect fellowship implies association with the whole human race, and perfect freedom consists in service to all mankind. Thus the goal of democracy can only be a world-wide community of the free. That goal, however, is as yet so far distant as to be wholly beyond the vision of the keenest sight. "Of the great world-Commonwealth," says Mr. Zimmern, "we do not yet discern the rudiments."[1] On the one hand, the masses of mankind are still unfree; unfit for the liberty of self-government; unqualified to enter into equal association with the democratic peoples who have inherited the culture and civilisation of Greece and Rome. Asia, Africa, and Oceania must necessarily remain long incapable of full fellowship with Europe, America, and Australasia. On the other hand, racial, national, and ecclesiastical consciousness is still so strong that the sense of community rarely extends

[1] Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, p. 23.

effectively beyond the boundaries of tribe, or state, or sect. Must we therefore abandon all hope of the attainment of a goal which lies so far beyond the horizon of our loftiest speculation? By no means. For if the ideal and all-inclusive City of Man is incalculably remote, we can see the light of its perfection in the sky; we know the direction in which it is situated; above all, we can clearly discern two great stages and points of departure along the straight road that leads towards its gates. It is the work of practical politics to keep ideals in view, to avoid divagations in directions that do not lead towards them, and to advance by such steps as may be possible along the way of their attainment. Along the way that leads towards the universal and ultimate democratic City of Man, one stage, which it would seem to be the particular function of the peoples of the British dominions to reach, is the establishment of a Federal British Commonwealth; a second stage towards which they in conjunction with their allies in the great war now raging—and, let us hope, eventually in conjunction with their defeated enemies—may with confident steps move forward in the formation of a League of Free States. In this chapter I propose to consider the causes that indicate, and indeed necessitate, the development of a federal constitution for the British dominions, the changes that the creation of such a federal constitution will involve, and the means by which these changes can most easily be effected. In the next, and last, chapter I propose to consider what is meant by a League of Free States; to examine the principles which should determine the composition of the league, and to discuss the means by which the league can be

inaugurated. Of course, in neither case will it be possible—or would it be relevant to the subject of this book—to do more than sketch the broad features of the new polity as they are seen from the point of view of democracy. We are concerned with the Federal British Commonwealth only in so far as it appears to be the natural consummation of the national and democratic movements in the British dominions at the present day; and we are concerned with the League of Free States only in so far as it involves the extension of representative government throughout the world, and the reduction beneath the yoke of universal law of the anarchic sovereignty of the present polities.

§ 72. *The Need for National Devolution.*

Federation as applied to the British Dominions means two very different things, and it means both of the two together. It connotes both disintegration and unification; both devolution and centralisation. On the one hand, as applied to the United Kingdom, it involves its re-division, within certain clearly-defined limits, into its constituent national sub-states of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; it implies the subtraction from the present parliament of many of its sectional functions, and their bestowal upon subordinate legislatures; it includes the creation of new national councils or sub-parliaments, and the enlargement of the spheres of existing county and borough councils. On the other hand, as applied to the British Empire, it involves its re-amalgamation, also within certain clearly-defined limits, into a unitary state of the type of the great American

Commonwealth; it implies the separation of such properly imperial functions as foreign policy and defence from functions of merely particular concern; and it includes the formation of an imperial legislature and an imperial executive on truly imperial lines, in order that they may devote themselves entirely to the affairs of the Federated British Commonwealth as a whole.

Of the imperative need for *devolution* within the United Kingdom I have already spoken.[1] It is unnecessary to labour in argument on the point, or to toil in the accumulation of evidence. The fact is undisputed. So long ago as 1879 Mr. Gladstone remarked in one of his Midlothian speeches: "The parliament is overweighted; the parliament is overwhelmed!" That Mr. Gladstone was at that time actually contemplating some scheme of devolution is suggested by the consistency with which his friends and followers continued to advocate it. In 1880, for instance, Mr. Childers, that *fidus Achates*, War Secretary in the new Gladstonian Cabinet, descanted on the anomaly that a single parliament in this kingdom should endeavour to do what required between forty and fifty legislatures in the North American continent.[2] In 1885 an inspired manifesto entitled *The Radical Programme*, contained words that plainly indicated that the disburdenment of parliament was contemplated: "Recent experience,"

[1] See above, § 66 (*e*).

[2] Cf. *Life of Childers*, vol. ii. p. 230: "Again and again I asked myself, how is it that one race in the great Republic and in the greatest of our Colonies requires and fully occupies all this parliamentary machinery—between forty and fifty legislative bodies most of them of two chambers—while we imagine that we can adequately transact the business of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, together with the imperial affairs of the whole Empire, with one parliament only."

it said, "has made it perfectly clear that parliamentary government is being exposed to a strain for which it may prove unequal. The overwhelming work thrown upon the imperial legislature is too much for its machinery. The enormous complexity of modern legislation, to say nothing of difficulties caused by obstruction and party politics, indefinitely postpone many measures of reform, no matter how imperatively they may be called for." Most unhappily, the sound principle of "home rule all round" which Mr. Gladstone and his followers seemed to be about to apply to the solution of the parliamentary problem was this very year suddenly abandoned in favour of the limited and hopelessly unsatisfactory expedient of "home rule for Ireland" only. The change was due to party exigencies. Mr. Gladstone's enormous failures during his five years of office, 1880–1885—in Afghanistan, in Ireland, in Egypt, in South Africa—caused him to lose his British majority, and made him dependent on the tender mercies of the Irish Nationalists. They forced him to accept a measure of self-government for Ireland which was not only in itself flagrantly unjust to the other members of the United Kingdom, but was also (by the very reason of its injustice) wholly incompatible with any general scheme of federal devolution. It was largely on the ground of this incompatibility that Mr. Chamberlain, who was a convinced devolutionist, with other prominent Liberals, refused to support Mr. Gladstone's Bill. Lord Rosebery, who—although he did not like the Bill—refrained from revolting with the Unionists, remarked to Mr. Gladstone: "If you are going to tread this path you will have to give satisfaction under the same conditions, certainly to

Scotland, and possibly to Wales." Mr. Asquith, while accepting the Home Rule Bill without enthusiasm, perceived that it did not do anything to solve the problem of parliamentary congestion, and he continued to dwell on the pressing need for a wide scheme of disburdenment. In 1895 Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in his election address said: "I regard as urgently necessary the creation for the three kingdoms of subordinate legislative assemblies dealing with the distinctive features of each." Nothing however was done by either political party, mainly because of that deplorable Irish imbroglio which blocked the way. Hence, on the one hand, the growing national sentiment of all the four parts of the kingdom remained unsatisfied; on the other hand, the congestion of parliamentary business continued to increase. "The House of Commons," wrote Sir Sidney Low in 1904, "is not so much overworked as overwhelmed by the multiplicity of its nominal duties." [1] In 1909, the great Canadian statesman, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, commenting on the way in which the imperial parliament is "overloaded with petty interests and trifling questions," ventured to hint, on the strength of his trans-Atlantic experience, that "perhaps, some time or other, some federative system dividing legislation with regard to England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales may be devised for the United Kingdom." [2] Since that date the urgency of the matter, both as an administrative question and as a national question, has increased rather than diminished; and it is hardly too much

[1] Low, *Governance of England*, 2nd ed. p. 291.

[2] This and many other similar opinions will be found collected in Mr. F. S. Oliver's *Federalism and Home Rule*, and in the same writer's numerous contributions to the press on the same theme, *e.g. Observer*, May 12, 1918.

to say that when the tremendous problems of reconstruction after the war come up for settlement the only alternative to devolution will be disaster. The gravity of the administrative aspect of the matter is depicted by Right Hon. J. M. Robertson in the words: "I affirm with all possible emphasis that it is to-day impossible for any member of parliament to study adequately all the questions upon which he is called to vote. After the war, when we have to grapple with a host of new problems the impossibility will become a source of grave danger." [1] Mr. Robertson strongly urges the relief of the imperial parliament, and the liberation of its energies for affairs of general importance, by means of the establishment of four national councils or sub-parliaments for England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland respectively. In other words he advocates a return to the sound policy of the days before Mr. Gladstone's fatal divagation of 1885—the policy of "home rule all round." This return is desirable, and indeed imperative, not only for administrative reasons, but also for national reasons. The sentiment of nationality has become stronger, not weaker, among the peoples of the United Kingdom during recent years. Not Ireland only, but Scotland and Wales, and even poor, despised, and down-trodden England, have felt the strong movement of desire for domestic self-determination. Although for purposes of foreign policy and defence against external foes they remain united as a single

[1] *Daily Chronicle*, April 22, 1918. Mr. Robertson finds himself in unusual agreement with the two archbishops who in their Report on the Government of the Church (1916) say: "The congestion of secular business alone is very great, and it appears increasingly unlikely that any government brought into power under modern democratic conditions, and overwhelmed with matters that call for legislative action, will have leisure for detailed consideration of church questions."

community with a single general will: for purposes of internal administration—in such concerns as religion, education, industrial organisation—they are consciously separate and distinct political entities. England in particular is awakening to the need of home rule for herself. She realises that she has long been a submerged nationality; that her policy has been dictated to her by such holy but alien alliances as that of the Welsh Nonconformists and the Scottish crofters which Rev. Sir Robertson Nicoll (perhaps as a Scotsman) surveys with so much satisfaction;[1] and that her money has been taken from her with lavish prodigality in order to subsidise the log-rollers of the Celtic fringe. Existing conditions, in short, are precisely those in which the federal solution is indicated. There is everywhere a desire for union rather than unity; there is a consciousness of solidarity as regards the outside world, but of individuality within the domestic circle; there is a desire for the external integrity which is strength, in conjunction with the internal self-determination which is freedom. When it is said that nationality is the necessary basis of the modern state it is not meant that every nation must become a sovereign independent unit. On the contrary, there are few nations, if any, which are large enough and varied enough to constitute states of the greatest and most successful type. The great states of the future will undoubtedly be federated states, in which many nations, peoples, and tongues combine with cordial loyalty for common ends, but in which they retain within the federation the cherished traditions of their respective historic personalities.

[1] See above, p. 413.

§ 73. *The Growth of the British Empire.*

If we turn from the United Kingdom to the British Empire at large, we see that, for entirely different reasons, the problem of federation is equally urgent, and that the same sort of solution is indicated. If the British Empire is to retain its place in the reconstituted World, and if it is to perform its proper function in the progress of the peoples towards the ideal City of Man, it must become a commonwealth of free nations much more homogeneous and much more closely knit together than it has been in the past.

The incoherence of the present so-called "empire" is due to historic causes. The first movements towards the expansion of England were made, in "the spacious days of great Elizabeth," under fitful individualistic impulses, and not, as was the case with the colonising ventures of Spain and Portugal, under the unifying and co-ordinating control of the state. Sea-rovers, inspired at one and the same time by Protestant zeal and piratical lust, explored with errant activity the coasts and islands of the Spanish Main; traders bent on private gain quietly and imperceptibly extended the spheres of their operations until the resources of new continents passed into their hands; eager adventurers, lured by the fascination of the unknown, sought new routes to old lands, or dared the perils of uncharted seas; men of faith, in quest of a religious freedom unobtainable in Europe, tore themselves from the land of their birth and made plantations in a less inquisitive world. Everything was haphazard, like the springing of seed in a primeval forest; nothing was done according to a prearranged plan. The absence of state-direction, and the general

lack of co-ordinated effort, of course, had some grave disadvantages: it left the adventurers to the mercy of chance; it allowed them to fall into countless tribulations; it deprived them of protection from their enemies; it involved many of them in irretrievable ruin. But, on the other hand, it had some conspicuous compensating advantages: it called forth remarkable individual resource; it developed immense personal initiative; it permitted unhampered adaptation of organism to environment; it undoubtedly conduced to the ultimate and conspicuous success of a few of the great enterprises. Before the end of the seventeenth century the nucleus of the first British Empire was established along the North American littoral, in the West Indian Archipelago, and on the East Indian continent. Along the coast of the New World were firmly rooted twelve separate colonies stretching from the Carolinas in the south to the offshoots of Massachusetts in the north; among the islands that fringed the Caribbean Sea numerous flourishing plantations were made; in India four "factories" provided the great Merchant Company with bases for its growing commerce in the East.

But if the first outstanding feature of these successful beginnings of English expansion is their individuality, the second undoubtedly is their heterogeneity. Not only were they widely separated in geographical space; they were infinitely diverse in character and genius. There was little or nothing in common between the true colonists of America, the planters of the West Indies, and the factors of Calcutta or Bombay. Even among the twelve groups of settlers who held contiguously the western shore of the Atlantic from Florida to Acadie, the most

surprising differences and disunities existed. Religious, political, and social gulfs divided the aristocratic and Anglican landowners of Virginia, the last and staunchest supporters of the Stuart cause, from the Puritan merchants of New England, the first and fiercest advocates of republicanism. Between these extremes lay the Catholics of Maryland, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, and the miscellaneous foreigners—Dutch, Swedes, Germans—of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. Many specific disputes accentuated the inherent antipathies of the colonies toward one another—disputes respecting boundaries, charters, native concessions, and so on—and until 1774 the thought of any sort of general union or even combination seemed too absurd for contemplation. Such was the first British empire on the eve of the American War of Independence. It was a loose and unconcatenated collection of all sorts and varieties of dependencies, without any kind of coherence, and held together merely by a common subjection to a careless, unsympathetic, and rather oppressive Mother Country. It was not a commonwealth at all; it was a number of properties. The War of Independence—the revolt of the American colonists against the mercantile system of exploitation—broke up this first British empire, leaving to Britain only a few scattered fragments of overseas dominions. It further changed the indifference of the Mother Country in respect of her remote offspring to positive and energetic detestation. Colonies came to be regarded as unprofitable, as sources of danger, as sinks of expenditure, as breeding-places of prospective rebels and enemies. Hence for a century—roughly 1783–1883—the policy of successive British governments was to discourage

expansion, to disclaim responsibility, and to desire separation. Disraeli was but expressing the general official opinion when in 1852 he said: "These wretched colonies will all be independent in a few years and are a millstone round our necks." During this very century, however, in spite of neglect—because, indeed, of that very freedom from molestation which is the obverse side of neglect—the second British empire was established. Britons, once again manifesting limitless resourcefulness and enterprise, extended the benefits of law and good government over the willing peoples of India; spread westward over Canada from the captured French station of Quebec; occupied the vast spaces of the Australasian Continent; planted themselves firmly upon Dutch foundations at that halfway-house between East and West, the Cape of Good Hope. The second British empire gradually became larger in extent and immensely more populous than the first. But it was even looser and less articulate in structure: for the mercantile system, under which the first empire had been treated as a property, had given place to the *laissez faire* abnegation of system, under which the second empire was treated as a nuisance. The great colonies were allowed, and indeed encouraged, to become self-governing communities: the day of their complete separation was anticipated.[1] They were permitted to manage their own affairs: even tariffs

[1] Lord Blachford, who had been permanent under-Secretary at the Colonial Office 1859–1871, wrote in 1885: "I had always believed—and the belief has so confirmed and consolidated itself that I can hardly realise the possibility of any one thinking the contrary—that the destiny of our colonies is independence: and that in this point of view the function of the Colonial office is to secure that our connection, while it lasts, shall be as profitable to both parties and our separation when it comes as amicable as possible." Cf. Egerton, *Colonial Policy*, p. 367.

directed against the Mother Country were tolerated. Finally they began to show signs of independence in the high regions of foreign policy.[1] As for India, until 1858 it was not under the direct administration of the government at all; but its teeming populations, comprising one-sixth of the human race, were ruled through the instrumentality of a joint-stock company. Never had there been seen so strange an empire; never had existed so anomalous a political situation.

§ 74. *The Need for Imperial Federation.*

About the year 1883 a remarkable change took place both in the attitude of the Mother Country towards the Dominions, and in the attitude of the Dominions towards the Mother Country. On the one side indifference and dislike gave place to interest and desire for union; on the other side the movement towards separation and independence was transmuted into a movement towards federation and co-partnership. The causes of this twofold change are not far to seek. They were both many and various. First, the unification of the world by means of steam and electricity had made isolation no longer possible; secondly, the emergence of new problems of world policy and new questions of inter-colonial relations had made attempts to maintain isolation dangerous;[2]

[1] For examples see *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, p. 76. In 1899 Mr. Schreiner, Prime Minister of Cape Colony, said in prospect of the Boer War: "I shall do my very best to maintain for this colony the position of standing apart and aloof from the struggle." A few years later, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking for Canada, said: "It was for the parliament of Canada, if she created a Canadian navy, to say not only where but when it should go to war."

[2] For example Australia was alarmed by both German and Japanese activity in the Pacific; South Africa was harassed by both German aggression and Indian immigration; Canada was threatened by the tariffs of both Germany and the United States.

thirdly, the prodigious expansion of Russia and the United States during the century 1783–1883 seemed to portend the establishment of powers, military or economic, which would overwhelm by their magnitude the older states of the world; fourthly, and consequently, in the 'eighties a general rush on the part of European peoples for overseas dominions began, and Germany in particular showed a novel but firm and alarming determination to mop up any unclaimed or unguarded portions of the earth's surface—hence, to avoid conflict, the partition into spheres of influence, of Africa in 1884 and Oceania in 1900; fifthly, the new policy of high protection adopted by most states, the closing of many foreign markets to free trade, and the outbreak of tariff wars, caused an unprecedented anxiety concerning the commercial and industrial future, and concerning the supply of food and raw materials in time of war—hence a strong desire to secure and control the home and colonial markets; finally, the enormous and ominous growth of armaments, and the increasing frequency of international excursions and alarms, impressed upon all responsible statesmen, both in the United Kingdom and in the Overseas Dominions, the imperative need for solidarity.

Among the pioneers in this country of the new movement towards imperial federation were Disraeli in the closing years of his life; Lord Carnarvon his Colonial Secretary; Lord Rosebery; Mr. Chamberlain; Mr. W. E. Forster; with helpers among men of literature and history such as Froude, Seeley, and Tennyson. In 1884 the Imperial Federation League was founded, and for ten years it continued its enlightened propaganda. But circumstances pre-

vented its immediate success. On the one hand, its specific proposals, pressed with somewhat undue persistency, were not generally acceptable to colonial statesmen; on the other hand, it made too light of the real and formidable difficulties which stood—and still stand—in the way of an effective union of the British Dominions. It did not take sufficient count of the infinite diversity of the Dominions; it did not adequately allow for the profound divergence of interests which existed concerning many questions of tariff, immigration, defence, and foreign policy. The result was that for twenty years (1894–1914) the programme of definite imperial federation was "side-tracked." Nevertheless, so urgent was the necessity for closer co-operation between Mother Country and Dominions that even during this period much was done in an empirical and informal manner, as occasion arose, to strengthen the ties of union. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council worked for a unification of law; a new Committee of Imperial Defence, instituted by Lord Salisbury, developed by Mr. Asquith, and kept free from the distractions of party politics, attempted to formulate plans for the protection of the empire as a whole; above all, an Imperial Conference, first called as part of the Jubilee celebrations of 1887 and repeated in 1897, developed into a permanent organisation for the regular discussion of affairs of general concern. But, in spite of this growing and hopeful confabulation, so unfortunate a spirit of timidity and over-anxiety-not-to-offend prevailed, that the two crucial questions were not faced. These were, and still are: How can the Dominions secure a share with the Mother Country in the active control of foreign policy, including the

determination of peace and war? How can the Mother Country secure from the Dominions a regular and proportionate contribution towards the enormous expense of imperial defence? It was because these two crucial questions had not been faced and answered that the empire was unprepared for the crisis of 1914; that no one knew what the attitude of the Dominions would be; that Germany was able to calculate on widespread defection and abstention; that the imperial armies had to be improvised at the cost of extravagant waste, grave injustice, and mortal peril. The response of every part of the empire to the call of the Mother Country was, of course, magnificent. In no respect were German pre-calculations found to be more false than in those which related to the attitude of the Dominions towards the war. The young nations across the seas and the ancient peoples of India alike perceived that a German victory in this struggle would mean for them, as well as for the men of Europe, a future of servitude and remorseless exploitation. Hence they rallied with splendid unanimity to the side of the Mother Country and her allies. The effect of the war has been to weld together by new and powerful ties of knowledge, respect, and affection the members of the many widely-sundered fragments of the dominions of the king. Common dangers faced, common hardships endured, common sacrifices cheerfully rendered, common victories heroically achieved—these have effected a union of hearts that no "salt-estranging seas," and no alienating suspicions, can by any possibility sever. But a union of hearts is not enough. Government is a business, and not an emotional attitude; a matter of organisation, and not a matter of sentiment. Its

establishment and development are, of course, immeasurably facilitated when there is such cordial understanding and sincere goodwill as there is at the present moment. But the occasion must not be lost. The crucial problems must be faced and solved. A federal constitution must be formulated.

NOTE.

I should have liked at this stage to give some account of democracy as it has developed in different parts of the Empire —particularly Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. As my limits do not allow me to do so, I must rest content with referring my readers to Professor A. B. Keith's masterly treatise on *Responsible Governments in the Dominions*. 3 vols. (Clarendon Press, 1912).

§ 75. *The Next Step.*

By what means can the democracies of the United Kingdom be brought into line with the democracies of the Great Overseas Dominions? To what extent can the Dependencies which are not as yet self-governing be brought as partners into a federal scheme? Above all, what place in such a scheme can be assigned to the three-hundred-millions of the peoples of India, who constitute numerically about two-thirds of the subjects of King George?

Many suggestions for the unification of the empire have been made during the past hundred-and-fifty years. The majority are obviously inadequate to meet the various necessities of the present situation. In the eighteenth century, at the time of the American troubles, the only measure that was regarded as feasible was the simple expedient of adding colonial representatives to the parliament of Great Britain: it was this that Benjamin Franklin demanded on

behalf of the revolting provincials; it was this that Chatham urged in his efforts towards conciliation; it was this alone that both Edmund Burke and Adam Smith discussed, although they realised better than the mere politicians the almost insuperable difficulties imposed by distance. Science and invention have removed the barrier of distance; but new and more formidable obstacles have taken its place. The addition of overseas representatives would increase the size of a House of Commons already too big; even so, the overseas representatives would be swamped by those of the United Kingdom; the congestion of business, already paralysing, would become mortal; the confusion of imperial, national, and local affairs, even now a source of grave abuses and of serious derogations from genuine self-government, would become hopeless and intolerable. No one, indeed, now continues to press this eighteenth century panacea. The proposals that have taken its place are, for the most part, of a very different and much more modest order. So far from contemplating the establishment of a unitary monarchy with a single legislature and executive, they tend to avoid any suggestion that would be incompatible with almost complete colonial independence. They include such timidities as the admission of eminent colonials into the Privy Council, the development of the Imperial Conference, the enlargement of the functions of the Committee of Defence, the formation of an advisory body out of the Agents-General resident in London. These proposals, excellent for petty purposes, obviously offer no sort of solution to the two crucial problems of control of foreign policy and participation in the burden of defence. The only possible way of

solution of these two problems is the creation of a real imperial executive wielding full administrative power in these important departments, and in such departments as are inextricably bound up with them. Matters of imperial concern, which relate to the whole British Dominions, and therefore demand to be dealt with by an executive representing them all, are (1) foreign affairs, (2) intercolonial affairs, (3) the government of India, (4) questions relating to defence and communication, (5) such financial questions as are involved in the four preceding groups. The formation of such an imperial executive presents but few difficulties. Several steps towards its creation have been taken during the course of the present conflict. The War Cabinet has come normally to include representatives of the great Dominions and India. Nothing, however, has been done to decide the all-important problem: To whom is the imperial executive to be responsible? In time of war, when the constitution is in suspense, it is possible and desirable, without formality, to invite great Dominion statesmen and soldiers to join the cabinet. The anomaly of their position passes unnoticed; just as, when a fire breaks out at night in a hotel, people tend to find themselves quite properly in situations that normally would cause embarrassment and would require a good deal of ingenious explanation. But in time of peace and ordinary constitutional rule the position of these distinguished visitors would be impossible. To whom would they be responsible? Whom would they represent? From whom would they take instructions and derive authority? It is quite clear that no imperial executive can consist of members who are severally responsible to a number

of different parliaments: unity and solidarity are vital requisites. It is equally clear that no imperial executive can remain responsible to the parliament of the United Kingdom alone: the colonial members could not place themselves under the control of the British electorate. It is essential that they should represent their respective Dominions, and carry the authority of the Dominions with them. The only possible solution is the creation of an imperial legislature, drawn proportionately from every part of the empire, which shall assume supreme control, throughout the whole empire, of the five great departments just enumerated. In other words, the only solution is genuine imperial federation—the establishment of a true and all-inclusive Federal British Commonwealth.

The crux of the problem of imperial federation is the constitution of this imperial legislature, to which the imperial executive shall be responsible. The heroic knights of the *Round Table*, with fine courage, splendid enthusiasm, and great ability, advocate an entirely new institution.[1] This means that the existing parliament of the United Kingdom would be deprived of its more important functions and restricted to purely domestic affairs. If no account had to be taken of historic traditions—if we were starting with a *tabula rasa* instead of merely from a *tabula rotunda*—this would probably be the best arrangement. But it is scarcely conceivable that the Mother of Parliaments, or the British electorate, could be brought to accept so serious a *capitis deminutio*. Moreover, if in addition to this new federal parliament for imperial affairs, national councils for the particular government of England, Scotland,

[1] Cf. *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, especially pp. 206-12.

Wales, and Ireland respectively were set up, as has been suggested in a preceding section, the old parliament of the United Kingdom would find very little left for it to do. It would pass from the height of importance and the extreme of congestion to comparative impotence and unemployment. It is safe to say that it will not do this.

There is another aspect of the case, also, which must not be overlooked. The British electorate will not tolerate any more elections. It is hard enough, as it is, to get voters to take interest in, and give attention to, the two that now claim their suffrages, viz. elections for parliament and for county or borough council. They simply would not go to the bewildering trouble involved in the intelligent election of representatives to (1) the county or borough council, (2) the national council, (3) the diminished parliament, and (4) the new federal legislature. If the new assemblies are in any shape or form to be instituted, the only practicable way of instituting them, it seems to me, is to work through the already existing elected bodies. I would suggest that the national councils be appointed jointly by parliament and the county and borough councils; and that the federal legislature consist of delegations from the parliaments of the empire, special arrangements being made for the representation of the Crown Colonies and India.[1]

[1] This principle of delegation is ably urged by Sir Sidney Low in *King's College Lectures*, pp. 240-48. The question how far India is ready for representative institutions is at the present moment being hotly debated in connection with the proposals of the *Montagu Report*. The Report lays down the sound principle that self-government should begin locally, extend provincially, and culminate centrally only when it has proved its competence in the lowlier spheres. Since, however, the Report itself admits that even in British India only 18 out of the 244 million inhabitants have any developed political capacity, the whole movement seems to be premature. Democracy is not a constitution for political babes and sucklings.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LEAGUE OF FREE STATES

'To conclude, I announce what comes after me.
I announce justice triumphant;
I announce uncompromising liberty and equality;
I announce that the identity of these states is a single identity only;
I announce the union more and more compact indissoluble;
I announce splendours and majesties to make all the previous politics of the earth insignificant."

WALT WHITMAN, *Leaves of Grass.*

The road to Internationalism lies through Nationalism."—A. E. ZIMMERN, *Nationality and Government.*

"The only possible basis of universal peace is true representative government."—IMMANUEL KANT, *Perpetual Peace.*

"The establishment and maintenance of a League of Nations . . . is more important and essential to a secure peace than any of the actual terms of peace that may conclude the war: it will transcend them all."—VISCOUNT GREY, *The League of Nations.*

"The League of Nations means the regime of organised law for the world."—M. CLÉMENCEAU *to M. Léon Bourgeois.*

"The problem of a union in a common international policy is already, as I have said, almost solved. To all intents and purposes such a union exists to-day with the necessary machinery. Only the slightest adjustment is necessary, mainly in the way of reaching an understanding, not in inventing forms."—Professor G. B. ADAMS, *The British Empire and a League of Peace.*

§ 76. *The Need for a League.*

IF only the ministers of George III. who held power at the conclusion of the triumphant Seven Years' War in 1763 had recognised their opportunity and had possessed capacity to avail themselves of it, the subsequent history of the world certainly would have

been strikingly different, and probably would have been immeasurably happier. The peoples of the mother country of Britain in conjunction with those of the daughter colonies of the American seaboard had just inflicted a decisive and spectacular defeat upon the Bourbon autocracies of France and Spain—the eighteenth-century counterparts of the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg empires of the present day. In the course of the long and doubtful conflict they had been drawn together by close ties of common ideals, common perils, and common achievements. Only the magic touch of sympathetic genius was necessary to transmute cordial co-operation into indissoluble union. But the magic, the sympathy, the genius, were lacking. The men, indeed, were living who could have wrought the transforming miracle: it needed but the wisdom of Adam Smith, the statesmanship of Burke, the fiery enthusiasm of Chatham. But these were not the men whom George III. chose to call to his councils; and the dull mediocrities whom he preferred to these men of light and leading not only allowed the golden occasion to slip away, but even permitted alliance to give place to hostility, and gratitude to be submerged in passionate sense of wrong. The schism of the Anglo-Saxon race completed in 1783 was unquestionably one of the gravest calamities that ever befell either the cause of humanity in general or the cause of representative government in particular.

A hundred years later, as we have just seen, another great opportunity began to present itself to British statesmen—the opportunity of effecting a federal union of the second British empire. Somehow or other, amid the tumults of the 'eighties, they missed

it. It would not be fair to apportion blame too positively. The times were trying and difficult; and perhaps the opportunity never presented itself fully. At any rate the chance, such as it was, passed away, and the British empire remained inchoate and but half-defended—a lure to the looter and a prey to the predatory, rather than a strong bulwark to law and peace. There can be no doubt that the schism between Britain and America, combined with the lack of cohesion in the British empire itself, offered to Germany that seductive prospect of the attainment of world-dominion which she set out to seize in 1914. Against a federated, or even a firmly allied, Anglo-Saxon race she would not have embarked on her criminal gamble for *Weltmacht*.

The growth of the German menace during the opening years of the twentieth century did much to stimulate both the organisation of the British empire and also the close alliance of all the Anglo-Saxon democracies. It further tended to bring together in a league to maintain peace all such other powers as did not wish to see the existing political order subverted by a German outburst. Hence the period witnessed such hopeful events as the numerous imperial conferences and committee meetings whose object was to further the cause of the British Commonwealth; the restoration between Britain and America of a complete friendship which displayed itself in the conclusion of an arbitration treaty unlimited in its scope—a notable document, the first of its kind; the establishment of the *entente cordiale* between Britain, France, and Russia; the calling of the second Hague Conference; the noble efforts of Sir Edward Grey to conciliate and satisfy Germany, to

remove any just causes of complaint that she might have, and to use British influence as a means by which the antagonistic Triple Alliance and Triple Entente might be harmonised into a genuine Concert of Europe. All these promising efforts, however, were baulked of their main purpose, viz. the maintenance of the peace of the world. For Germany, obsessed by the obsolete and anti-democratic ideas of an earlier and more barbaric age, had an altogether different conception of the methods by which the earth should be governed and its tranquillity preserved. Regarding herself as the heir of the empire of Caesar Augustus and Charlemagne, she dreamed of world-dominion. Convinced of the superiority of her culture and inhumanity over the civilities and nationalities of all other peoples, she proposed to confer upon these peoples the benefits of subjection to her tutelage. Educated to believe in the divine right of her Kaiser's imperial majesty, she rejected the authority of the general will, and despised the feeble inefficiency of democratic self-government. Created by force, she exalted force to a dignity above law. Hence vain were all efforts to mollify her by concessions, to bind her by conventions, to invoke her honour in defence of treaties, to excite her sympathies for small peoples and struggling causes, to secure her co-operation in disarmament, to enrol her as a member of peace-protecting League of States. With ruthless resolution, and with reckless disregard of the rights of other communities, she prepared herself for " the day " on which she should strike for world-ascendancy. In 1914 it seemed to her that " the day " had arrived, and accordingly with the coolest deliberation, and yet with the fiercest deter-

mination, she struck the long premeditated blow. Having precipitated the war, she proceeded to wage it with a barbarity which for three centuries had been regarded as no longer possible. Repudiating all the mitigations of savagery which modern International Law had introduced, violating solemn engagements which she herself recently had made, ignoring moral laws which exercise restraint even over uncivilised desperadoes, displaying an ingenuity in cruelty and crime such as one does not commonly associate even with the devils of hell, she raged along her bloody way towards the goal of supreme dominion. She was not destined to attain it so easily as she had anticipated. The decencies and sanctities of humanity rose up against her; the forces of law and honour placed themselves with heroic devotion across her victorious path; the challenged democracies and the threatened nationalities rallied and combined to put a term to her insolent pretensions. Nevertheless, so great was her lawless might, so complete her secret preparations, so highly developed her cleverness, so resolute her will to power, that the conflict was long and desperate, ere it definitely began to turn against her. In the awful agony of the last four years the fine flower of the manhood of free Europe has perished, the product of the peaceful toil of many generations has been destroyed, the very existence of Western civilisation has been brought into question. From the midst of the tumult, and from out the ghastly ruin, comes from the hearts of all save the baffled German militarists the cry: "Never again!"

§ 77. *Previous Attempts to form a League.*

"There is more at stake in this war," says Viscount Grey, "than the existence of individual States or Empires, or the fate of a Continent; the whole of modern civilisation is at stake."[1] He rightly adds that "this war is the greatest trial of which there is any record in history," and warns us that, horrible as the Germans have made it, it is yet nothing to what the "next war"—which the Germans are already contemplating if they can get safely out of this one—will be, when all the military lessons learned in this struggle have borne fruit in perfected engines of death and desolation. The "next war" is one which civilisation could not possibly survive; one in which perhaps even the human race itself might be all but extinguished.[2] It must at all costs be prevented.

By what means can the "next war" be prevented? There are three possibilities. The first is to allow the Germans to attain the ascendancy which they seek. They no doubt would maintain peace, in the sense that they would make war impracticable for others and unnecessary for themselves. But it would be the perpetual peace which Leibnitz (criticising the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's scheme for a league of states) described as the peculiar characteristic of a graveyard. It would be the desolate quietude that would reign where freedom was slaughtered, nationality extinguished, democracy dead. A German domination would make the world safe for autocracy. It is not to be thought of. The second possibility

[1] Grey, *The League of Nations*, p. 4.
[2] Cf. Wells, *In the Fourth Year*, pp. 106-12.

is the restoration of the balance of power. This would be infinitely preferable to the first. But there is this objection to it, that it would not make the world safe for anything at all. For the balance of power itself, as the name implies, is a condition of unstable equilibrium. It does not deserve the harsh and foolish condemnation which has been heaped upon it by modern pacificists; it was the only feasible alternative to the world-dominion sought by such monarchs as Philip II. of Spain, Louis XIV. of France, the Emperor Napoleon I., or the Kaiser William II.[1] It has often kept peace among the nations for long and priceless periods of prosperity; it has frequently safeguarded that freedom and independence of small peoples which is even more precious than peace. But it suffers from the incurable disability that it itself has to be maintained, and that the task of maintaining it in these days of gigantic armies and enormous fleets has become one of prohibitive difficulty and expense. It was the apparent failure of the Triple Entente to maintain it in 1914 as against the Triple Alliance that encouraged Germany to make her bid for supreme power. It will not be enough, therefore, for the Allies as a result of this war to re-establish the balance of power. They must go beyond that point, and must establish an over-balance of power. They must create a League of Free States that will be strong enough to enforce peace as against aggressive militarism, and to make the world safe for democracy as against all the plots and projected assaults of autocracy. This

[1] Cf. Professor Alison Phillips in *New Europe* of November 1, 1917, and an article by the present writer in *Fortnightly Review* of December 1917.

is the third possibility, and the only one that is now adequate and tolerable.

It will not be easy to create a permanent League of Free States for the maintenance of peace. The history of the last three hundred years is strewn with the débris of discarded schemes for the prevention of war, and with lamentable relics of shattered organisations of pacific alliances and benevolent concerts. The projects of Sully, Saint-Pierre, Leibnitz, Rousseau, and Kant demand careful consideration to-day; for their failure to realise themselves is eloquent not only of the adverse conditions in which they were promulgated, but also of inherent defects which must in all circumstances have doomed them to futility. Much as they differed in detail, they were all alike in the following respects: they contemplated leagues of princes rather than of peoples; they postulated no congruity among the members in principles or modes of government; they sought peace rather than justice; they made no provision for necessary political change, but merely aimed at perpetuating the *status quo*. It is a fortunate thing for humanity that no scheme marked by defects such as these was able to make good. Bad as the wars of the last three hundred years have been, the stereotyping and stabilising of the Europe which existed at any moment during the long course of these centuries would have been worse. The same must be said of those concrete efforts to prevent disorder by prohibiting change which embodied themselves in the Holy Alliance, the Quadruple Alliance, and the more recent Concert of Europe. They all of them aimed at the maintenance of a peace which would have been to many submerged nations and potential democracies a synonym

of death. Such events as the liberation and unification of Italy could not have taken place amid the stolid tranquillity which they existed to preserve. Necessary developments of European polity such as these could be accomplished only—as they were actually accomplished—by war, or else by means of a League of States incomparably more powerful, more active, more courageous, and more progressive than any Alliance or Concert that ever up to the present has been created or conceived.

The necessary changes in the polity of the world are not yet complete; nor, indeed, will they ever be complete. Man is a moving animal; he is both progressive and retrogressive; never stationary for long. He is bound to adjust himself to his environment; and if he has no means of doing so by law, he must do so by force. Some political changes, particularly in Europe, are long overdue; old tyrannies cumber the ground, ripe for dissolution; young nations struggle to be free, eager for autonomy. No doubt the war itself will effect a number of needed readjustments; but it cannot achieve all, and it cannot make specific provision for such as may manifest themselves in the future. What it can do, however, and above all other things must do, is to set up some permanent organisation which shall be able peacefully to direct and carry through such just and necessary alterations in the European polity as occasion may demand from time to time. It must maintain peace not by prohibiting war and perpetuating the *status quo*, but by administering justice and furthering the realisation of the ideal City of Man. That organisation is the League of Free States.

§ 78. *The Presuppositions of a League.*

"A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained," says President Wilson, "except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. It must be a league of honour and a partnership of opinion." These words of President Wilson go to the root of the matter. They indicate the essential presuppositions in the absence of which any league that might be established would be foredoomed to failure. They are at once idealistic and yet eminently practical. They are, indeed, characteristic of the speaker. No one has done so much as the great American leader to bring the project of the League of Free States within the scope of achievable politics. The project—one of the noblest which the mind of man has conceived—had to be rescued, and still has to be safeguarded, from the hands of two sets of destroyers. On the one side it has to be defended from the assaults of the militarists who cannot believe, and in the case of the Germans do not wish to believe, that the reign of force can be brought to an end, that a definite term can be put to wars of conquest, and that a reign of law can be inaugurated. On the other side it has to be rescued from the fatal sappings of the pacificists who tend to undermine it by means of their feeble fanaticisms. With that curious moral obliquity and lack of common sense which mark them, they would include all states in it irrespective of their character; they would cause it to abandon all weapons save suasion; they would launch it on the quest of unattainable grails, and would involve it in the ruin

and ridicule that overtake all the causes that suffer from their indiscreet advocacy. If it is to achieve any success at all it must be strict in the conditions of its membership; definite in its constitution; strong in its mode of procedure; yet modest in its immediate objects.

The principal presuppositions of the league would appear to be: first, that membership shall be limited to free states; secondly, that it shall prosecute the present war until it ends in the decisive and spectacular defeat of the Central Empires, and the complete destruction of their military autocracy; thirdly, that it shall dictate a peace settlement that shall satisfy legitimate national aspirations, make provision for necessary economic development, and give promise of permanence; fourthly, that it shall be maintained by all its members as the prime object of their loyalty; finally, that it shall educate the democratic peoples who come within its scope until they develop into an organic international community with a public opinion, a communal conscience, and a general will of their own. A brief note on each of these five points must here suffice.

1. *Only Free States must be included.*—By "free" is here meant democratic: "free states" are such as have both representative legislatures and responsible executives. The British "League of Nations Society" has unfortunately committed itself to the policy that "any civilised state desiring to join the league shall be admitted to membership." This will not do. It makes possible, and is deliberately framed to make possible, the inclusion of an undefeated, unreformed, and unregenerated Germany and Austria-Hungary. Such an inclusion would be fatal. What

genuine co-operation can there be between democracy and autocracy, between legality and militarism, between honesty and criminality, between the Kantian and the Hegelian theories of the state? There must in any league be agreement as to fundamentals and congruity of ideas. No league which should include the Central Empires as at present constituted would be worth the "scrap of paper" on which its regulations might be written. The British "League of Nations Society" is too much dominated by the vicious influence of members of that sinister and essentially oligarchic combination of secret diplomatists, lost sheep, and cosmopolitan pacificists, the misnamed "Union of Democratic Control." [1] Under that influence, and in the interest of the propaganda of "peace at once" and "peace at any price," it shuts its eyes to both moral and political distinctions that are of vital import. This war was not due to the "European Anarchy," but to Austro-German design; all states are not equally guilty, but two stand out as convicted criminals; permanent peace is not to be secured by grouping villains and victims indiscriminately round a table and asking them to formulate rules for the future, irrespective of the past. Mr. G. N. Barnes of the War Cabinet is wiser and less immoral than the "League of Nations Society"; but he, too, would include Germany in the association. "I would include Germany in a League of Nations," he naïvely says, "just as we include the thief and the burglar, as well as the decent law-abiding citizen,

[1] Mr. H. N. Brailsford's book, *The League of Nations*, is vitiated by the same evil sentimentality. Though full of information, suggestive, and well written, it is entirely prejudicial to the cause it professes to advocate by reason of its moral obtuseness, and its persistent pro-German, pro-Austrian, and pro-Bulgarian propaganda.

in our national affairs." [1] But *do* we include the thief and the burglar in our national affairs? Do we entrust them with the franchise; do we knowingly admit them to council and to authority; do we make no distinction in our law-courts between the dock and the jury-box? What sort of a league would it be that comprehended the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs in their capacity as the thieves and burglars of the world? Only as penitent thieves and reformed burglars would it be possible to admit them; only as such would they desire to enter. Of penitence and reformation no signs are evident as yet. No; President Wilson is right. None but "free nations," that is, democratic states, can be accepted as members of that high association which is to administer justice upon earth, and maintain among men the peace of ordered law.[2]

2. *The Central Empires must be defeated.* — The weak pacificists press their league upon us as a cheap substitute for victory. They are morbidly anxious to save Germany from humiliation; Austria-Hungary from dismemberment; Bulgaria from disappointment in Macedonia; Turkey from eviction from Arabia, Syria, and Macedonia. They apparently hope that by gentle treatment they may mollify the war-lords, and wean them from their faith in Odin. It is as vain and deadly a delusion as that which obsessed them before the war, when they said that there was no German peril, and that International Socialism would guarantee perpetual peace. Whatever may be the case with Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and

[1] *Times*, August 6, 1918.

[2] This principle is accepted and proclaimed by the new "League of Free Nations Association" inaugurated at Northampton by Lord Bryce on September 13, 1918.

Turkey, for the German war-mania there is no cure but decisive and overwhelming defeat. As Bebel, the great Socialist leader, used to lament, the German people have since 1864–1871 been *siegestrunken*—drunk with victory; and for that heady type of intoxication no remedy avails except a cold deluge of disaster. An undefeated Germany, which is able to persuade herself that on the whole she has come out tolerably well from this war, will at once prepare for, and speedily precipitate, the next war—in spite of all leagues, and irrespective of whether she is included in them or not. Once again President Wilson voices the sane opinion of the world: just as Germany must be liberalised before she can be admitted to the League of Free States, so must she be defeated before any guarantee for freedom can be secured.

3. *A Good Peace Settlement must be made.*—The peace settlement will be the basis of the future operations of the league. It is therefore necessary that it should be made in accordance with those principles of right and justice which the Allies accept, but which their enemies repudiate. A German peace would be a military compromise of the old disastrous sort; it would be one determined by strategic considerations with a view to the advantageous commencement of future wars; it would be a halting-place on the road towards Teutonic world-autocracy. A settlement which is to be a firm foundation for a future commonwealth of peoples must be one that satisfies genuine and legitimate national aspirations, and that provides the amplest opportunities for proper economic developments. Such a settlement can be effected only at the dictation of the victorious

Allies, and not by negotiation with undefeated Kaisers and Sultans.[1]

4. *A Strong Loyalty and Sense of Legality must be developed.*—It will not be enough for the Allies to dictate a good peace settlement. They will have to maintain it, amplify it, modify it, and keep it fresh, through the long and anxious periods of the future. Here will be the real crux of the problem, and the supreme test of statesmanship. Whatever may be the constitution of the league, whatever its powers, whatever its mode of procedure, it must inevitably involve some diminution of the sovereign independence of its members. For its successful working it will therefore demand a high sense of loyalty and legality. It will be necessary for once-unlimited rulers to bow to the decisions of a superior authority; it will be necessary for Allies to recognise that a new duty has been imposed upon them which takes precedence of their bilateral obligations; it will be necessary for all to acknowledge that a novel community has been brought into existence whose common conscience and whose general will, within their own proper sphere of international affairs, take precedence of those of any individual state. There may well arise a clash of interests and a conflict of loyalties that will impose a very severe strain upon the new allegiance. In such circumstances what must we think of those who are engaged in undermining the sense of legality in the world? What is the condition of mind of those labour leaders who

[1] Still valuable for the discussion of details, although written in the very different circumstances of 1915, is Arnold J. Toynbee's *Nationality and the War*. Quite essential for those who wish to keep themselves informed concerning current international problems is the weekly magazine *New Europe*.

on the one hand are fomenting the class war, encouraging strikes, advocating the settlement of industrial disputes by means of the direct methods of lawless violence, and at the same time are proclaiming themselves international pacificists, advocates of "peace by negotiation," patrons of the league of nations, defenders of the principle of "democratic control"? Until the authority of law is restored throughout the democratic world there can be no peace either national or international. In the absence of reverence for law, and obedience to law, a League of Free States could but serve to make anarchy more anarchic than before.

5. *Hence, finally, an educated International Opinion, Common Conscience, and General Will must be cultivated.*—The democracies of the world must be trained to recognise more fully than they have ever yet done the community of their interests. They must learn to co-operate in all good works, and to compete only in the noble rivalry as to who shall render the largest service to the common cause of humanity. When this international opinion, conscience, and will shall have been developed, then at last will the nations and the national states of the world take their proper places as units in the Great Society, each making its own peculiar contribution to the welfare of the whole.

§ 79. *The Constitution of the League.*

Into a detailed discussion of the constitution of the League of Free States it would be irrelevant to enter here. Most of the schemes hitherto propounded are vitiated by the fact that they ignore or deliberately reject the fundamental pre-requisite that the

full members of the League must be "free states," *i.e.* states with representative legislatures and responsible ministries. No doubt it is desirable that all the world should be included, and it is to be hoped that at no distant date all the world will be included. But admission must be conditional upon the adoption of genuine "free" institutions. There *must* be essential agreement among members of the league upon such basal principles as democracy and nationality. Nothing would be gained by rushing states like Turkey, Austria-Hungary, and, above all, Germany, into association with the states composing the present Entente. There would be no common standards to which the incongruously mated associates could appeal. The "League of Peace" would become merely the "European Anarchy" under another name; and every problem that the league might be called upon to solve would be the occasion of a quarrel concerning fundamentals which would inevitably terminate in schism and war. It is necessary therefore to reject the scheme of the British "League of Nations Society," which, as we have seen, would admit "any civilised state desiring to join"; it is necessary to reject the "Draft Convention" drawn up by Mr. Theodore Marburg and his "Group of American Jurists and Publicists" on the same ground of indiscriminateness; it is necessary to reject the elaborate plan for a "Supernational Authority that will prevent War" formulated by a Fabian Committee, because it starts off with all "the belligerents in the present war" as members; it is necessary to reject Mr. H. N. Brailsford's proposals, because his visionary league is to be created after the war by a body that shall consist of "the

late belligerents" irrespective of their character and performances, together with "such other civilised states as the American President may name." There is no hope in any of these miscellaneous collections of sheep and goats.

The only hope of the establishment of an effective "league to enforce peace" is to be found in the formation of a firm union among states who are agreed in the view that ultimate sovereignty resides in the people; that nationality should be the prime determinant of political autonomy; that the principles of the moral law are binding upon governments as well as upon individuals; and that, in future, international disputes must and shall be settled by methods of adjudication and arbitration, and not by war. To include states who do not accept these elementary postulates is merely to ask for trouble and to ensure futility. Now the nucleus, and more than the nucleus, of such an effective league already exists in the great alliance of free states which at the present moment is fighting on behalf of national democracy against military autocracy. This is the body which, unless it is frustrated by pacificists, will win the war; this is the body which, unless it is baffled by Bolsheviks, will make a good peace settlement; this is the body whose awful experience of the horrors of the German brand of militarism will lead it, unless it is bemused by the schemes of the cosmopolitan ideologues, to found the permanent League of Free States that shall maintain the hardly gained peace of the world. To join this body of victorious Allies, when they have finished their present necessary but painful work, will in due course be invited the democratic neutral states whose ideals of world-

policy are congruous with those of the Allies. Other neutral states will be admitted, if they wish to be so, as soon as their constitutions and policies conform to the standards of the league. The defeated enemies will be informed that they, too, will be welcomed whenever they give proof that they accept the principle of the league and satisfy its tests.

If it be granted that there must be some sort of principle underlying the league besides the mere desire to escape the inconveniences of war; if it be granted further that that principle is "freedom" and that it is at present embodied in the grand alliance which is resisting the despotic might of the Kaisers and Sultans of Central Europe—it remains to be asked how this temporary and belligerent union in the cause of freedom can be converted into a permanent and lawful league of peace. There are four possible types of constitution: they are those of (1) the unitary state; (2) the federation; (3) the confederation; (4) the alliance. By the Act of 1707 England and Scotland became a *unitary state.* No one, however, would contend that the members of the Entente, with all their cordiality, are ready to merge their individuality in a new unity of this sort. The tendency of the day is rather towards the splitting up of unitary states into the second type of political organisation, viz. that of federal unions of autonomous nations. A *federation,* such as the United States of America, is a composite body which for certain specific purposes (*e.g.* for the conduct of foreign affairs and for the waging of war) acts as a single community and sets up a central government; but which for other or primarily domestic purposes remains differentiated in its constituent parts. It

is externally homogeneous, but internally heterogeneous. It presents a united front to the world, but allows much freedom of local self-determination within its borders. Some publicists, Mr. J. A. Hobson and Mr. Sidney Webb for example, seem to think that the powers are even now ripe, or ripening, for federation. Both Mr. Hobson's "International Government" and Mr. Webb's "Supernational Authority"—under a misleading terminology which habitually confuses "nation" with "state"—imply the establishment of a new and vast federal organisation, with its legislature, its executive, and its judiciary, which shall have the same relation to such states as France or Britain as the government at Washington has to such states as Massachusetts or Virginia—states which have ceased to be states in the proper sense of the term and are now merely provinces. It is doubtful whether any existing sovereign state is as yet ready to accept so serious a diminution of its independence as this would involve: it is quite certain that the majority are not. Any attempt to establish a real federal union with all that it entails of subordination and repression would be infallibly to wreck the whole scheme.[1] A *confederation* is a much more modest and practicable form of constitution. It is little more than a permanent and well-organised alliance of sovereign independent states. The best-known example is the German *Staatenbund* of 1815–1866, which not only illustrates the type of organisation, but also shows the fatal folly of trying to combine into a single political structure elements that are radically incompatible. Of course the

[1] See a powerful letter by the late Lord Parker of Waddington in *Times* of June 25, 1918.

formation of a confederation implies on the part of its members the limited surrender of the exercise of the rights of full state sovereignty; but so does the conclusion of every treaty, the acceptance of every convention, the entry into every entente, the making of every promise. You can no more make an omelette without breaking eggs than you can enter into any engagement whatsoever without diminishing your freedom of action—that is, of course, unless you are a German, and do not mean to keep your engagement. The establishment of any sort of league of states necessarily involves the surrender of the exercise of some of the rights of sovereignty. The very purpose of the league is, indeed, to deprive any and every state of the right of going to war at its own sweet will. The main point that differentiates a confederation from a mere alliance is its permanence: its members are not free to withdraw without the consent of the rest. It is doubtful whether the constituent states of the present Entente are prepared to go even so far as this; *i.e.* to enter a league from which they could not depart without permission. It would therefore probably be best that, at any rate at first, the League of Free States should be constituted simply as the close and continued alliance of those democratic powers which are at present linked together in the struggle against military autocracy, together with such other kindred states as may be invited and may wish to join them.

§ 80. *The Reign of Law.*

If the view expressed in the preceding section is the sound one, the League of Free States is already

in existence. True, it is at present in a very rudimentary stage of development, and its vitality is none too vigorous. Nevertheless, it is there, and it is living; it contains the possibilities of a glorious and beneficent future. Its first work is to secure its own continuance of life. In other words, it must not rest from its present agonies until it has inflicted upon Germany and her satellites a defeat so decisive and crushing that the last traces of the mania of "victory-drunkenness" shall have been exorcised. This war is not one that can be ended by negotiation and compromise; it is a struggle between irreconcilable principles, between freedom and servitude, between light and darkness, between good and evil. The Allies have no choice but to fight until both on behalf of themselves and on behalf of the victims of the central despotisms — Russians, Rumanians, Poles, Bohemians, Danes, Alsatians, Luxemburgers, and the rest—they are in a position to dictate the terms of a peace in accordance with the general will of the peoples concerned. They must establish so complete an over-balance of power that military autocracy can never raise its baleful head again. Having accomplished this necessary preliminary operation, they can proceed, at the peace congress and after, to organise themselves into a more permanent league for the prevention of future wars, for the safeguarding of the settlement, for the discussion and determination of such changes as may be rendered necessary by unforeseen developments in the world's polity. They will, of course, invite and welcome the entry into the league of all states—such as Spain, Holland, the Scandinavian Kingdoms, and the South American Republics—whose systems of government and ruling

ideas are similar to their own. The advantages of security, of ordered lawfulness, of economic liberty which they will be able to offer and guarantee will be such that every minor state in the world will be eager to prove itself to be worthy of membership. They will, further, if they are wise and magnanimous, make it as easy as possible for the defeated and disillusioned enemies of the league to purge themselves of their disqualifying vices and fit themselves for admission. The ideal undoubtedly is that eventually the league should be co-extensive with mankind; but it would be vain to imagine that the attainment of that goal is within human ken at present.

When once the league is fairly established it will develop of its own accord such institutional machinery as it may require—just as at Versailles during the war that rudimentary form of the league which has been created under pressure of necessity has developed an increasingly effective organisation of its own. It would be a grave mistake to attempt to draw up beforehand an elaborate written constitution for the league. The Fabian scheme for the erection of "the supernational authority that will prevent war," for example—the formulation of which occupies twenty-five octavo pages—is a complicated mechanical trap into which no state, however small and innocent, would ever think of putting its head.[1] All that is necessary at first is (1) to perpetuate the Versailles Conference with the additions indicated above; (2) to lay before it for its information and consideration all the extant treaties which concern any of its members, to agree that no treaties not thus made public shall be regarded as valid, and to arrange that

[1] Cf. Woolf, *International Government*, pp. 231-55.

all future treaties shall when completed be reported and published; (3) to secure from all the members a pledge that if any dispute whatsoever arises between themselves and any other state (whether a member of the league or not), which cannot be settled by ordinary diplomatic means, they will bring the subject of dispute before the Conference for adjudication or mediation, as the case may require, instead of resorting to arms; (4) to establish for the prompt and impartial consideration of such subjects of dispute a permanent court which shall give authoritative decisions on all matters that are legal in their nature, *e.g.* questions of fact, questions of interpretation of treaties, questions of compensations for damages; and a permanent council which shall give judgment, weighty if not decisive, upon matters that are political in their nature, *e.g.* the claims of Serbians and Bulgarians in Macedonia; (5) to appoint a commission to revise the whole body of so-called international law and, after submitting it to the consideration and confirmation of the governments of the states included in the league, to reissue it in its final form as an authoritative code which the league is prepared to enforce; (6) to devise peaceful means, such as economic boycott or pacific blockade, for enforcing judicial decisions, preventing the outbreak of war, and maintaining the authority of international law; and (7) as the last resort, to organise and keep in readiness military and naval forces—so overwhelmingly strong in combination that none will dare to challenge them—for the suppression of malefactors and for the comfort and defence of such as are minded to live peacefully beneath the reign of law.

To say that even in so modest a league, developed

in so natural a manner from the existing Conference of the allied Free States, there lurks the possibility of tyranny, is merely to state the obvious. The awful example of the Holy Alliance—or, more correctly, the Quadruple Alliance—of 1815 is too recent to be forgotten. That notorious "league to enforce peace" culminated in a universal despotism owing to two main defects: first, there was no agreement among its members on the cardinal questions of democracy and nationality; secondly, there was no adequate definition of the legitimate sphere of its operations, so that it began to meddle in an intolerable manner with the internal affairs of the states of the Continent. Hence first Britain and next France had to repudiate it in the name of freedom, and to bring its interferences to an end. If any new league is to escape the fate of its prototype of 1815, it must restrict its activities rigidly to its proper sphere of international relations, and it must be careful to respect the proper autonomy of both its members and those who remain outside it. No doubt, however, if it moves cautiously, and if it succeeds in its main purpose of securing progressive justice and maintaining equitable peace, it will grow in strength and develop a fuller and more complex organisation. In course of time—as the nations of the earth acquire a world-consciousness, as mankind comes to realise its unity, and as the human race attains to a common opinion, a single conscience, and a general will—it may well become a true federation, with all the organs, legislative, executive, and judicial, of an effective democratic World-State. But though that goal should be kept in mind, no attempt should be made to reach it by short cuts or seductive bypaths.

The sound motto for secure advance is: *Festina lente.*

§ 81. *Conclusion.*

These reflections on democracy, which I began to put on to paper in the first week of January 1918, I bring to a close during the last week of September of the same year. I mention the dates exactly, because the tone of my remarks has been a good deal determined by the circumstances in which these remarks have been uttered. Although I have traversed broad and long tracks of history, and although I have constantly appealed to principles that remain immutable at all times, the book which I now conclude is emphatically a book of 1918. It was planned and commenced at a period when democracy seemed to be threatened with extinction at the hands of victorious Prussian militarists and treacherous Bolshevist fanatics. During the months occupied in its composition the political situation has changed extensively; but the dangers which menaced democracy have in the aggregate increased rather than diminished. On the one hand, indeed, the peril from Prussianism has hopefully decreased. Up to the middle of the year, it is true, it seemed to grow more formidable every week; until at last the Allies appeared likely to have to face the necessity of abandoning both Paris and the Channel Ports, and of fighting "with their backs to the wall" whilst America completed her plans for their relief. But in July the splendid counter-attacks of the English and French on the western front under Marshal Foch's masterly generalship; the marvellous rally of the Italians, and their crushing defeat of the

Austrian invaders of the Lombard plains; the rapid advent of the fine American troops and their decisive blows for victory; combined with the successful movements of Serbians, Greeks, loyal Russians, Czecho-Slovaks, and Japanese in widely scattered fields of action, entirely transformed the military outlook. September sees the defeat of the Prussian enemy of democracy assured—unless the cause of the Allies is ruined by treachery from within. But if, on the one hand, the defeat of Prussianism is thus in sight, on the other hand, unhappily, the forces of Bolshevism have increased their malignant hold over the minds of the domestic foes of democracy. Not only in Russia have they worked their destructive and murderous will, to the utter undoing of that unfortunate land, and to the everlasting disgrace of human nature; in every country of the Alliance have they operated with insidious villainy to poison patriotism, to foment the class war, to foster sectional interests, to stimulate syndicalist strikes, to break national unity, to discredit the democratic cause. If the world is to be made safe for democracy, not only is it necessary that Prussian militarism should be scotched; it is equally necessary that Bolshevism in all its manifestations should be exorcised. It is rapidly becoming the graver danger of the two; and in all probability before the final issue between Prussianism and Democracy is settled, the issue between Bolshevism (*i.e.* Marxian Socialism, revolutionary Syndicalism, and communist Anarchism) and Democracy will be joined. It will be necessary to vindicate the principle of the rule of the majority against the minority of Social Revolutionaries, as well as against the minority of militarist Junkers.

But not only has the world to be made safe for democracy; democracy has to be made safe for the world. At present, as we have seen, it suffers from many defects. Its dominant merits manifest themselves as yet but as potentialities and possibilities. If it is to be worth saving it must purge itself from its faults. And it *is* worth saving; for along the road of democratic self-government lies the one and only political hope of the perfection of the human race. Hence the supreme communal duty of every lover of his kind is to fit himself to play his part in the democratic progress of his people, and to help his people to play their part collectively in the democratic progress of the world. It is no easy path that lies before the enlightened individual or the toiling community. For if the straight track lies, as it appears to do, by way of national autonomy, and through federation, to the ultimate City of Man, there will be many extremely difficult and delicate problems to solve along the road. If they are to be solved at all, and if the moving multitudes are not to lose themselves in hopeless crossways, there will be need of the clearest vision, the purest conscience, and the firmest will. There will be need that the principles of democracy, now but imperfectly grasped by many who mistakenly call themselves democrats, should be intelligently apprehended; there is need that the sense of legality and civic duty, now but partially developed in large sections of the people, should be quickened and cultivated; there is need that the public opinion, the communal conscience, and the general will, now but feebly coherent and apologetically operative, should display themselves in strength, and should enforce

themselves against rebellion in all the majesty of law.

The issues are tremendous: but the opportunity is great. Rarely, if ever, in the history of the world have there been progressive movements so profound among such masses of mankind as there are at this moment of dawning victory and awakening hope. Heavy is the responsibility of those to whose lot it falls to lead and guide the democracies of the world at this crisis of their march. But, if heavy their responsibility, glorious are the possibilities that spread themselves before them. May they rise to the sublimity of the occasion. May they realise at how vast a cost the world has been made safe for democracy, and as they think of the myriads of noble lives that have been gladly given in order that freedom and self-government may continue to flourish among men, may they see to it that their highest endeavours are devoted to the task of making democracy safe for the world.

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