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**POLITICAL PARTIES
AND POLICIES**

POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLICIES

A POPULAR EXPLANATION OF THE
PRINCIPLES OF THE CHIEF POLITICAL PARTIES
AND A GUIDE TO THE UNDERSTANDING
OF CURRENT POLITICS

BY

E. ROYSTON PIKE

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POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLICIES

CHAPTER I

Conservatism : Philosophy and Practice

SINCE men first began to take an interest in politics—which, it may be noted here in passing, is derived from the Greek word for citizen—there has been observable the clash of two conflicting principles, the principle of Conservatism and the principle of Change. Now one, now the other, in this place and in that, has gained the mastery. There were innovators of the most radical kind in the Neolithic settlements, conservatives of the deepest dye paced the floors of the Egyptian temples; to speak of the laws of the Medes and Persians is to suggest the most unbending resistance to change, and there were certain chattering Athenians who, St. Paul noticed, were always seeking some new thing. In every community and in every age the two principles have been contrasted and at war. In no community, in no age, has one triumphed long without there followed a period when either the rival principle came into its own or rigid formalism or unstable novelty brought ruin and death upon the land. Looking back down the long vista of history, we see that those countries have prospered most in which the alternations have been comparatively slight and regular.

Britain is one of these favoured countries. In her history there have been periods of misgovernment and repression, followed almost inevitably by moments of

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revolutionary excess ; but taken as a whole, it is the record of orderly development along what may be styled constitutional lines. The forces of conservatism have never been strong enough to impose upon the nation an iron rigidity ; the forces of innovation have never been strong enough to inspire its people with a love of change merely for the sake of change.

In the present chapter we are concerned with the first of the contending forces, with conservatism (with a small c) and the Conservative party.

NATURAL CONSERVATISM. In its essence conservatism is a distrust of the unknown, an aversion to change, a preference for the old and familiar ways. This "natural conservatism" is discernible, running like a thread, through the many chapters of human history. Particularly is it apparent in "old" countries, where men have lived in a state of ordered civilization for many generations, where societies of great complexity have been born and grown to maturity. In a "new" country the institutions, the customs, the buildings even, are little older than the citizens ; they have not been hallowed by the years ; they have not yet acquired the odour of sanctity and the hoariness that inspire respect even in the very young and thoughtless.

Perhaps there is more of this natural conservatism in Britain than in any other western land. In her history no great revolution divides the modern world from that which went before, as in the case of France ; she has been a nation for a thousand years and more, where Germany, for instance, is the creation of less than a century ; her soil is littered with memorials of the storied past—stone circles and earth-walled camps, ruined castles and cathedrals that are indeed "sermons in stone"—whereas in North America a house that has

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seen a hundred winters is considered ancient ; the life of her people is chequered with survivals of old-world pageantry that in most other countries would long since have been swept away as being altogether incompatible with modern ideas of progress.

The Monarchy and the House of Lords, the Lord Mayor's coach and the Beefeater's Tudor garb, the admiral's cocked hat and the judge's wig, the hedgerows—so wasteful yet so beautiful—of the countryside, and driving on the left—each and all are expressions of the survival in our midst of the conservative principle. We laugh when we hear the town-crier's "Oyez ! Oyez !" and wonder sometimes at the archaic language of the liturgy; but the blue-coated bellman is always sure of an audience, and in our heart of hearts we believe that the quaint old phrases heard in some grand cathedral or more modest but no less ancient parish church are more worthy of their theme than any modernized version could ever be.

In Britain nothing can be really new in the sense that, for instance, an American or Australian township can be new ; even the industrial system which transformed the land in the century following 1760 had its roots in practices that had been in vogue for hundreds of years. The rate of change was increased beyond measure, but the changes themselves were developments rather than complete innovations. However entangled they may be in the modern world, the people who dwell in the Britain of to-day are at every turn reminded of those who came and went before them ; a thousand influences unite to prove that we are citizens of no parvenu among the nations, but enjoy a heritage of two thousand years of culture. Surrounded by the precious fragments of a glorious and remembered past ; recalling

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to mind the brave men and noble women who, generation after generation, have played their part in the national life, have added their mite to the national inheritance—it is not to be wondered at that even the most unthinking among us are impressed, and that those who have a thought for serious things should resolve that they will do nothing to impair the splendid legacy they have received from their forbears, but rather will hand it on with added lustre and content to the generation that comes after.

This natural conservatism, though it is by no means confined to professed Conservatives, is the distinguishing characteristic of the Conservative party. Conservatives, more perhaps than most men, reverence the past ; they have an intense horror of wholesale destruction ; they prefer an old institution, however patched it may be, to a brand-new but uninspiring creation. After all, they say, the old institution has *worked*. In the passage of the years many other ideas have been engrafted on the Conservative stock, but this belief that it is better to preserve and improve than to destroy and make anew is to be traced throughout the whole history of the party.

The first Conservatives, it has been said, were the Elizabethan statesmen who guided the destinies of England through the stormy period that followed upon the Reformation. Burleigh—founder of one of the greatest Conservative families, the Cecils, to which Lord Salisbury belongs—was essentially a Conservative, striving continuously and with conspicuous success to preserve all of the old that could well be salvaged, establishing a new Church that was not so very different from the old, and bringing into being a form of national government which, though very modern in some respects, was firmly rooted in the experiences of centuries. Towards the end of

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Elizabeth's reign we find Parliament becoming divided into two clearly-marked and definitely opposed sections—the partisans of the Court (the Conservatives of the day), and the supporters of the Puritan movement who were often as radical in their political as in their religious demands. In the next century the two parties, now called respectively by the names of Royalists or Cavaliers and Parliamentarians or “Roundheads,” became still more opposed, and at last the antagonism between them became so acute that they resorted to the sword as the final arbiter of their differences.

THE THRONE. The Royalists were the founders of that tradition of loyalty which is still one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Conservative. They believed that the king ruled by “divine right,” that he had been appointed by God Himself to his high office, and that, therefore, he was entitled to the unquestioning obedience of his subjects. He might make mistakes; he might act unjustly, or develop into a bloodthirsty tyrant. Still the duty of the ruled was plain. St. Paul had enjoined submission to Nero, and Charles I, even in his most despotic moments was nothing like so bad as the imperial fiddler. Nothing, therefore, could excuse disloyalty: to raise a hand against the Lord's Anointed was the most heinous, most unpardonable of crimes. So taught the clergy of the Church of England, and those who listened to their teaching gave effect to it in their lives. Charles was served with unswerving devotion by the Cavaliers, and when he died on the scaffold they transferred their loyalty, as a matter of course, to his son.

During the years of the Commonwealth, Conservative opinion gradually gained ground, as more and more men of moderate opinions and inclination were shocked by the excesses of the republicans. In 1660 there came the

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Restoration ; the king came into his own again, and with him were restored the Church, the House of Lords, and most of the other old institutions which had suffered so severely at the hands of the Puritan innovators.

But though at the time almost everyone save the Cromwellian soldiery and officials seemed to rejoice at the return of the old order of things, the conflict of conservative and reformer soon began afresh. There were clashes over the restoration of many details of the old regime in Church and State, but the first great struggle arose over the succession to the Crown. The "Merry Monarch," so loved of romantic historians, had no legitimate offspring, and the heir to the throne was his brother, James, Duke of York, a man of forbidding personality and a Catholic in religion. When it was realized that the Queen was likely to be barren, society was split into two opposing camps. The one, headed by Lord Shaftesbury, did all in its power to oust James from the succession, and nominated in his stead the Duke of Monmouth, a natural son of Charles by one of his many mistresses ; the other, under the leadership of the Marquis of Danby, was equally active in support of James. At first the two parties were styled respectively "petitioners" and "abhorers"—in the one case because of the host of petitions to the King to recall Parliament, which Charles did not want to do since a majority were in favour of James's exclusion, and in the other because of the abhorrence with which the Danbyites regarded this interference with what was then part of the royal prerogative. But it was not long before these nicknames gave place to others, shorter and nastier in meaning. The "petitioners" became Whigs, the "abhorers" Tories. Both words, like Christian and Quaker, were originally terms of reproach, for the first Whigs were

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dour, fanatical Presbyterians of the Scottish lowlands, while the first Tories were wild outlaws, Catholics in religion and robbers by profession, who for many years waged a guerilla warfare against the English in Ireland. Shaftesbury dubbed his opponents Tories because he hoped by so doing to arouse against them the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic prejudices of the mob ; the newly-christened Tories retaliated by identifying their foes with obscure and despised Presbyterian sectaries. Both appellations " caught on." The original meanings of the words were soon forgotten, and the two great parties of the State were proud to acknowledge names which were originally terms of contempt. About a hundred and fifty years later, at the time of the great Reform Bill of 1832, the terms Conservative and Liberal came into favour, but it is noticeable that of late years there has been a revival of " Tory," particularly among the younger and more vigorous elements of the Conservative party—another example of the practical working of the conservative spirit.

It would be interesting but it is hardly necessary to trace the thread of Tory loyalty running through the tangled politics of the succeeding reigns. Tories served Queen Anne, and, true to their loyalist tradition, endeavoured at her death to place the legitimist heir, her brother James, the Old Pretender, on the throne. They failed—and expiated their failure in fifty years of wandering in the political wilderness, remote from place and honours. Typical of the Tories of those days was Squire Western in " Tom Jones," with his frequent gibes at the " Hanoverian rats." Only when George III came to the throne in 1760, the first British-born sovereign for generations, did they abandon their allegiance to the exiled dynasty. Then at long last they became political realists, acquiescing in what they were powerless to

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change. The new king welcomed the wanderers back to the fold with open arms : indeed so cordial was their reception that within a year a Tory ministry had been formed. Now their loyalty was appreciated to the full. Throughout almost the whole of his long reign, King George was served by Tory ministers ; he himself became in fact if not in name the leader of the Tory party. Through victory and defeat, the loss of the American colonies, the building up of a greater empire in India, and the long wars with the French republic and Napoleon, the Tories served the sovereign with fidelity and devotion. For generations they had been without a royal hero to follow and worship ; now one had appeared, and they were not niggardly in their offerings. Europe was filled with the sound of crashing thrones ; but "Farmer George," buttressed by his faithful Tories, survived every crisis and died peacefully of old age in his bed at Windsor.

George's sons who followed him on the throne were very unheroic figures ; but with the accession of his grand-daughter in 1837 royalty again became adorable, almost divine. Under Benjamin Disraeli the Tories, now styled Conservatives, became the self-constituted champions of the Throne, and no doubt compared very favourably in the Queen's eyes with their rivals, many of whom professed republican sentiments. Of all the long list of prime ministers who served Victoria the great Jew was the most favoured, the most honoured and trusted. For others, she had reproofs and reproaches ; for him, nothing but gentle words and kind actions. And Disraeli, though he laid on flattery "with a trowel," though consistency was never one of his virtues and his views both in politics and religion were lightly held and easily changed, was in one respect thoroughly sincere, altogether consistent. The Queen whom he had seen on her throne

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in all the charm of her girlhood, whom he served for so many years as minister and confidential friend, was for him a being far above the ordinary level of mortals. He prostrated himself before her with oriental obeisances—obeisances which did not go unheeded or unrewarded. He “educated” his party in subjects of which many of its members had never dreamed; he led them along many strange paths—but in his devotion to his sovereign he was a Tory of Tories, an exponent of the earliest principle of Toryism. Indeed, it may not be going too far to say that it was Disraeli who preserved the Monarchy during those years after the death of the Prince Consort in 1861 when the Queen practically withdrew from public affairs, and the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, was denied his rightful share of responsibility and power and found relaxation in ways that scandalized many of the straiter Victorians. For some time there was an open republican movement in this country. Charles Bradlaugh, the militant Freethinker, was a republican; and so, too, in his earlier years was Joseph Chamberlain, the wealthy Birmingham screw manufacturer who later occupied high office in Conservative governments and was the father of two of the Conservative leaders of the next generation. But the years passed; the Queen gradually emerged from her seclusion, and by the time of the first Jubilee in 1887 had regained her old position in the hearts of her people. Ten years later the Diamond Jubilee was the occasion for an unprecedented outburst of loyal devotion in every part of the Empire. Republicanism, never a very thriving plant, was dead.

To-day all the great parties of the State are at one in honouring the Throne as an institution and the monarch as an individual. The King, it is recognized, is above party, but at the same time he is not a figurehead. He

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enjoys the three rights enumerated by Bagehot—the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, the right to warn—but he is also something that Bagehot, imbued with the sentiments of mid-Victorian Liberalism, would hardly have understood. The King is the sole link which binds the component parts of the Empire together ; in loyalty to the King-Emperor, Britisher and Indian, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealander, Irishman and Newfoundland, South African and West Indian, Nigerian, Bantu, and Malay, form one great family. The Tory it may be claimed, preserved the Monarchy in the past ; if this be so, then in one respect at least Toryism has surely been justified by its fruits.

THE ESTABLISHMENT. Devotion to the Crown has been paralleled by devotion to the Church of England as by Law Established ; sometimes, indeed, the latter has been given the preference, as in 1688 when James II crowned his course of folly by threatening to Romanize the national Church.

Since the Elizabethan settlement Conservatives have always stood for the direct recognition of religion by the State, although it is not without interest to remember that some of the most notable rationalists—Hobbes the philosopher, and the historians Gibbon, Hume, and Lecky, for instance—have belonged to what is called the “right wing” in politics. The arrangement that prevails in England to-day has been perpetuated mainly by Conservative influence. That arrangement is, briefly, the selection of the Anglican Church as the officially recognized church of the land, and the consequent granting to it of privileges, honours, and endowments that are not shared by any of the other religious bodies that have come into being since Elizabeth’s time. The Primate’s position in the official hierarchy ; the arch-

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bishops and bishops in the House of Lords ; the exclusive possession of the cathedrals and parish churches ; the requirement that the Sovereign shall be a member of the Church of which he is legally and constitutionally the head—although when he goes to Scotland he is in the same way officially a member of the (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland ; the monopoly of certain offices ; the right of officiating at coronations and other great occasions of national importance ; the enjoyment of property bequeathed by pre-Reformation Catholics—these are some of the outward and visible signs of the State's preference for one particular form of religious faith and organization.

On the other hand, it should be mentioned that there are certain disadvantages attached to the position. The Church is, in effect, a department of state ; her archbishops and bishops are appointed by the Prime Minister for the time being, whatever his personal religious opinions may be, and are responsible in the last resort to the House of Commons for their actions. Clashes between Church and State have been in the past infrequent, but of late years the relationship has been severely strained on several occasions, notably when the House of Commons rejected the revised prayer-book prepared by the bishops. As a result of recent controversies there may be some modification of the traditional Conservative attitude towards the Church. Until fairly recently it would have been correct to say that the whole Conservative party was unwavering in its defence of the principle of establishment ; but to-day, although the position of the great majority probably remains unchanged, there is a considerable body of Churchpeople who are of the opinion that, although the recognition of religion by the State is valuable, it may be bought too dearly, and that if the bonds of union are

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drawn very much tighter it may be in the best interests of the Church for them to be altogether severed.

Still, however, those who think along these lines are in the minority. The typical Conservative is a member of the Church of England as were his fathers before him ; he is her champion, her defender against all her foes. As far back as the days of Elizabeth, when, as we have seen, the parties are first to be distinguished, the Court party was also the party of the Church ; and the close alliance then effected has been maintained almost without a break. The Conservatives of the sixteenth century supported Elizabeth in her harrying of the Puritans and persecution of the Catholics ; those of the next century backed Archbishop Laud in his attempts to make episcopacy predominant in Scotland and in England. When the Church fell on evil days, when her bishops were deprived, her vicars driven out, and the use of her liturgy was prohibited, the Conservatives, too, were passing through the waters of affliction. When the tide turned and the Royalists regained the direction of affairs, the Churchmen shared in their triumph, and Act after Act was passed at their instigation and in their interests. The Tories were all staunch Churchmen—so staunch, indeed, that on the famous occasion already mentioned they put their loyalty to their Church before their loyalty to their King. In the eighteenth century the Anglican clergy were amongst the strongest supporter of the Tory ministries, and in the nineteenth the Conservatives resisted the emancipation of Roman Catholics and Dissenters from their disabilities. For generations the squire and the parson have been natural allies, and to-day, despite the decline in churchgoing and the widespread indifference to theological matters, there can be little doubt that if the Church were ever really threatened,

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then the cry "the Church in danger!" would suffice, as in the centuries gone by, for a host of Conservative swords to be drawn at once in her support.

CONSTITUTIONALISM. "Constitutional" has come to be almost a synonym for Conservative; usually the two words appear together over the portals of the party clubs. Conservatives defend our parliamentary constitution for three main reasons. In the first place, it is old. It is hallowed by a thousand associations and is indissolubly bound up with many great and glorious events in our history. Then, secondly, it has *worked* and still works more or less efficiently. It is true that on occasion the parliamentary machine rasps and creaks, that its methods of business are antiquated, and its organization defective. But as long as it functions fairly efficiently, as long as grievances are ventilated and "Acts of Parliament" turned out with reasonable despatch, the Conservative party will lend it its support and its protection. In the third place, up to the present there has not been devised any really satisfactory alternative. Communism, with its negation of monarchy and aristocracy and its hostility to organized religion, is completely opposed to Conservative principles; and though some Conservatives have found something to admire in the Corporative State—in the "functional" representation of masters and men in a kind of parliament of industry—Fascism as a whole is abhorred for the disgraceful pages that its disciples have written in the history of the modern world. Inefficient though our parliamentary system may be in so many respects, it cannot be said to have as yet any really dangerous rival.

Of the three reasons just mentioned the first is probably the most important and most widely held. The Conservative detests change for change's sake, and when

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changes are inevitable he strives to ensure that they are made in the spirit of continuity with the past. "I would not exclude alteration," said Edmund Burke, perhaps the greatest of Conservative philosophers, "but even when I changed it should be to preserve"—and his maxim finds a ready acceptance amongst modern Conservatives. More fully, perhaps, than either of its great rivals, the Conservative party realizes the extraordinary complexity of the civilization in which we live, move, and have our being. To destroy the fabric built up during two thousand years of labour and sacrifice, how easy! To build another and better system on its ruins, that, alas! is a task for giants, giants in intellect, resource, and energy. And what likelihood is there, asks the Conservative, of the fortuitous emergence of these supermen?

Up to the present we have been concerned with what may be styled the Tory element in Conservatism. Historically, of course, that element is of the greatest importance, and it still exercises a very powerful influence on many minds, but there can be little doubt that the most popular element in the party creed to-day is one which would certainly have vastly surprised the earlier Conservatives. That element is the belief in Britain's imperial destiny.

IMPERIALISM. The other parties have misgivings about the Empire—about the way in which it has been built up and the manner in which it is governed. The great mass of Conservatives have no such misgivings. They are unfeignedly proud of the great red splashes on the map, they glory in their citizenship of an empire on which the sun never sets. A Conservative "Little Englander" is almost a contradiction in terms, yet it is the fact that until nearly the close of the eighteenth century it was the Whigs, the ancestors of the Liberals of to-day, who were

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the chief supporters of empire, of a vigorous foreign policy, while the Tories were almost to a man "Little Englanders" and ardent advocates of a policy of insular isolationism.

It was Cromwell, the first president of the British republic, who wrested Jamaica from the Spaniards and added it to the Empire ; it was Blake, the Puritan admiral, who by his victories laid the foundations of our naval supremacy. The Whigs backed Marlborough during the War of the Spanish Succession, and enabled him to triumph at Blenheim and Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet—names embroidered on the standards of some of our oldest regiments ; the Tories for their part recalled the great captain in disgrace and hastened to make peace. The first square miles of territory in Canada and India were acquired during the period of Whig supremacy ; the old colonial empire collapsed and the colonies in America were lost when the Tories were at the helm of state.

But in the last decade of the eighteenth century there are signs of a change. It was William Pitt the Younger, the Tory Prime Minister, who gave self-government to the Canadian provinces ; and throughout the long struggle with the French we see the Tory ministries doing their utmost to uphold the might and prestige of Britain, sending her fleets into every quarter of the globe, and adding year by year fresh tracts to the already extensive dominions of their sovereign. In effect, therefore, there was an exchange of policies. The Whig donned the garment discarded by the Tory as being too tight-fitting ; the Tory wrapped himself in the cloak which the Whig had found too large.

Fifteen years after Waterloo the long period of Tory ascendancy came to an end, and the Whigs ruled in their stead. Parliamentary reform, the Corn Laws,

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Chartism—these became the great subjects of the day, and around these the tide of political warfare ebbed and flowed. A Commons division was generally regarded as being of far greater importance than a colony, and in these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the far-distant lands where scattered little groups of settlers still flew the Union Jack and swore allegiance to the British Crown grew dim and faint on the horizon. In the homeland colonies were regarded with disfavour, both as being worthless in themselves and as entailing a diffusion and weakening of the armed forces of the State. England was the workshop, the factory, the carrier, of the world. The colonies, it was urged, *must* trade with her in order to obtain the coal and iron, the woollen and cotton goods that they required. Why then persist in maintaining a costly and burdensome political link when its dissolution could have no harmful effects upon our commerce and would probably be in the best interests of the colonies themselves? Then, too, in 1833 slavery was abolished in the British Empire; and this, however satisfying to the consciences of English Evangelicals, had a disastrous effect on the material wealth of many of the colonies, thus making it still less worth while for the mother country to bother herself with their protection and retention. Gradually, imperceptibly, it came to be recognized as almost a political truism that at no very remote date the colonies would “cut the painter,” or, to change the metaphor for that employed years before by Turgot, the French economist and statesman, would “drop like fruit from a tree.” Self-government, regarded as inevitable, was also regarded as being the first step towards complete separation—a prospect which, if not actually welcomed, was certainly not looked upon with any considerable degree of apprehension.

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To Disraeli may be ascribed the credit for having stemmed the tide of "little Englandism." His speeches are still the textbook of the imperialist ; and although as premier he did little for the imperial cause beyond the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India, it was nevertheless under his leadership that the Conservatives developed a passion for the Empire. Hardly had the torch fallen from his wearied hands than it was snatched up by Joseph Chamberlain, the one-time Radical Republican, and waved more energetically than ever before. It was because of the Liberal proposal to grant a measure of Home Rule to Ireland that Chamberlain and those who thought with him left the Liberals in 1886 and became " Liberal Unionists," and so great a place did the Home Rule controversy occupy in the political world that for a generation and more the Conservatives were almost generally known as Unionists—as a party that is, who were determined above all things to maintain the imperial connexion in its entirety. For thirty years the question of Home Rule for Ireland aroused the fiercest antagonisms, and the early months of 1914 saw two rival armies drilling in Ireland—the Nationalist Volunteers who stood for the measure of Home Rule offered them by Mr. Asquith's Liberal Government, and the men of Ulster who had subscribed a " Covenant " binding them to resist the imposition of Home Rule to the bitter end, and who were openly encouraged and supported by the most prominent leaders of the Conservative party. Then came the Great War—a little earlier, some believe, than would have been the case if the Kaiser had not been convinced of the imminence of civil war in Ireland ; and Nationalists and Ulstermen gave their lives in tens of thousands in support of a common cause. It was a coalition government that had the

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unenviable task of suppressing the Sinn Fein revolt of 1916 and of combating the guerilla warfare that endured until 1921. Then when the Irish Free State was created, when the Southern Irish were granted a measure of self-government greater by far than had ever been proposed by Gladstone or demanded by the Irish Nationalists, the Conservative members of the coalition cabinet played a prominent part in the negotiations. In so doing they laid themselves open to the charge of having abandoned their Conservative principles; but in defence it was urged that they were making the best of a thoroughly bad situation, and that they were at least keeping Ireland within the Empire.

Defeated though they were in the long run over the Home Rule question, the Unionists were conspicuously successful in other directions in their imperial policy. Before Joseph Chamberlain went to the Colonial Office in 1895, the post of Colonial Secretary was regarded as a comparatively minor one, suited to politicians of an uninspiring kind and of quite ordinary mentality. Under his vigorous direction the Colonial Office was transformed, and a new imperial policy was inaugurated. The self-governing colonies were definitely taken into partnership, while those administered direct by the Colonial Office were developed, not as estates of the home country but as backward children who by dint of much coaxing and guidance could be made in course of time to attain to the status of their older and bigger brothers. Financiers were encouraged to invest their money in colonial enterprises, and colonial government stocks were made trustee securities; railways, bridges, and docks were built in many parts of the Empire; research stations were opened, diseases combated and overcome. Deserts and jungles, fertilized by money and brains, blossomed like the rose;

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savages became civilized and demanded not slaves but cotton goods. Chamberlain resigned in 1903 ; but even his resignation was dictated by his desire to devote himself still more completely to the imperial idea. He began a raging, tearing campaign in favour of " Tariff Reform "—the preferential treatment of goods imported from the colonies, and the imposition of protective duties on goods of foreign origin or manufacture. His propaganda was unsuccessful—indeed, it was a contributory factor to the crushing defeat which the Conservatives sustained at the general election of 1906 ; but much of his teaching fell on good soil, and the proposal to connect the various countries of the Empire by chains of commerce and common interest as well as by the slender cords of sentimental friendship attracted a large body of support.

Despite reverses at the polls, an ever-increasing number of Conservatives reverted to the old belief in the efficacy of " Protection " (we shall have much more to say about Protection when we come to discuss the opposite theory of Free Trade in our chapter on Liberalism), generally supposed to be " dead and damned," in Disraeli's phrase, since the abolition of the Corn Laws in the eighteenth-forties. After the Great War protectionist propaganda was intensified owing to the fact that Britain, practically the only " Free Trade " country in a protectionist world, had become the " dumping-ground " for manufactures produced under conditions which would never be allowed within her own borders. For a time it was hoped that matters would right themselves—that currencies would be stabilized, that supply would adjust itself to demand, that old markets lost during the War would be regained, and that conditions akin to those prevailing in 1913, when Britain was still the workshop of the world, would soon manifest themselves. But when it was seen

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how remote was the possibility of these things happening, and when the economic slump engulfed Britain in her turn, the Conservative demand for a policy of Imperial economic self-sufficiency was intensified, and soon after the setting-up of the National Government in 1931 active steps were taken towards its realization. In the following year an Imperial Economic Conference was held at Ottawa, and the resolutions that were then agreed, providing for the admittance to Britain of all Empire produce free of duty, were hailed by Mr. Neville Chamberlain as opening a new chapter in imperial history, as evidence of a new conception of imperial duty.

Much, then, has been done to make the Empire an economic unit, capable of competing as a unit with those other great political amalgamations, Soviet Russia and the United States ; but many Conservatives hold the view that very much more remains to be done. Conservatives of this school have a vision of the Empire as a great self-supporting, self-contained commonwealth of free nations, united in allegiance to the same sovereign, speaking the same language, possessing the same traditions and the same heritage of culture, providing each other with the goods and services that they need. As for the larger Crown Colonies, they too have their places, as components that have not yet grown up to nationhood, who still require skilful and disinterested guidance and help before they can attain to Dominion status. To many, such a vision seems grandiose and impracticable, but at least it is not an ignoble one. To Conservative eyes it has all the attractions of a Promised Land. Let us make the Empire self-supporting—Lord Beaverbrook's Empire Free Trade crusade in the years before the second World War may be recalled ; let us develop our imperial estate, they urge, and the poverty and un-

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employment which exact such a toll in the home country as well as in the overseas realm will be, if not wiped out, at least diminished beyond measure.

In the twentieth century the Empire is no longer regarded as a useless and dangerous appendage. With the possible exception of the Communists, men of all parties recognize that the British Commonwealth of Nations constitutes one of the most remarkable facts in the modern world, and is perhaps the greatest and most powerful of the influences making for world order and stability. There is, therefore, less talk nowadays of disruption or secession, but a great deal concerning the improvement of imperial communications and the development of backward areas. Yet in spite of the unanimity of opinion on many points connected with imperial politics, there are other points on which there are wide differences. Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists are all in favour of maintaining our imperial heritage, but *how* it is to be maintained is the subject of acute and never-ending controversy. Generally speaking, the Conservative still puts the emphasis on air fleets and naval bases and such-like material ties ; and whereas in the other parties the term *British Commonwealth* is generally preferred, the Conservative still displays a preference for the older and bolder and altogether more assertive *British Empire*.

Here it may be mentioned that one of the largest and most influential of Conservative organizations is the Primrose League, founded in 1883 for the maintenance of religion, the constitution of the realm, and the imperial ascendancy of Great Britain. It derives its name from the fact that the primrose is supposed to have been the favourite flower of Lord Beaconsfield (as Benjamin Disraeli was styled after his elevation to the peerage in

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1876) ; and every April 19, the anniversary of his death in 1881, the statue of the great statesman in Parliament Square, Westminster, is surrounded by bunches and wreaths of the little yellow flowers. The League was established in honour of his memory, and remains the active instrument of the political ideals he had most at heart.

CAPITALISM. The last main division of the Conservative philosophy need not detain us for long, as the defence of the present economic order and the opposition to State Socialism and communistic legislation is not confined to Conservatives and will be referred to again in later pages.

In economic matters the Conservative is usually—but not always—an advocate of private enterprise as opposed to State ownership and control. This is easily understood when we remember that probably the large majority of the wealthy and the well-to-do, those who have sufficient of this world's goods to dread their confiscation, who stand to lose most by any drastic alteration in the methods of production, distribution, and exchange, are to be found in the Conservative party or at least vote for the Conservative candidates at election times.

This is not to say that Conservatives are convinced that this is the best of all possible worlds, and that any change must necessarily be for the worse. Rather they insist, in accordance with the basic principle of their faith, that any changes that are made in the social and economic structure must be made in the same spirit as those brought about in the political sphere—they must be in the nature of slow and peaceful evolution, not rapid and violent revolution. Our capitalist system, they say, is by no means perfect; but can any human institution or set of institutions be perfect when the men who create and have

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to use them are such imperfect creatures? They often readily agree that the plans of Socialist and Liberal reformers "sound all right in theory, but when you come to practice——." Under Capitalism, they point out, Britain was first raised to an unexampled pitch of wealth; even in the slump-ridden world of the thirties this country weathered the storm far better than any of its great rivals. The workers in Britain have better food and drink, live in better houses, are dressed in far better clothes, have infinitely more amusements and recreations, than kings and nobles could command a few hundred years since. True, we have had in some years two million and more unemployed, but the workless have had their "dole" and public assistance, and no one has been allowed to starve.

The average worker of to-day, asserts the Conservative, is no "wage-slave" such as he is sometimes pictured by "agitators," but a sturdy and independent member of a great and free community. He has enough money in his pocket to spend his evenings at the "George" or the "dogs," he has his working-men's club and his allotment; he can have more than an occasional flutter on the "3 o'clock," and can usually afford to take his wife to the cinema or music-hall once a week, while for a few pence a week he can introduce into his home all the entertainment and information carried by the wireless. His children are educated free, so far as he is concerned; his boys may win scholarships to exclusive schools and to the university, and his girls, after a course at a business-training college, can tap their typewriter-keys to sufficient advantage to be able to dress in such a way as to be practically indistinguishable from the damsels in "Society." Cheap cosmetics and artificial-silk stockings are among the greatest of levellers. An extremely

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numerous middle class, unknown to our ancestors, has sprung into existence—civil servants by the hundred thousand, local government officials, professional and business men, joint-stock company officials, pensioners, and people living on interest from investments. Property is distributed as never before, and the rich man, even the millionaire, returns such an exceedingly large part of his income to the State by way of taxation that he has claims to be regarded as a public benefactor.

What guarantee have we, asks the Conservative, that the economic system can be radically improved in a short time? The present capitalist system has been built up through the years by men who knew their business—who *had* to know it, for if they did not, they went to the wall. It is nothing less than the sheerest folly, the rashest presumption, on the part of doctrinaire reformers to lay their hands on the industrial machine and suggest that it should be broken into pieces and remodelled according to entirely fresh designs.

At the same time it must not be imagined that the Conservative is necessarily and all the time opposed to State action. Tory support was forthcoming for the early Factory Acts, and some of the greatest social reformers of the last century—Sadler, the champion of the millhands, and Lord Shaftesbury, friend of chimney-sweeps, costers, and outcasts, to mention but two—were Conservatives; and readers of *Sybil* will not need to be told of Disraeli's keen insight into the "social question." Then in our own time we have seen Conservative governments carrying social legislation of the most advanced description, measures which only a generation ago would have been denounced as socialistic—such as, for instance, the granting of pensions to widows and orphans, the nationalization of broadcasting and in large

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part of the electric supply. There are plenty of "planners" in the Conservative party, but their planning would still leave ample room for private enterprise, for individual initiative. Critics of Conservative planning have asserted, indeed, that it is generally in the interests of "Big Business," of what the Marxists call "monopoly capitalism."

Some may think that in these circumstances it is wrong to say that the Conservative party stands for the maintenance of the present social system. It is indeed wrong to say so, if it is implied that Conservatives believe no change to be possible or desirable ; but it is not wrong if all that is meant is that Conservatives are opposed to sudden, drastic changes, whether in politics or economics. Generally speaking, Conservatives are firmly opposed to nationalization ; they are certainly opposed, as one man, and woman, to that complete socialization for which the Socialist party is supposed to be working. They profess a horror of bureaucracy. Private enterprise and individual initiative—these have served us well in the past, and are likely to serve us well in the future, far better than the salaried and wage-paid activity of the Socialist State. So argues the Conservative spokesman. But, he goes on, circumstances may arise—have already arisen—when for one reason or another it is in the public interest for the State to own and conduct, or perhaps only control a specific enterprise. Then Conservatives have no hesitation in saying that in these particular circumstances of time and place this particular kind of State action is desirable. That Conservatives are no "die-hard" reactionaries was shewn in 1947, when they included in their official policy the implementing of an Industrial Charter, aiming at the union of employer and employee, of State and Private Enterprise, in fruitful partnership.

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CONSERVATIVES IN OFFICE. The first Prime Minister in the modern sense of the term was Sir Robert Walpole, a Whig, who held office from 1721 to 1742—twenty-one years, the longest premiership in our history. (See Appendix A.) The Whig ascendancy continued for many years after Walpole's fall, and the first Tory premier is generally considered to have been Lord Bute, who succeeded William Pitt the Elder at the beginning of George III's reign. Then, after a period of alternate Whig and Tory rule, the Tories came in under William Pitt the Younger and were in office with hardly a break from 1783, at the conclusion of the war of American Independence, to 1830, at the beginning of the Reform Bill agitation. Throughout Queen Victoria's long reign, Whigs and Tories, or Liberals and Conservatives as they were now called, took it in turn to form the government of the day. The Conservative premiers included Sir Robert Peel, Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield), and Lord Salisbury; those on the Liberal side included Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, and W. E. Gladstone. For a generation politics as seen by the ordinary man resolved itself into a battle between the two giants, Disraeli and Gladstone—or "Dizzy" and the "G.O.M." (Grand Old Man) as they were familiarly and affectionately styled.

At the turn of the century the Conservatives (now often called Unionists, because of their insistence upon the legislative union of Britain and Ireland) were in office, as they had been a hundred years before. But in 1906 they and their Liberal-Unionist allies were routed at the polls by a Liberal, Radical, and Labour combination, and they were not in office again until after the Great War. Then between the wars, save in 1929—1931, the Conservatives were the largest party in the

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House of Commons, and for fifteen of the twenty-one years between the wars the Government was predominantly Conservative, even when it was not headed by a Conservative Prime Minister. During this period the Conservative premiers were Andrew Bonar Law, who was in office for only a year—he died of cancer shortly after his resignation in 1923 ; Stanley Baldwin, almost a newcomer to the Front Bench when he was called to the premiership in 1923 in preference to Lord Curzon, it being felt that in the twentieth century the Premier must sit in the House of Commons ; and Neville Chamberlain, who, after a long apprenticeship as Chancellor of the Exchequer, succeeded Mr. Baldwin as Premier in 1937. Baldwin was Premier three times, for eight years altogether. When Mr. Chamberlain fell in 1940, at the supreme crisis of the World War, he was succeeded by another Conservative, albeit a very independent one, and one moreover who in his younger days had been one of the most brilliant cabinet ministers of the Liberal governments of Asquith and Lloyd George. But Winston Churchill's father was a Conservative statesman of the Victorian era, and he himself has shown throughout his career plentiful signs of that reverence for the past and for venerable institutions, that eager and wholehearted loyalty to the Crown and Constitution, that firm belief in Britain's imperial destiny, and of that general preference for individual effort and enterprise, that are the principal contributions made by Conservatism to the political pattern. In our next chapter we shall concern ourselves with the party that has opposed Conservatism through the centuries, although it was not the Liberal but the Labour party that ousted Mr. Churchill's Conservative government in 1945.

CHAPTER II

Liberalism, Old and New

LIBERALISM, as its name suggests, puts the emphasis on liberty. It may be defined as the belief that liberty is Man's birthright, an essential of human happiness and well-being—a belief finding expression in a constant endeavour to extend the sphere of liberty in every department of life. Liberalism recognizes the right of every individual to have a voice in the government of the country ; it recognizes the right of every people to govern its own affairs. It is opposed alike to government by priests and kings, by plutocrats and aristocrats, by classes and sects, by the few, and by the mob. It stands four-square for the basic principle of Democracy—government of the people, by the people, for the people ; for only when men are free can they lead full and happy lives.

In the last chapter we saw that political history resolves itself into the unending rivalry of the forces of conservatism and those of change. We have already discussed Conservatism. Liberalism may be said to represent the opposing principle, although in Britain since the rise of the Labour party it is no longer the creed of those who want to make the most thoroughgoing changes in our political, social, and economic structure in the shortest possible time. Speaking generally, Liberals advocate the transformation of society by gradual and peaceful means, whereas many Socialists and all Communists envisage action of a more rapid and revolutionary kind. Liberals believe in progress ; but just as Conservatives dislike

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change merely for the sake of change, so Liberals do not seek it simply because they are in love with novelty. Rather they recognize that human nature changes, though slowly, and that, therefore, men must be increasingly set free from those bonds which, however necessary in a state of pupillage, are out of place when the child has reached years of discretion.

The core of Socialism, as we shall see, is its regard for the State, its almost mystical conception of the State as being not only the expression of the social conscience but as taking up into itself and sublimating the lives of all its individual citizens. Conservatives hold up for our admiration our ancient Constitution and far-flung Empire. The Liberal, although appreciating to the full the many beneficent activities of the State in the modern world, although by no means blind to the virtues of the Constitution or the glories of the Empire, yet sees something higher and more important than State or Constitution or Empire—Man himself. Man must be free, he asserts: the State, the Constitution, the Empire—these things are important, but only in so far as they guarantee to the citizen the means of a happy and prosperous and worth-while existence. They are but the instruments to an end.

MEANING OF LIBERTY. A classic and one of the best-known expositions of the Liberal point of view is that contained in John Stuart Mill's famous essay, *On Liberty*. "This, then, is the appropriate region of human liberty," he writes.

It comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological. The liberty of expressing and publishing opinions may seem to fall under a different principle, since it belongs to that part of the conduct

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of an individual which concerns other people ; but, being almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself, and resting in great part on the same reasons, is practically inseparable from it. Secondly, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits ; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character ; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow : without impediment from our fellow creatures, so long as what we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse, or wrong. Thirdly, from this liberty of each individual, follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals ; freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others : the persons combining being supposed to be of full age, and not forced or deceived.

That was written in 1859. Some eighty years later a great American liberal looked forward to a world “founded upon four essential freedoms.”

The first is *freedom of speech and expression*—everywhere in the world. The second is *freedom of every person to worship God in his own way*—everywhere in the world. The third is *freedom from want*, which means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peace-time life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world. The fourth is *freedom from fear*, which means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour—everywhere in the world.

“The world order we seek,” went on President Franklin Roosevelt, in what history may come to regard as a classic exposition of liberal philosophy, “is the co-operation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized Society.”

To return to British Liberalism: its history is in large part the record of the attempt to put these principles into practice. In politics and religion, in commerce and education, in business and private life, Liberals have striven to obtain the utmost degree of freedom possible under the particular circumstances of time and place. Let us deal first with the struggle for political liberty.

It will be remembered that in the previous chapter the Royalists or Cavaliers were described as the ancestors

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of the modern Conservatives. This does not mean, of course, that the opinions of Falkland or Clarendon in the seventeenth century are identical with those held by Lord Woolton or Anthony Eden in the twentieth, but merely that the guiding principles professed by the one set of statesmen are, in the main, those professed by the other. In like manner, the "Roundheads" or Parliamentarians were the forerunners of the modern Liberals, although it may be supposed that Cromwell and Milton, Vane and Harrison, would find much in present-day Liberalism that would be hardly to their taste. Nevertheless, it may be claimed that the motive that inspired Cromwell's career—the desire to do the *right thing*, that which was right in the eyes of God—was in essence the same as that which guided the footsteps of Gladstone; although in some other departments of politics—for instance, the treatment of subject nationalities—the Lord High Protector makes a very poor showing compared with not only the Liberal "Grand Old Man" but such more recent leaders as Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith, and Lloyd George.

The Cavaliers maintained that the king ruled by divine right, and that, therefore, he who raised his hand against the Lord's Anointed was courting the just anger of Heaven. The Roundhead boldly declared that the only rightful sovereign of the people was the people, and that the king was but a nominee, liable to be dismissed if he failed in his duty to his subjects. The Cavalier looked upon the clergy of the Church of England as holy men, representatives of the Deity on earth; the Roundhead Puritan scornfully swept aside priest and prayer-book and ceremonial, and fiercely asserted the right of every man to approach the throne of God without any human intermediary. The wealthy aristocrats who followed the

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king imagined that the high places in Church and State had been reserved for them by a kindly fate ; they were disillusioned by a middle-class yeoman—brewer, according to some accounts—who sent a former tailor to arrest the king, and a one-time drayman to “ purge ” the House of Commons. Cromwell and his Ironsides had never heard the Liberal name, but they were imbued with the truly Liberal belief in the essential greatness of the common man, the comparative worthlessness of such things as wealth and rank and birth.

We see the same spirit at work after the Restoration of 1660. When society was divided over the proposal to exclude the Duke of York from the succession, the partisans of the Duke were opposed by a party which put expediency before legitimacy. “ Our liberties,” said Shaftesbury in effect, “ our liberties will not be safe under a Catholic king ; let us put aside, therefore, the natural heir and choose a sovereign who will rule, not by right of birth, but by parliamentary title. Thus the interests of the Crown will be bound up with the maintenance of the Constitution and the retention of our present liberties.” The Whig leader was overruled, as we have seen ; but at the Revolution in 1688 his party scored a great and decisive victory, and gave the divine right of kings its death blow.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. But the divine right of aristocrats to govern has had a very much longer life, and perhaps is not yet quite dead. It owes its long-continued existence, no doubt, to the fact that many generations passed away before it was made the subject of party warfare. All during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and well on into the nineteenth, the great Whig and Tory houses shared the government of the country between them. Until the passing of the

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Reform Bill of 1832 Parliament represented only a very small proportion of the people. The number of electors did not amount to half a million in the whole of the United Kingdom, and nearly half of the seats in the Commons were at the disposal of wealthy patrons, many of whom had seats by right of birth in the House of Lords. It was estimated in 1793 that fewer than two thousand persons, mainly great peers and landowners, could secure a majority in the House if they combined together for the purpose. Under such conditions the great mass of the people was practically unrepresented in Parliament ; one class, and one class alone—the class of wealth and rank—could be sure of having its grievances heard and redressed.

As early as 1654 Cromwell had contemplated the abolition of the “ rotten boroughs ” (i.e. boroughs which still retained the right of returning members to Parliament although the number of persons they contained entitled to vote had shrunk to almost nothing), and the extension of the franchise to all who possessed property of the value of £200 ; but at the Restoration schemes for reform were given short shrift, and for nearly two hundred years more Parliament remained the monopoly of the few. Pitt in 1785 brought in a bill providing for the extinction of the “ rotten boroughs,” but the time was still not ripe ; the bill was rejected, and Pitt abandoned the project for good. Then came the long twenty-two years’ war with France, followed by fifteen uneasy years of peace, years marked by misgovernment and oppression. Suddenly, in 1830, the long Tory reign came to an end, and the Whigs, henceforward known as Liberals, took up the reins of office. Amongst the first acts of Lord Grey’s ministry was the introduction of a reform bill, which after two years of fierce controversy became law in 1832. By its

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provisions 143 members were taken from the "rotten" and nomination boroughs—boroughs, that is, where M.P.s were nominated by the chief landed proprietors who in effect owned them—and given to the counties and the new towns which had sprung up in the course of the Industrial Revolution; and at the same time the electorate was enlarged to nearly a million.

For over thirty years the question of further reform was in abeyance, but in 1866 Mr. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Russell's Liberal government, introduced a bill proposing to extend the franchise very considerably in both town and country. The bill was rejected, the cabinet resigned, and Lord Derby formed a Conservative ministry in its place, with Mr. Disraeli as his Chancellor and Leader of the House of Commons. Parliament was not dissolved, however; there was still a Liberal majority in the House, and the demand for reform continued unabated. Disraeli, with his usual sagacity, was quick to realize that the demand must be met, and saw no reason why the Conservatives should not reap whatever advantages were to be derived from its satisfaction. He decided to "dish the Whigs"—although in somewhat similar circumstances twenty years before he had attacked Sir Robert Peel, the Conservative premier, for having "caught the Whigs bathing and walked away with their clothes"—and introduced a bill far more radical in scope than that which had been sponsored by Gladstone a few months before. The bill was altered considerably in committee; but in the end, supported as it was by men of both parties, it passed into law, thereby increasing the electorate to about two and a half millions. In 1884, during Mr. Gladstone's second ministry, another reform bill was put on the statute book, enfranchising some three millions,

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the chief class affected being the agricultural labourers. Then by the Representation of the People Act, 1918, the Coalition government, headed by a Liberal premier and supported by a Liberal majority in the Commons, increased the number of electors to some twenty-one millions, including for the first time a number of women ; and finally in 1928 the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act, passed by Mr. Baldwin's Conservative government, gave a parliamentary vote to practically every man and woman on reaching the age of 21. Nearly twenty-nine million citizens were thus possessed of the right to vote, and by 1945 there were some thirty-three million names on the register.

It will be seen that the Acts of 1832 and 1884 were passed by Liberal governments, and those of 1867 and 1918 by Parliaments in which there were Liberal majorities in the Lower House. To the Liberal party, therefore, must be ascribed the honour of having democratized the franchise, of having made it possible for the middle and lower classes to take a share in the government of the country. As bill after bill has passed into law the powers of the privileged have steadily diminished, until to-day, when every adult man and woman has the vote, there is nothing—at least in theory—to prevent the carrying into effect of the popular will. In theory—for under our present system of election it is possible, indeed it frequently happens, that a member of Parliament is returned by a minority of voters ; and what is still worse, that a government wields the full powers of the State when in fact it does not command the confidence of a majority of the electorate. We have nowadays universal adult suffrage ; we have not yet got the machinery for ensuring that the will of the majority shall prevail, still less that

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minorities shall be fairly represented in the Commons according to their voting strength.

Time after time in recent years governments have obtained office as the result of a general election in which though they won a majority of seats they did not have a majority of votes. It was so in 1924, when the Conservatives, with a little under half the total votes cast, won just over two-thirds of the seats, and again in 1929 when Labour, though returned as the largest single party with 287 seats, polled rather fewer votes than the Conservatives with 260 seats. It is always the case that the number of seats won by any particular party is not proportional to the number of votes cast for its candidates throughout the country. Thus, in 1931 the National Government candidates, polling 14,500,000 votes as against not quite half of that number polled by the Opposition, secured 556 seats out of 615 ; and in 1935 the National candidates secured 431 seats in return for rather fewer than twelve million votes, while the other parties, though polling rather more than ten million votes, had to be content with 184 seats.

Liberals are more resentful of this state of affairs than either Conservatives or Socialists because of the unfortunate position in which they find themselves as the third party in a political system which works satisfactorily only when there are two parties—the Government and the Opposition. The most obvious way of remedying the situation is the elimination of the Liberal party, and there are many in the camps of its rivals who think that this is bound to come sooner or later. Socialists are inclined to look on Liberalism as a back number, and it is a fact that most of the causes with which it was identified in the past are no longer subjects of debate and conflict, that most of the things for which the historic Liberal party fought

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so strenuously are now on the statute book. Far better, then, urge the Socialists, that all the progressively-minded should join together in the Labour party, and so ensure that reform shall be steady and continuous. Conservatives, too, think that modern Liberalism has no sufficient *raison d'être* and complain of Liberal candidates "splitting the constitutional vote." The Conservative party of to-day, they argue, is really liberal without the capital letter ; it has received so many Liberal recruits—Winston Churchill is one of them—that it has been definitely liberalized.

Many Liberals since the rift in the party resulting from the establishment of the Lloyd George coalition in 1916 have themselves come to think along similar lines, and have transferred their political allegiance to one or the other of the great rival parties. But a nucleus of the Liberal party has persisted in keeping the old flag flying. They have refused to be absorbed ; they have refused to admit there is no place for Liberalism in the modern age. True, they say, most of the things for which our party fought in the past have now been won ; but in a world distracted with nationalistic hatreds, impoverished by tariffs, and in which millions are denied any measure of economic liberty and independence, there is more than enough to keep Liberals busy for years to come.

Having claimed the right to continued existence, they go further and demand that the political machine shall be so altered as to permit of the Liberal voice being effectively heard. The old two-party system worked well enough in its time, says the Liberal ; the "swing of the pendulum" ensured that each party in turn had its share of office and responsibility, its chance of putting its theories and programme into effect. But the emergence and rapid growth of the Labour party has produced an

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entirely different state of affairs. The third party—which to-day is the Liberal—stands very little chance of ever attaining office. Nay, more, under our present electoral system of single-member constituencies there is a very small chance of the Liberals winning any appreciable number of seats, or a number that is at all proportional to the number of Liberal votes cast in the election as a whole. In 1924, for instance, only thirty-four Liberal M.P.s were returned although 3,008,097 voters voted for Liberal candidates, while 142 seats were won for Labour with 5,483,088 votes and 382 seats by Conservatives with 7,450,990 votes. Or, put in another way, one M.P. was elected by 19,505 Conservatives, 38,613 Socialists, and 88,473 Liberals respectively. In 1935 the corresponding figures were roughly 27,000, 54,000, and 81,000, and in 1945 46,000, 30,000, and 170,000.

This sort of thing is a grave reflection on our Parliamentary system, argues the Liberal spokesman, and cries aloud for remedy. As long as it is allowed to continue, it is absurd to pride ourselves on our democracy, the very first principles of which are so completely violated. Hence Liberals, ever since the Great War at least, have never ceased to put in the forefront of their programme proposals for the amendment of our electoral system by the application of the principle of Proportional Representation. There are many variations of "P.R.," but the one favoured by the Liberal party of to-day is what is known as the single transferable vote, and it would be used in both parliamentary and local government elections. Each voter would have, as now, only one vote, but he would have the right of indicating the order of his preference among the several candidates by putting the figures 1, 2, 3, etc., after their names. If the candidate of his first choice does not need his vote—i.e.

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has already obtained sufficient votes to secure election or is hopelessly relegated to the bottom of the poll—then the vote will be transferred to the second choice, and so on until the required number of members has been elected.

By the adoption of this method, or of some other variation of Proportional Representation, Parliament might be made a much fairer reflection of political opinion in the country. If that were done, then Liberals feel that, so far from disappearing as a party, it would be found that they would be able to play a very important and useful part in the management of the nation's affairs.

If and when the Liberal revival comes, it may be confidently expected that it will have Free Trade as its rallying cry. For a hundred years Free Trade has been the principal plank in the platform of the Liberal party, and to-day belief in Free Trade is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Liberal. Almost to a man Liberals are faithful to their old love ; they still hold fast to the fiscal teaching of their greatest leaders, Cobden and Bright, Gladstone and Asquith. If it were not for this persistent belief in the Free Trade gospel, the task of the Liberal stalwarts would have been even harder than has actually been the case, and many more Liberals would have become left-wing Conservatives or right-wing Socialists. As it is, there is still a very large body of opinion among the electorate who are convinced of the economic advantages of a policy of open markets ; and this being so, they are naturally concerned that the only party which stands for and by Free Trade should continue to exist as a fighting organization. For Conservatives in the 1930's were definitely and openly Protectionists, while the Socialists view the fight between Free Trade and

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Protection as belonging to an old and out-of-date order of political ideas.

FREE TRADE *v.* PROTECTION. Since 1932 Britain has been a Protectionist country, and it may be thought, therefore, that a discussion of Free Trade *v.* Protection is of little practical importance. The fact however, that the Liberal party is still wholeheartedly for Free Trade and is pledged to do all in its power to secure a reversal of protectionist legislation at the earliest possible moment—not all at once, of course, but as and when opportunity offers—makes it necessary for all who would be politically well-informed to have at least a nodding acquaintance with the principal arguments advanced by the one side and the other.

What, then, in the first instance, is meant by Free Trade? Reduced to its simplest form, it may be stated as the freedom of commercial intercourse between nations, unhampered by governmental restrictions. In a country which has adopted Free Trade to the full extent, colonial and foreign produce is treated by the State authorities in exactly the same way as home produce of the same kind. There are no financial arrangements intended to direct the flow of commerce into certain approved channels, no taxes imposed on imports from foreign lands which are not also imposed on goods of the same description produced at home, no preferential treatment of colonial goods, and no bounties to encourage the export of particular commodities. It is realized, of course, that the state of the national finances may make it necessary to raise money by taxes on imports and exports, but if such taxes are imposed they must be so arranged that they only produce revenue and do not constitute differential treatment of goods proceeding from particular sources. Thus the tax on tea was not

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considered to be an infringement of the principle of Free Trade, for tea is not produced in England, and the tax was levied solely with a view to the revenue to be obtained from it. The tax on imported steel, on the other hand, has been denounced by Free Traders as a most decided infringement of the principle, and has been strongly opposed on the ground that its object is not the raising of money but the favouring and bolstering-up of the home producer.

All trade, it may be supposed, is carried on with a view to the mutual benefit of the parties concerned in it, but generally speaking its chief object is the satisfaction of the consumer, for it is he who acts as paymaster. Free Trade, so Liberals claim, is the best means yet devised for supplying the consumer with what he requires, in the largest quantity, at the lowest price. Under Free Trade, goods tend to be produced where they can be produced most advantageously, and prices are kept as low as possible because every producer is exposed to the competition of all the other producers in the same line of business, both at home and abroad.

So much is admitted, even by those who favour the opposite system, that of Protection. The Protectionist, generally a member of the Conservative party, admits that Free Trade may oftentimes result in a plentiful supply of cheap goods, but he goes on to maintain that cheapness is not the only or even the most important thing to be considered. Cheap goods may prove to be dear goods, when they are produced by sweated labour in insanitary and demoralizing surroundings. The price expressed in terms of money may be low ; expressed in terms of flesh and blood it may be so high as to be incalculable. Human beings, he declares, are often exploited in order that the consumer may be saved a

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shilling or two—just as industrially-undeveloped and economically-backward countries tend to be exploited by their better-equipped neighbours. The sweated worker sacrifices his strength of body and mind in return for a miserable pittance ; the sweated country, England, for instance, sells its natural resources to a greedy world at cut-throat prices. Then there are certain industries, “key industries” as they are called, which are of such vital importance that the safety of the State demands that they shall be carried on within its boundaries. The Protectionist cites agriculture and the chemical industry as cases in point. Britain to-day is not a self-supporting country as regards food : a fact which was brought home to us during the two World Wars. How much better it would be, he argues, if we grew all, or at any rate a very large part, of our food at home ! Chemicals, too, are vastly important, for as years go by war is likely to become “chemicalized” more and more. Surely it is worse than folly to allow foreign manufacturers, probably subsidized by their own governments, to drive out our manufacturers from such an important field ! But it is in the Dominions and colonies that the Protectionist arguments meet with the readiest acceptance and are most infrequently acted upon. In “new” countries most industries are, of course, in the embryo stage ; and unless they are carefully “nursed” by the government—unless, that is, they are protected from foreign competition by heavy import duties—it is very probable that many industries would never be started at all, and many more would never reach maturity. Then the Protectionist puts yet another side of his case. It is surely only right and proper, he urges, that the British worker, with his comparatively high standard of living, should be protected against the competition of the foreign worker, whose

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standard of life is frequently deplorably low. Failing international standardization of wages, hours, and conditions of labour, there is surely something to be said for the view that just as we have tried to drive the sweater out of business, so we should try to penalize a sweating nation by excluding its products.

Hence the Protectionist advocates the imposition of duties to check or regulate the flow of imports, the granting of bounties on approved exports, and the admission of British Empire goods at a cheaper rate of duty than that charged on goods of the same kind coming from countries outside.

But the Free Trader is not silenced. It is doubtless possible to prove, he rejoins, that from the point of view of abstract theory a particular country, in particular circumstances of time and place, would benefit from a policy of Protection, but in practice it is generally found that the disadvantages of such a policy considerably outweigh its advantages. Duties on imports and bounties on exports are bound to result in higher prices for the consumer, for otherwise there would be no point in making them. Admitted, they may possibly benefit a particular class of producers, but this is, in effect, the taxation of the whole community in the interests, real or supposed, of a favoured minority. Sweated goods are an abomination; but what guarantee have we, he asks, that if they are excluded from our shores our own manufacturers will produce similar goods under better conditions? More often than not the consumer, deprived of the foreign-made article, finds that the home-made article is either decidedly inferior or is not forthcoming at all. Foreign competition is the spur that drives on our manufacturers to devise new methods of production, to discover for themselves new markets for their products.

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Without it they will almost certainly tend to amble along in the old, well-tried paths, quite contented with the market secured them by a benevolent State.

Then, too, Protection tends towards the creation of "vested interests" and national and international trusts, cartels, and monopolies. Masters and men in a protected industry combine together to obtain the highest possible price for their productions, and in so doing fleece the consumer, who, deprived of the shield of foreign competition, is practically at their mercy. Politics and industry become closely intertwined; rival groups of business magnates fight each other in Parliament in order to obtain the greatest measure of protection for the trades in which they are interested. To the Liberal, this intermixture of politics and business is highly objectionable. He agrees—none more heartily—that the State has many duties to perform; but the regulation of our foreign trade is not one of them, and the attempt to do so is bound to end in disastrous failure. Even in medieval days, he points out, the State found it very difficult to control the commerce of the nation; how immensely more difficult is the task to-day, when trade has assumed such huge dimensions and is carried on in such a variety of ways! Then as regards the safeguarding of key industries, would it not be far better, he asks, if we paid less attention to our requirements for the next war and did all in our power to ensure that another great war shall never come? Trade is the most powerful instrument yet discovered for the breaking down of international barriers, for dispelling ignorance of other nations, for linking up the whole world by chains of common interest. Throw down your barriers, he says to those countries that have surrounded themselves with ring-fences of protective duties; forget your insane

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jealousies, your silly fears, drop your ideas of a self-centred nationalism, and take the whole world for your market !

The general result of Protection, continues the Liberal Free Trader, can only be to hamper trade ; for inasmuch as a nation can pay for its imports in no other way than with its exports, if the former are restricted the latter must inevitably decline. Britain under Free Trade made rapid and continuous strides along the path of progress, and attained to a degree of wealth and prosperity undreamed of by our forefathers. The adoption of a policy of Protection must, sooner or later, stay the progress and lead to a retrogression. Diminished imports must mean diminished exports ; diminished trade, a reduction in the standard of living of the great mass of the people. Far better, then, he concludes, if instead of reverting to the policy our great-grandfathers found wanting and abandoned, we had continued to put our trust in a policy which, more than anything else, gave Britain her commanding position in the world.

As for that, the Protectionist rejoins, if appeal is made to history it will be found that the governments of England pursued a protectionist policy with but brief intervals from the time of Edward III, and that Free Trade was adopted only during those brief periods when the central government was not sufficiently strong, or too preoccupied with other matters, to concern itself with the economic welfare of its people. Elizabeth was a protectionist ; quite early in her reign she forbade the importation of finished goods from abroad which might be made at home, and also the export of raw materials which might have been made up by English hands. Cromwell, too, was of the same persuasion ; witness his determined measures aiming at the encouragement of English shipping and the suppression of the commerce

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and maritime supremacy of our chief rivals, the Dutch. For another hundred years the wisdom of a protectionist fiscal policy was hardly challenged, so justified was it in everyone's eyes by its fruits. Not until the publication of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" in 1776, in which he advocated the abolition of all the old restrictions on trade—and also on labour—was it hardly imagined there might be another side to the question. Then the academic arguments of the Glasgow professor of Moral Philosophy were reinforced by the pushful manufacturers who resented the limitations put on their activities by the antiquated labour and commercial code drawn up at a time when very different conditions prevailed. In the first flush of the Industrial Revolution our men of business felt fully capable of doing without any kind of government assistance or regulation; but in their scramble for markets, their rush to "get rich quick," they often forgot the best interests of the nation and sacrificed everything and everybody save themselves on the altar of cheapness.

But the Liberal is still unconvinced. "The legislation of which you have spoken," he tells the Protectionist, "though doubtless inspired by patriotic motives, was based on one of the silliest and most pernicious ideas in the whole history of economic theory—the idea that it is money alone that enriches a country and that the commercial policy of the government should be directed towards obtaining a 'favourable balance of trade' by importing as little as possible of goods from overseas and exporting as much as possible of its own country's produce, so as to obtain more money than is paid away." "One would have thought," he continues, "that this 'Mercantile Theory' had been sufficiently disproved and discredited a hundred years ago, when in 1846 the Liberals

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of the day, thoroughly convinced themselves of the protectionist fallacies, at length compelled the Conservative government of Sir Robert Peel to throw open the ports to foreign corn and so initiate the great and prosperous era of Free Trade." Re-reading the speeches of those days, tracing over again the fortunes of the Anti-Corn Law League, directed with such conspicuous ability by Cobden and his chief lieutenant, John Bright, the Quaker, the Liberal finds fresh inspiration for the fight which circumstances have thrust upon him. Britain in a few weeks in 1932 ceased to be a Free Trade country and became quite definitely protectionist. The battle was short and sharp, and the result decisive, but Liberals have Free Trade "in their bones" to such an extent that they refuse to accept the settlement as being permanent, and are persuaded that their party can make no greater contribution to human welfare than to fight all over again the battle for freedom of commercial intercourse between the nations of the world.

Tariffs and quotas and all the other mechanism of trade restriction are hateful to the Liberal. We live in a world of potential plenty, he argues, yet the masses of the people in every land are sunk in poverty and are denied the wherewithal to buy the goods they so urgently need. Throw down the barriers that divide nation from nation, encourage production where the conditions are most favourable, abandon the pernicious idea of making each country, even Britain, completely, or largely self-supporting, and this "economic disarmament" will be followed by a degree of universal prosperity such as is now hardly dreamed of!

WORLD PEACE. Perhaps it is because he is such a believer in Free Trade that the Liberal is an ardent internationalist, or it may be that it is because he is so

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keen an internationalist that he is convinced of the virtues of a policy of open markets. The Conservative is inclined to pride himself on his insular or imperial patriotism ; the Socialist, though in theory a strong internationalist, in practice usually tends towards a policy of nationalism. Liberals, however, believe that no nation to-day can live unto itself alone—that the whole world is interdependent and is becoming more and more so day by day, notwithstanding tariffs and other attempts at achieving national self-sufficiency. They are among the strongest opponents of imperialist jingoism, and have usually taken the lead in all proposals aiming at disarmament and the settlement of differences by arbitration. The League of Nations received the unstinting allegiance of every Liberal, and from 1919 to 1939 the party insisted that the support and strengthening of the League should be a basic principle of British foreign policy. Most Liberals were severely critical of the “ appeasement ” policy of the Chamberlain government, and welcomed every scheme for the establishment of a world order based on justice and armed with the means of seeing that justice shall triumph. The failure of the League of Nations to prevent the World War was a heavy disappointment, but the United Nations Organization has the full support of Liberals everywhere.

Now let us turn to the sphere of social reform, in which, as might be expected from the party which represented so long the progressive principle, Liberalism has been extremely active.

SOCIAL REFORM. A hundred years ago the typical Liberal was a firm believer in *laissez-faire*—the doctrine expounded by Jeremy Bentham and the other “ Philosophic Radicals ” and Utilitarians that the State should concern itself as little as possible with business and

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economic matters generally, since unrestricted competition and enlightened self-interest would inevitably produce the maximum of good. As the result of this policy became apparent, however, in the shape of degraded masses struggling to exist on starvation wages, the multiplication of pestiferous slums, and the driving to the bankruptcy court of most of those employers who had any concern for anything save the making of profits for themselves, Liberals, in common with many Conservatives, began to see in State action a means of remedying the all too obvious maladjustment and malpractices of the economic and social systems.

All through the nineteenth century and, indeed, right up to the outbreak of war in 1914, hardly a year went by without the legislature encroached still farther on what had before been regarded as the sphere of individual action. In a thousand ways the State came to concern itself with the life of the citizen, both as producer and consumer. Hours of labour, wages, and conditions of work were regulated on the one hand, while on the other a long series of enactments aimed at securing a pure food supply, a reasonably high standard of housing accommodation, and the provision of drainage and sanitation, water and gas services, and cheap travel facilities. And so far from the tide of social—some would say, socialistic—legislation ebbing with the years, the last Liberal government, which endured from 1905 until the second year of the Great War, was marked by a number of novel and far-reaching experiments in Social Reform—National Health Insurance, for instance, Trade Boards, and Labour Exchanges.

The earlier Liberals would have been horrified at many of the things their successors have done in the name of Liberalism, and usually there have been those in the

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party itself who have protested with angry vehemence against each new departure from the old principle of *laissez-faire*. Nevertheless, Liberals have played by far the greatest part in the modern promotion of State action in internal affairs.

At first sight it may appear strange that the party which has so prided itself in the past, and still does so to-day, on its concern for individual freedom should have worked so strenuously to extend the functions of the State. Liberals maintain, however, that throughout they have been inspired by a regard for their fundamental tenet. They have accepted—nay more, encouraged and advocated—contraction of individual liberty in certain directions only in order that they might win for men a greater and more worth-while freedom in other directions. They have not worked for the intervention of the State in every walk and department of life, but they have tried to arrive at the happy mean.

As long ago as 1846 Lord Macaulay, the great Whig historian, said in a speech in the Commons on the Ten Hours Bill, "I hardly know which is the greater pest to society, a paternal government, that is to say, a prying meddlesome government, which intrudes itself into every part of human life, and which thinks that it can do everything for everybody better than anybody can do anything for himself ; or a careless, lounging government, which suffers grievances, such as it could at once remove, to grow and multiply, and which to all complaints and remonstrance has only one answer : ' We must let things alone : we must let things take their course : we must let things find their level ' " ; and he went on to declare that there is no more important problem in politics than to draw correctly the line which divides those cases in which it is the duty of the State to inter-

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fere from those in which it is its duty to abstain from interference.

The Liberal view of the matter is that the State can do many things which the individual cannot do, or at least cannot do so well ; but it would be nothing less than disastrous if it should attempt to do all that the Socialists would have it do—to organize and carry out, that is, the whole of the operations of production, distribution, and exchange. In so complex a society as ours, Liberals urge, such a task is quite beyond the capacity of any government, even the most powerful and able ; and even if it were otherwise it would be the height of madness to supersede the system of private enterprise which has proved so beneficial in the past, though admittedly it has been, and is, marked by many defects. But these defects can be cured without the killing of the patient. The State, in other words, should regulate, rather than actually own and operate, the great industries of the country—the industries which partake of the nature of natural monopolies or may be classed as public utilities. As for the great mass of small industries and businesses of every description, generally speaking they are much better left as far as possible in the hands of companies and individuals who experience in themselves the benefits of enterprise and the spur of adversity.

The last Liberal government left office in 1915 at the formation of the first Coalition, and the formation of the Lloyd George ministry in the next year caused so profound a split in the party ranks that ever since Liberalism has played but a small part in the government of the country. Despite its banishment from office, however—perhaps because of it—the faithful remnant who believe that the party's task is not yet accomplished have devoted much time and thought to the application

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of Liberal principles to the solution of the most pressing problems of the day. The Land and the Towns, the Mines and Industry, became the subject of careful investigation ; and the conclusions of the several inquiries, embodied in famous Reports in the 1920's, have been incorporated in large measure in the officially-adopted programme of the party. This is not the place to recapitulate or review the contents of the "Green," "Brown," and "Yellow" books, or of their numerous successors, but it may be said that in all is expressed the belief in the virtue of private enterprise, regulated by the State in the interests of the whole community.

Quite definitely, Liberals seek to move along the industrial middle road, avoiding with equal care the extremes of Individualism and Socialism. They are not worshippers at the shrine of Private Enterprise, nor do they bow their heads in the Socialist temple, reciting the credo, "I believe in Nationalization . . ." The god they serve is Liberty, and its worship has no prescribed form. Confronted by a choice of organizations or of methods, the Liberal refuses to be guided by purely theoretical considerations, but asks himself, which organization, which method, is most expedient in the circumstances ; which is most likely to produce the best results expressed in terms of human happiness and liberty? Often he comes to the conclusion that an extension of the State's activities is both desirable and possible. The State, according to the Liberal philosophy, exists for the purpose of securing peace, justice, liberty, and social security for all its citizens ; and with these ends in view Liberals propound a comprehensive programme of social and economic change, involving in the first place a vigorous development of our natural resources and reconditioning of the nation's capital equipment. Then

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when the product of industry has been enormously enlarged, its division is to be effected on better and fairer lines than those which prevail at present. Profits are to be limited, profit-sharing schemes encouraged, and a minimum wage decreed for every industry. The taxation of the wealthy is to be still further increased, and some restrictions placed on the right of inheritance ; but although plutocrats are looked at askance, the small capitalist is to be helped and encouraged in every possible way. The multiplication of property-owners, indeed, is one of the aims of the Liberal policy ; it seeks the diffusion of wealth amongst the mass of the people, instead of it being so largely concentrated in the hands of a small minority. The Socialist remedy, the vesting of all ownership in the State, would be worse than the disease ; the Liberal party's aim is to "abolish the proletariat and make all men owners." But material prosperity is not everything, and it is generally realized that lack of status on the part of the worker is responsible for almost as much discontent as low wages and long hours. This the Liberal proposes to remedy by substituting industrial co-operation for the present distrust and antagonism of employers and employees. "Workers' Control" is not contemplated, but nevertheless the worker is to be very much more than a cog in the industrial machine.

So the Liberal physician proceeds with his prescriptions. "You are a bit of a humbug," says the Conservative, in effect ; "with your proposals for a new way of life you are pitting yourself against the stern and immutable laws of economics, to say nothing of smoothing the path for the revolutionary." "You are a quack," says the Socialist ; "Capitalism is a deadly disease, and you profess to cure it with pills and plasters, when what is

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really wanted is a surgical operation." But the much-criticized Liberal proceeds on his way. *Laissez-faire* he rejects as impossible and anarchic ; nationalization would lead, he thinks, to the destruction of liberty, the checking of initiative, the impoverishment of the people—at least, if it was carried out on a wholesale scale. "Give my pills a chance," he pleads, "before giving up all hope of a cure or submitting yourself to the surgeon's knife. . . ."

BEVERIDGE REPORT. A very good example of the modern Liberal philosophy is afforded by the report on Social Insurance prepared by Sir William (now Lord) Beveridge, who in his younger days was one of the chief lieutenants of Lloyd George in the launching of the first schemes of national health and unemployment insurance, and who, two years after the publication in 1942 of his report, became a Liberal M.P. "The object of government in peace and in war is not the glory of rulers or of races, but the happiness of the common man," wrote Sir William Beveridge ; and he declared his Report to be one part only of an attack upon five great evils :

Upon the physical *Want* with which it is directly concerned, upon *Disease* which often causes that want and brings many other troubles in its train, upon *Ignorance* which no democracy can afford among its citizens, upon the *Squalor* which arises mainly through haphazard distributions of industry and population, and upon the *Idleness* which destroys wealth and corrupts men, whether they are well fed or not, when they are idle

Such is Liberalism to-day. It is different, very different, from the Liberalism of the nineteenth century—often called the Liberal century, not so much on account of its social legislation as of its achievements in the political sphere. It is different from the Liberalism of the years just before the Great War, for then Liberals were fighting for such things as Home Rule for Ireland, the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, and the abolition

of the Veto of the House of Lords. These issues have been dead long since. Even in the matter of social reform, though the Liberal of the Asquithian period would find much in common with the Liberal of to-day, neither would be at home with their predecessors of the time of Cobden. Only as regards Free Trade, perhaps, has the Liberal attitude remained unchanged. The rest of the party's programme is an excellent example of that gradual and progressive evolution in which the Liberal, more perhaps than most men, is inclined to put his trust.

LIBERAL TRIUMPHS AND REVERSES. As we have seen, the Whigs—ancestors of the Liberals of to-day—were in office continuously from the death of Queen Anne to the accession of George III, nearly fifty years later. Sir Robert Walpole was the first of the Whig prime ministers ; another as great—indeed greater—was the elder William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. During the Napoleonic wars the Whigs were a small and dwindling sect, champions of democracy and parliamentary reform in an age of political repression, when to be a reformer was to court denunciation as the friend of the revolutionaries so busily working the guillotine across the Channel. But fifty years of unpopularity and exclusion from office failed to make an end of the Whigs. The spirit of Fox lived on, and in 1830 Lord Grey, one of his “ young men ”—now old, however—became premier, and launched the country on a great era of reform. The Liberals (as the Whigs were now called) were in office when Victoria came to the throne, and Lord Melbourne had as his Liberal successors Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, Gladstone—no other of our statesmen has beaten his record of four times prime minister—and Lord Rosebery. At the turn of the century the Liberals were in eclipse, but in 1906 they triumphed in one of the greatest electoral victories

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in our annals. The Liberal government of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman and of H. H. Asquith (later the Earl of Oxford and Asquith), who succeeded him on his death in office in 1908, was by common consent hardly rivalled in its brilliant membership. Asquith himself, Lloyd George, Churchill, Haldane, McKenna, Simon, Runciman, Samuel, Birrell, Burns, Morley—the last Liberal cabinet was one filled with famous names. But with the Great War the Liberals fell on evil days. They were essentially a peace party, and Asquith was no war leader. When his lieutenant, Lloyd George, drove him from office in 1916, the Liberal party was split, and in 1918 it was practically eliminated at the polls, for the Liberal supporters of Asquith had been denied the Lloyd George-Bonar Law “Coupon” that was almost an essential for victory in that heated and victory-flushed time. After the crash of the Coalition in 1922 the two Liberal bodies worked together in a not very easy union, but at the election of 1924 the Asquithian and Lloyd George Liberals were almost all defeated. Just a handful of Liberal M.P.s remained at Westminster, but it was generally realized that Liberal opinion in the country was far more widespread than its political representation would suggest. So it was that in 1931 the Liberals were accorded a considerable share in the National Government that was formed under Ramsay MacDonald and secured a striking victory at the polls. But fortune soon withdrew her smiling face. The Liberals under Sir Herbert Samuel withdrew from the government rather than agree to the abandonment of Free Trade, and there was bitter rivalry between these “Samuelites” and the followers of Sir John Simon (“Simonites”) who still supported the government. In addition there was a little party of Independent Liberals

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consisting of the Lloyd George family—the ex-premier himself, and his son and daughter. In the years just before the World War the Samuelites had become Liberals without prefix or suffix, and were led by Sir Archibald Sinclair, and on the formation of the Churchill administration their chief entered the government and they as a party gave it their full support. Yet they were careful to maintain and assert their identity. Gone were the days when the Liberal was the party of the Non-conformists, just as most Church of England folk were Conservative, when the shopkeepers and working-men voted Liberal as a matter of course. The Labour party had snatched away a great mass of their former voting strength. The “Nonconformist conscience” was no longer a political force. The middle classes were largely Conservative in their political allegiance. Yet in all classes, in every district, there were little pockets of the Liberal faithful who refused to bow the knee in the Conservative temple or the Labour meeting-hall.

At the general election held in 1945 the Liberals suffered another reverse, only twelve of their candidates being successful, although throughout the country the Liberal vote came to the not unimpressive total of two and a quarter millions. Yet in the face of this fresh disappointment, the Liberal party organization remained in being, and the Liberal gospel continued to be preached, as affording an alternative to the policies of both “Right and “Left.”

CHAPTER III

Socialism and the Labour Party

FOR a little more than two hundred years the two great historic parties had the political arena practically to themselves. From the 'eighties of the seventeenth century until the 'eighties of the nineteenth, the Whig-Liberals and the Tory-Conservative-Unionists played the two-party game of ins-and-outs in accordance with the rules which were gradually evolved and generally accepted. About 1880, however, Socialism began to grow in England; and though for a generation the older parties paid little heed to the new arrival and, indeed, had little to fear from it, the ground was being steadily prepared; and in 1906 the politicians of the older school gazed with wonder and considerable apprehension at the spectacle of a Labour party of twenty-nine seated on the benches of the House of Commons.

Since then the Labour party has made steady progress, and in 1924, and again in 1929, Labour governments took office, though in both cases supported by a minority of votes in the Commons. During the rest of the years between the wars Labour constituted the official opposition, and in 1940 it joined in the all-party administration of Mr. Churchill. Then in 1945 at the post-war general election it won 393 seats out of 640, thus securing for the first time a real majority.

Strictly speaking, the Labour party was born in 1900, when the Labour Representation Committee was formed by some of the more active workers in the Socialist ranks. But parties, like men, do not spring into the world fully

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grown ; their beginnings are to be found far back in the past, and are in general small and unpretentious.

The real origins of the Labour party defy exact discovery. The medieval agitator who asked the pertinent query—

When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman ?

was a spiritual ancestor of the modern “red.” John Ball, the “mad priest of Kent” as the landlords called him, denounced the social system in the fourteenth century as fiercely and wholeheartedly as Keir Hardie in the twentieth. All through the ages there has been present an undercurrent of revolutionary feeling. Always there have been men who refused to admit that this is the best of all possible worlds, who have scorned the idea that the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate is the last word in social organization. Generally this feeling has been kept down by force, but on occasion it has managed to burst through the thick crust of repression and has made itself both felt and heard. The Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 was one such eruption ; another was the Levellers’ movement in the days of the Commonwealth ; a third was the Chartist agitation of 1830 to 1848. The serfs who followed Wat Tyler, the soldiers who gathered about the republican Lilburne, the shopkeepers who rallied to the standard of Feargus O’Connor, all could be, and indeed have been, claimed as workers in the Socialist cause. But the claim in some cases, at least, is hard to substantiate, and on the whole it seems better to date the history of English Socialism from the activities of Robert Owen (1771–1858).

EARLY SOCIALISM. Owen was a Welshman, the son of a village saddler and ironmonger. At a very early age he was apprenticed to the drapery trade, and before he

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was thirty had won considerable success as a cotton-spinner. Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, Owen devoted his leisure and wealth to the improvement of the condition of his "hands." He was a pioneer in the work of factory reform, of education, and of co-operation. It was not long before this highly successful employer came to the conclusion that his schemes of social improvement were incompatible with the existing capitalist system, and so he set about the creation, both in Britain and in America, of little socialistic communities, consisting of groups of people who had voluntarily agreed to withdraw from the world of competition and self-seeking and live their lives in accordance with the altruistic principles of their founder. These attempts at establishing Socialism by private enterprise were, as might have been expected, uniformly unsuccessful; but the spirit of Owenism survived their collapse to win remarkable victories in other fields. The little band of Rochdale weavers who in 1844 established the first co-operative store, the parent of the co-operative organizations which to-day are to be found in all parts of the world, were soaked in Owen's doctrines and fired by his stimulating example.

After the failure of his famous community of New Harmony in the United States, Owen transferred his attention to the English trade unions, then in their infancy—they had been legalized so recently as 1824—and endeavoured to convert them to his views on the question of social organization. Owen regarded both the capitalist and the manager as superfluities, to be dispensed with at the earliest opportunity; and, still possessed with the idea of establishing Socialism by voluntary agreement, he advocated the transference to the trade unions of the whole of the business of the

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country. National Companies should be set up, he urged, one for each trade ; and all manufactures should be carried out by these Companies, who were to be responsible for their actions to the " Grand National " establishment in London. If they had been established, these " Companies " would very soon have become mere joint-stock concerns, enjoying a monopoly of their trade and subject to no kind of public control, and it need hardly be said that they were never actually started. But it may be mentioned that the word " Socialist " first came into general use during the course of the discussion arising out of the proposal.

So much of Owenism having been proved impracticable, the more ardent spirits amongst the Owenites enlisted in the ranks of the Chartists ; and for many years the " six points " of Chartism—annual parliaments, vote by ballot, manhood suffrage, abolition of the property qualification for members of Parliament, payment of M.P.s, and equal electoral districts—were the burning topics of political discussion. But although it was officered to a large extent by men who hated the " capitalist system " with an intense hatred, Chartism cannot be properly described as a Socialist movement. The real successors of the Owenites were the " Christian Socialists " of the middle years of the last century. Under the leadership of two Anglican clerics, F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley (of " Westward Ho ! " fame), they urged the necessity of reforming industry on Christian lines, and in particular advocated the establishment of co-operative associations of producers, or self-governing workshops as they were more usually called. Distributive co-operation, the co-operation of consumers, has enjoyed a long and uninterrupted period of expansion, but co-operative production is another matter. Discipline is essential in

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modern industry, and no manager can do his work properly if he knows that he may be discharged at any moment by those who are for the time being his subordinates. The innumerable little undertakings set up by mechanics, cabinet-makers, tailors, hatters, and boot-makers between 1848 and 1852 were all failures ; and the same fate, it may be added, attended the Builders' Guild established shortly after the end of the Great War in 1918.

MARX. For years after the "National Companies" and "self-governing workshops" had passed from off the stage, British Socialism appeared to be a spent force ; and the leadership in Socialist thought passed to the Continent. Karl Marx was the founder of the new school. A German Jew, the son of a lawyer in the Rhineland, Marx devoted his life to the study of economic history and social development. Expelled from Paris for his revolutionary activities, and exiled from Germany because of the part he played in the risings of 1848, he took refuge in London and spent the greater part of the remainder of his life—he died in London in 1883 and his grave is in Highgate cemetery—in the reading-room of the British Museum. Few men have had a greater influence on the course of events than this German theorist, yet during his lifetime he was without honour or recognition in his adopted country. On the Continent, however, his views met with ready acceptance ; and his chief work, *Das Kapital*, became the Bible of the "Scientific Socialists." Marx was the prophet of the new age, and with his name on their lips hundreds of devoted fanatics proceeded to wage war on autocracy and capitalism. In November 1917 they triumphed in Russia ; a year later a Marxist became the first president of the German Republic.

The principles of "Scientific Socialism" are to be

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found in the "Communist Manifesto" written by Marx in 1848 in conjunction with his friend and financial supporter Friedrich Engels. (It may be noted in passing that the "Communism" of Marx is but a synonym for Socialism.) All value, according to Marx, is created by "labour"; but a large portion of the value so created is "kept back" from the labourer by the employer. Capitalism depends for its growth and maintenance on the appropriation of this "surplus value" by the capitalist; and hence as long as it endures there must be a "class war" between the capitalists or "bourgeoisie" and the workers or "proletariat." But capitalism is doomed to perish. With the passing of time capital tends to become concentrated into fewer and fewer hands, and the workers tend more and more to be mere wage-slaves. Then when at last they realize that they have nothing to lose but their chains, the workers of the world will unite, the capitalists will be dispossessed of their ill-gotten gains, and the Socialist State will be proclaimed.

The direct influence of Marx's doctrines on the course of English political development was very slight; it is only in recent years that the indirect influence, exercised by way of Russian Bolshevism, has proved of very great importance. It is true that H. M. Hyndman in 1884 founded the Social Democratic Federation and began a vigorous Marxian propaganda; but the parliamentary candidates run by the new party were all unsuccessful. In the following year William Morris, famous as a poet and artist, started a "Socialist League" which officially adopted the Marxist creed, but he was far more concerned with combating the evil effects of capitalism in art and industry than with preaching the doctrine of the class war. Morris had little sympathy with "Scientific Socialism" indeed, and devoted all his energies to the

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revival of that love of craftsmanship which, so he believed, was one of the chief characteristics of the Middle Ages. The Social Democratic Federation had a life of some fifty years, but long before its demise it was practically moribund. A far greater part in the development of British Socialism has been played by the Fabian Society, founded in 1884 by a little group of middle-class "intellectuals"—professional men, civil servants of the higher grades, stockbrokers, journalists, and the like—all members of the "bourgeoisie" so hated by Marx. Ten years later the Independent Labour Party, better known as the I.L.P., was started by James Keir Hardie, a leader of the Scottish mineworkers and the first fully independent Labour M.P. The I.L.P. owed its origin to the conviction held by many of the younger trade unionists that a distinct and independent Labour party was essential for the achievement of their aims; and hence from its inception it worked for the dissolution of the alliance of trade unions with the Liberal party, which was a legacy of the middle years of the century. In 1899 the Trades Union Congress was persuaded to call a conference of trade unions and Socialist societies for the purpose of discussing the proposal to establish such a party; and in the following year, as a result of their deliberations, the "Labour Representation Committee" came into being. The L.R.C. was, in effect, a new party, although its representatives in the House of Commons generally supported the Liberals for many years. After the great Liberal-Labour triumph of 1906, the Committee changed its name to that of the Labour Party; and in 1918 another important step was taken when the party definitely adopted "Socialism" as its programme.

Such, in brief outline, was the development of the

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Socialist movement in Britain, the genesis of the Labour party. From history we turn now to theory. The Labour party is a Socialist party. What, then, is Socialism?

The word is in everybody's mouth. It is heard in debate in the House of Commons, in the parks, and at wind-swept street corners. It forms part of the ordinary vocabulary of the Welsh miner, the Detroit engineer, the Kharkov mechanic, the Shanghai coolie, and the "nigger" on the Rand. Yet few of the millions who speak of Socialism with such easy assurance could define the word in a way that would be assured of general acceptance.

A few years ago a Socialist writer published a book of definitions of Socialism; and there is some truth in the saying sometimes heard that there are as many definitions of Socialism as there are Socialists. Nevertheless it may be argued that the basic principle of the great majority is the same. This principle may be stated as the subordination of the individual to the community.

In accordance with this principle, Socialism may be defined as that system of society in which the means of production, distribution, and exchange are in public ownership and under public control, as opposed to the prevailing "Capitalist System," under which the great bulk of the world's wealth is in the hands of private individuals and corporations. It may be noted in passing that the adjectives "capitalist" and "competitive" are not synonymous. Of late years in particular there has been witnessed a very marked and increasing trend towards the restriction or abolition of competition, with the result that to a very large extent the industrial system is no longer competitive. It is still, however, mainly capitalist.

Both Socialists and anti-Socialists are in agreement on

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many points. Few of the latter would assert, for instance, that the pre-War social and economic organization was all that it should have been. They see with as clear a vision as their opponents that it ensured a fairly reasonable standard of comfort for a minority of the people, that it enabled a tiny handful to gratify their desires and appetites to the full, and that in the great majority of cases it did not guarantee the means of supporting life much above the subsistence level. Great masses of the people were poverty-stricken, ill-educated, under-fed, and poorly clothed. From cradle to grave they were harassed by insecurity and dogged by misfortune. They were constantly on the verge of a fearful abyss into which each year multitudes were sucked down to destruction. In all our great towns there were huge slums, in which were congregated thousands of stunted folk, deprived of comfort and culture, light and air; in every village, crowded in insanitary if picturesque cottages, there were dozens of deserving and indispensable agriculturists, striving to keep themselves and their families alive on a wage that only in war time was sufficient for a reasonable standard of living. For many years between the wars we had over two millions unemployed; for more years still we had hundreds of thousands in receipt of public assistance or "relief." Amongst those who were in work there were amazing and unjustifiable differences in pay and conditions. Those doing the really essential work of the world—scavengers, miners, railwaymen, and the like—were often the poorest paid; while "financiers," pool-promoters, "bookies," and purveyors of all kinds of luxuries, including the most vicious and anti-social, were rewarded quite out of proportion to the services they rendered. The newspapers catering for the wealthy were crammed with advertisements of fur coats and

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automobiles, town mansions and estates in the country ; the " society " columns chronicled an unending succession of dinners and dances and garden-parties ; the illustrated magazines were filled with photographs of the wealthy and leisured disporting themselves on the racecourse or a Mediterranean beach. And all the while, millions were in want—of food, of clothing, of houseroom !

Men of all parties have recognized these facts, and have deplored them. They are symptomatic of grave defects in the capitalist system. Are they essential to its working, or are they to be ascribed in the main to an imperfect human nature ?

The Socialist's answer is unhesitating. These things *are* inevitable, he asserts, so long as the means of production and distribution remain in private hands. Under Capitalism the rich have grown richer, the poor poorer. As year has followed year, wealth has become more highly concentrated. It is true that in some countries the number of small property owners is on the increase, but the individual holdings are too small to be of any real importance. It is true that in Britain the two World Wars have brought about an immense transfer of wealth and financial power. Yet it may be maintained that money still pulls the strings, that international finance is still the all-powerful arbiter of political and economic policy.

The points in the Socialist indictment are many and varied. Capitalism, it is declared, is indefensible on moral grounds—for what can be more immoral than a system in which the acquisition of money is the sole criterion of success, in which the " fittest " who survive are the greedy and unscrupulous ? It is against public policy, for it is surely unsafe for a great State to allow a handful of private individuals to control its food supply

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and its means of communication. It is economically unsound, for competition is wasteful in the highest degree and can only result in an increased price for the consumer. Under Capitalism luxuries are produced in preference to necessities, for the purchasing-power of plutocrats is greater than that of the pauperized masses. Finally, the social effects of the capitalist system are deplorable. The workless and the criminal, the vicious, the diseased, the insane—all are the products of an evil society. Change the environment, and in large measure they would all tend to disappear.

In a word, the Socialist maintains that Capitalism is a disease for which Socialism is the only cure.

But how is the principle of Socialism to be applied? What method is to be devised, what procedure is to be adopted, in order that the Socialist State may come into being?

The great majority of British Socialists believe that Socialism will come by way of evolution; those—the Communists—who put their faith in revolution are, numerically speaking, almost insignificant. The Labour party was established by men and women who believed in what Sidney Webb called the “inevitability of gradualness,” and Socialists hold that by and through it Britain will in due course be transformed into a Socialist state.

The membership of the Labour party is drawn for the most part from affiliated trade unions and Socialist societies, but like the other great political parties it is also organized on territorial lines, having in practically every constituency branches which receive into membership individual workers by hand or by brain.

The official mouthpiece of the trade unions is the Trades Union Congress, which is generally moderate in outlook. The Labour party, which acts for the unions

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in political matters, generally adopts a more advanced attitude, owing to the influence of the constituency parties and the Socialist societies affiliated to it. These latter until recently were insignificant as regards membership, but they have enjoyed a degree of power and prestige out of all proportion to their numbers, by reason of the fact that the officials of the trade unions in large part are, or have been, members of one or another of the Socialist bodies.

Until the 1930's these affiliated Socialist organizations comprised the Fabian Society, the I.L.P., and the Social Democratic Federation. The first still flourishes and wields considerable influence, although it is not perhaps quite so much in the limelight as in the days when its propaganda was reinforced by the contributions of Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, and H. G. Wells. The I.L.P. withdrew from the Labour party in 1932, on the ground that the latter was not sufficiently vigorous and definite in its fight for Socialism, and since then has followed an independent policy showing strong signs of communistic and pacifist leanings. The S.D.F. is dead. In the early 1930's a new society was formed and became affiliated—the Socialist League. This, with a membership composed very largely of ex-I.L.P. members who disagreed with its separatist policy, aimed at permeating the Labour party and the country generally with "advanced" Socialistic ideas—in other words, it hoped to play the part which the I.L.P. had played so successfully for a number of years. Before the World War, however, it had faded out.

Coming now to the Labour party's policy—which very often, it will be readily understood in view of the party's mixed composition, is the result of a considerable measure of "give and take"—we note that the party, unlike many

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of the Socialist parties on the Continent, has always stood for action along what are usually styled constitutional lines. As was pointed out just now, British Socialists are evolutionary Socialists. They regard the coming of Socialism as the ultimate flowering of democracy, to be achieved not by bullet and bomb but by the peaceful operations of the ballot-box.

As stated in the Party Constitution adopted in 1918, the Labour party exists "generally to promote the Political, Social, and Economic Emancipation of the People, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life"; and "to secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

LABOUR POLICY. The programme of the party is reviewed at each Annual Conference of delegates from the local parties and affiliated organizations, and is added to or otherwise modified as circumstances may necessitate. The main principles of Labour policy change hardly at all, however, and comparison of the programme enunciated in "Labour and the New Social Order," adopted in 1918 when the party first made its appeal to the electorate as a really national party, willing and able when called upon to take office independently of the other parties, with that contained in "Labour and the Nation" (1929), or in "For Socialism and Peace" (1934) or "Let Us Face the Future" (1945), reveals far more points of agreement than of difference.

In "Labour and the New Social Order" it was stated

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that capitalist civilization was on the verge of collapse, and that in its place Labour proposed to erect a "House," of which the "four pillars" were the universal enforcement of the national minimum, the democratic control of industry, the revolution in national finance, and the securing of the surplus wealth for the common good. It may be worth while to look a little closely at these "pillars," since the "house" of which they are the supports is still in all essentials the one favoured by the Labour planners. In 1945 began the attempt to convert the design into bricks and mortar.

The first "pillar" was declared to be the first principle of the Labour Party: the securing to every member of the community in good times and bad alike (and not only to the strong and able, the well-born or the fortunate), of all the requisites of healthy life and worthy citizenship. The worst economic and social calamity to which any community can be subjected, it was declared, is a degradation of the standard of life; and to prevent such degradation, the Labour party advocated the extension and improvement of the social and industrial legislation of the past hundred years, so as to secure for the workers by hand or by brain, men and women alike, at least the prescribed minimum of health, education, leisure, and subsistence.

The second "pillar" was a demand for the progressive elimination from the control of industry of the private capitalist, whether an individual or a joint-stock company. As a first step the party advocated the immediate nationalization of railways, mines, and the production of electrical power, to be shortly followed by that of industrial assurance. At the same time agriculture was to be revolutionized. By gradual steps the Government should resume control of the country's agricultural land, and

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ensure its utilization, not for rent or for game production or the social amenity of a small social class, not even for the securing of the greatest financial profit, but solely with a view to the production of the largest possible proportion of the foodstuffs required by the people of these islands, under conditions allowing for a good life to the rural population and complete security for the farmer's enterprise. National farms, smallholdings, municipal enterprises, and co-operative institutions were envisaged.

The revolution in national finance, the third "pillar," was a demand for a system of taxation which would yield all the necessary revenue to the Government without encroaching on the prescribed national minimum standard of life of any family whatsoever. Proposals for a protective tariff were rejected out of hand. A capital levy was advocated to reduce the enormous burden of the national debt, if not to pay it off altogether. (Here it may be remarked that this proposal was dropped when the difficulties of collection were more perfectly realized, and the post-war depression in trade made it exceedingly doubtful that the levy would be worth the making.)

Finally, the surplus for the common good involved the appropriation of the surplus wealth of the community, not to the further enlargement of existing private fortunes, but to the development of the social services, education, scientific research, and general culture.

This was the policy and the programme with which the Labour party wooed the electors in 1918; and although in the manifesto it was specifically stated that there would be a gradual development as knowledge grows and new phases of the social problem present themselves, it is interesting to note that the years have

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brought in fact no very radical change in either policy or programme. Defeated in 1918 and again in 1922, the Labour party took office at the end of 1923 as a minority government, but before 1924 was out had fallen from power and had been almost wiped out at the polls. In 1929 Ramsay MacDonald became the occupant of No. 10 Downing Street for the second time, but the years of his Labour administration were few and troubled; unemployment and international complications militated against any real progress with the erection of the Labour "house." Another disastrous defeat followed in 1931, when MacDonald, Snowden, J. H. Thomas, and other leaders of the party left it and joined the Conservatives and the Liberals in a National Government. The Labour party took a long time to recover from this defection, but the election of 1935 reversed in some measure the decisive verdict of four years earlier. The next ten years were hardly favourable to social reconstruction, however. The shadow of the Dictators fell across Europe and the world, and the greater part of the decade was spent in preparing for war and fighting what proved to be in some respects the most terrible of the great wars of history. Then came 1945, the year of victory, complete and unconditional. Nazism and Fascism lay as crumbled ruins in the dust, soon to be followed by Japanese imperialism. The great coalition of all parties that under Winston Churchill had brought the nation through its supremest trial was dissolved by mutual consent, and Mr. Churchill formed a Conservative administration, the "caretaker government," since it was to hold office only until the general election should have been held. The election took place and, in spite of the nation-wide admiration for Mr. Churchill, his government suffered a marked reverse at

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the polls. The result was the return of 393 Labour M.P.s as against 189 Conservatives. Mr. Churchill at once resigned, and Mr. Attlee became the first Labour Prime Minister to hold office in Britain with a clear majority in the House of Commons.

Now the opportunity had come to build the Labour "house" whose plans had been pigeonholed for so long. In the party's manifesto and in the political broadcasts it had been made clear that in the event of a Labour government being returned, there would be a great extension of State ownership and control. Certain industries, and those among the most important, employing armies of workers and many millions of capital, were to be nationalized, in accordance with the principles laid down in 1918 and reaffirmed so many times since. As soon as the new government was in the saddle, the plans were produced and the legislative machine was put to work on the process of nationalization. The Bank of England was the first to become State-owned; but since for many years past it had worked in the closest harmony with the Treasury, and the rate of interest paid to its shareholders had been pegged at a modest figure, the change of ownership involved little change in operation. Much more important was the nationalization of the coal mines, since it involved the transfer to the State of a great number of separate undertakings. Yet the change was effected without undue difficulty. For many years it had been realized that nationalization of the mines was as inevitable as anything may well be in politics, and the way had been already paved by the nationalization of coal royalties (i.e. the ownership of the coal itself). Henceforth the miner was not to be what he had been so often and for so long in the past, one of the lowest paid, least considered, and most frequently

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unemployed, of the manual workers ; pay, hours of work, and conditions of labour were improved with the declared intention of making him an "aristocrat of labour." Somewhat stronger was the opposition to the nationalization of the railways and of road transport. Yet other industries deemed ripe for State purchase and operation were electricity (the distribution of electrical power was already in the hands of the State), gas, the hospital and health services, and industrial insurance. Finally, the question of the land was taken in hand. Land nationalization, advocated by a certain section for a great many years, was not embarked upon, but the whole land of the country was brought under effective national control by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. Thus after nearly thirty years of constant advocacy and agitation, the leading legislative proposals of the 1918 programme were translated into fact.

TOWARDS A PLANNED SOCIETY. Yet in much of the social legislation that followed upon the World War there was a decided element of collaboration between the parties. For many years there had been agreement on the assumption by society of burdens and responsibilities that in Victorian days had been regarded as lying right outside the field of State concern. Free education, from the elementary school to the university ; school meals and milk for school-children ; subsidized housing, most of it undertaken by the local authorities as the agents of the State ; pensions, children's allowances, care and maintenance in sickness and misfortune, and full support during periods of unemployment—about these and many similar social provisions there is no great cleavage between the parties. The principle of State help for the individual citizen is one that is accepted by members of all the great political parties, as was seen by the almost universal

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welcome accorded during the War to the Beveridge Report and the national scheme of social insurance to which it gave rise. The Socialist is distinguished from the Conservative and the Liberal not so much by his choice of the road to be followed, but in the distance he is ready and desirous of travelling along it.

All parties profess a belief in "planning," but whereas the typical Labour supporter may hold that practically the whole field of human endeavour comes properly within the sphere of the State planner, the Conservative favours a national plan which will leave a great deal of scope for the individual business man and corporation, while the Liberal is concerned with the problem of reconciling a planned society with political and social liberty.

An unplanned society (says Labour) must think usually, if not all the time, of private profit. Only a planned society, one in which the instruments of production are publicly owned, can use the full resources of the nation for the benefit of the nation. Private interests were ruthlessly overridden during the Wars when the interests of the State demanded it; they must be as steadily subordinated to the public good in peace time. As Labour sees it there are four main aims. Full employment must be provided. Britain must be rebuilt to a pattern worthy of the heroic sacrifices of her people in the years of war. Social services must be organized on a level which secures adequate health, nutrition, and care in old age, for all citizens. Lastly, educational opportunities must be provided so as to ensure that to none is denied his or her share in our cultural inheritance. There is no waste to be compared with that of the potentially superior brains of the economically inferior.

So much for the Labour party itself. Now a few words

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about two of the Socialist societies, out of whose propagandist zeal it took its rise. First, the Fabian Society.

FABIANISM. Although its membership has never exceeded a few thousands, the Fabian Society has exercised an influence on political thought out of all proportion to its size, and many who have achieved distinction in other walks of life have served an apprenticeship in its ranks. Of these early Fabians mention may be made of Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells ; Annie Besant, at one time a Freethought lecturer in association with Charles Bradlaugh, but in her later years chief of the Theosophical movement and an active worker in the cause of Indian nationalism ; Graham Wallas, author of many works on politics and sociology ; Lord Olivier, one-time governor of Jamaica, and Secretary of State for India in the Labour government of 1924 ; Sidney Webb (Lord Passfield) the "English Marx," who probably did more for constructive Socialism in this country than any other man, and his wife who, as Miss Beatrice Potter, won fame as the author of a study of the English Co-operative movement, and later joined with her husband in the production of classic volumes on the history of trade unionism and local government, as well as a mighty volume on Soviet Communism ; and Clement Attlee, the first Labour Prime Minister to be backed by a great parliamentary majority.

In the main, Fabianism closely resembles the Socialism that has just been reviewed, and there is no doubt that "Labour and the New Social Order" was in large part the fruit of Sidney Webb's pen. The Fabian Society, then, like the Labour party proper, aims at the re-organization of society by the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual ownership and their vesting in the community for the general good. Fabians,

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therefore, work for the extinction of private property in land, the transfer to the community by constitutional methods and in return for reasonable compensation of all such industries as can and should be conducted socially, and the establishment as the governing consideration in the regulation of economic affairs of the common good instead of private profit. But it must be grasped that the Fabian Society is primarily a research organization. It seeks facts, not to decide policy.

People are sometimes puzzled by the Society's name. The word "Fabian" is derived from Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator—"the delayer," a Roman general and consul who, in the third century B.C., commanded the armies of the republic against the Carthaginians under Hannibal. Fabius avoided a pitched battle, but wore down the numbers and weakened the "morale" of the enemy by a series of harassing skirmishes. His policy—hence the name—is that adopted by the Fabian Society in its war against Capitalism. Fabians believe in "permeation," in making progress by taking little nibbles at the capitalist structure of society, until the day dawns when, by the "inevitability of gradualness," to quote once more Webb's famous phrase, it will be seen that Capitalism has disappeared and Socialism reigns in its stead. "Catastrophe Socialism"—the Socialism that is to be won by means of strikes and insurrections, bombs and machine-guns—finds no countenance amongst Fabians; the Socialism they envisage and have worked for so assiduously throughout the years is a form of State-collectivism in which all the more important industries shall be owned and controlled by the central and local authorities. Fabians have ever been to the fore with plans for the taking over by the State or the municipalities of gas and water works, electricity undertakings, tram-

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ways, etc., with the result that their particular school of thought has been dubbed, not unfairly perhaps, as "gas and water Socialism."

On the whole their views have been expressed with far greater precision than those of any other Socialist body. Fabians have known what they wanted, and furthermore, and perhaps as important, how to get it. The Fabian "New Jerusalem" was described in detail by the Webbs in the book, "A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain," which was published in 1920. In this two parliaments are advocated, one to deal with political questions and the other with those of an industrial description. Living by owning will gradually, through force of taxation, become a thing of the past; every citizen will be a worker, whether by hand or by brain. Co-operation is to play a very important part in the life of the nation, but the individual craftsman and the professional man will still remain. Incidentally it may be remarked that Fabians have no antipathy to personal property; in the Socialist Commonwealth planned by the Webbs individual wealth, it is suggested, would not be less but greater than at present.

It is almost impossible to over-estimate the importance of Fabianism in the development of the Labour party. From 1889, when the first volume of "Fabian Essays" was given to the world, the Society has kept up a stream of propagandist books and pamphlets—the famous "Fabian Tracts"—on political and social questions, while the wealth of talent always present within its ranks has enabled it to provide courses of lectures which have become famous and popular even in non-Socialist circles. It has never touted for members, and its personnel has been drawn almost exclusively from the middle and upper classes of the community; but it is just these classes which

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are not only the most influential but those most impervious to the ordinary Socialist propaganda. Indeed, it has been said that the greatest service rendered by the Society to the Labour movement has been the demonstration that the holding of Socialist views is quite compatible with "respectable" appearance and behaviour. The earlier Socialists were generally everything that the great middle-class detests. They were, for instance, in many cases Freethinkers, and sometimes free-lovers as well. They had no social standing, no titles, no wealth. The Fabians, on the other hand, were ultra-respectable ; so respectable, indeed, that in course of time their respectability became almost a crime in the eyes of the Socialist rank and file. Clergymen, ministers, university professors, lawyers, civil servants of the higher grades, writers, professional men—surely, it was argued, Socialism cannot be so very terrible if such people are to be found amongst its adherents !

THE I.L.P. What the Fabians did among the middle-class professional people, the Independent Labour Party performed among the politically-conscious proletariat of the towns. To-day the I.L.P. is in the wilderness, fighting not only its old enemies of the "capitalist" parties but that Labour party of which it used to be one of the most vigorous and influential sections. No study of the Labour movement would be complete, however, which did not take into account the pioneering work of the body founded in 1893 at Bradford by J. Keir Hardie, Robert Blatchford, Bob Smillie, Ben Turner, Ben Tillet, and others whose names are held in high honour in the Labour movement.

For a long time after the collapse of Owenism in the eighteen-forties there had been small talk of Socialism. The middle years of the nineteenth century were, in the main, years of comparative prosperity for the workers ;

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and Socialism tends to lose some of its attraction when trade is booming and the cupboards are full. Britain was the workshop of the world ; her ships were in every port, and her products in every home ; the good workman was almost always sure of a job. But about 1875 our industrial and commercial position took a turn for the worse. Agriculture in particular was depressed, for the invention of cold storage and the development of railways in America brought the frozen beef of the Argentine and the corn of the United States into the English market. But our manufactures, too, were affected. France and Germany, particularly the latter, although they had been handicapped for generations by reason of Britain's long start in industrialization, now showed ominous signs of great commercial activity ; and it was not long before the competition of their manufacturers and merchants was experienced in every market. There were, in consequence, short time and unemployment, strikes and lock-outs, accompanied by a revival on a large scale of the old spirits of class-consciousness and class-antagonism. Up to this time the trade unions had pinned their faith to the Liberal party ; but now, when the field seemed fairly set for a battle between Capital and Labour, many of the younger and more mentally active trade unionists began to doubt whether the Liberal was very much better than the Conservative, inasmuch as both were, as a rule, members of the same ruling, employing class.

The founders of the I.L.P. shared the doubt ; indeed, it may be said that the new party owed its origin to the conviction that it was useless to expect the Liberals to pass any really radical measures—measures, that is, whose effect would be contrary to the interests of the employers and owners. Keir Hardie and his friends succeeded in their object, for the party which they launched at

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Bradford played some years later a very prominent part in the creation of the Labour party proper, and for many years was its recognized left wing. The second and more important aim was the establishment at the earliest possible date of a Socialist Commonwealth, a social system in which land and capital should be owned by the community, and the processes of production, distribution, and exchange social functions. The I.L.P. in its Labour party days was not Marxist: it displayed little or no faith in the efficacy of revolutionary methods, meaning by revolutionary, bloody or violent; neither was it Fabian, for whereas the Fabians stood for gradual permeation of the existing parties, Conservative and Liberal, by Socialistic ideas, the I.L.P. was the visible embodiment of the belief that the cause of Socialism could best be served by an entirely independent party. It stood for democracy, both political and economic; it advocated the conversion of the "wage-slave" into a partner, and the management of each industry by the elected representatives of those employed in it. For the rest, it accepted and propagated unceasingly the programme that had been adopted by the Labour party as a whole.

In international affairs it was wont to take a strong line of its own, being definitely and pugnaciously pacifist. Led by Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden, it opposed the Great War to the utmost of its strength, and probably the majority of the conscientious objectors were in the possession of I.L.P. membership cards. Throughout it demanded a peace by negotiation, and when the policy of the "knock-out blow" triumphed at last, MacDonald, Snowden, and most of the other leaders of the party went down beneath enormous adverse majorities in the "coupon election" of 1918. It was not this perfervid, almost fanatical, pacifism, however, that

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led to the party's eclipse. In 1922 its old leaders returned to Westminster, and for some years more the I.L.P. continued to play its role of the Labour party's spear-head. When in 1924 the first Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald took office, I.L.P. hopes ran high, until the short-lived experiment came to a sudden end. Through the years of the Baldwin administration the party, led now by James Maxton, formulated plans for the coming of "Socialism in our time" which were pressed upon the second Labour government as soon as it took office in 1929. Again there was disappointment, but followed this time by disillusion. After much internecine quarrelling and splitting, the I.L.P.—or what was left of it—formally withdrew from the Labour party in 1932, and became its vigorous opponent. To-day its strength, such as it is, lies in the great industrial centres, in Yorkshire and Lancashire, South Wales, and in particular the Glasgow district.

TRADE UNIONS. The mainstay of the Labour Party are the trade unionists, and this remained true even after the electoral victory of 1945, when so many middle-class votes were cast for the party's candidates. There are rather fewer than a thousand trade unions in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but the majority are quite small, more than half of them having fewer than 500 members apiece. Only 191 trade unions are affiliated to the Trade Union Congress, but these have an aggregate membership of not far short of seven millions, out of a total of approximately eight million organized trade unionists. It is interesting to note that sixteen large unions, all affiliated to the T.U.C., have between them about three-fifths of the total trade-unionist membership.

Financially, the Labour party is largely dependent upon the contributions of the affiliated trade unions ;

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and this source of income was made very much more valuable when the Trade Disputes Act, passed in 1927 following the General Strike of the previous year, was repealed in 1946. Henceforth members of a trade union that imposed a "political levy" for the benefit of the Labour party were required to "contract out" if they did not wish to contribute, whereas the 1927 Act had decreed that it should be the normal rule that no member should be required to contribute unless he had made a specific request to "contract in."

Co-ops. As regards the Co-operative movement we have no space to tell of its romantic history, of its vast achievements and perhaps greater promise. There is a Co-operative party—established in 1917—but for years past there has been a close working alliance between the Socialist and Co-operative movements, so that when Co-operative candidates for a seat in Parliament are put forward in the constituencies it is with the approval and support of the Labour organizations. About 80 per cent. of the Co-operative membership is affiliated to the Co-operative party through their local societies, but only a small proportion of the members are politically active—as Co-operators. During the nineteenth century the majority of Co-operators were Liberals in politics, and there are still many in the societies who deplore the marriage with Labour. The Socialist State, they say, has little in common with the Co-operative Commonwealth—indeed, their basic ideas, compulsory collectivism and co-operation, are diametrically opposed. This is not the view now prevailing, however. In the Labour party and in the Co-operative movement it is generally believed that the Commonwealth of the future will be erected on the threefold basis of Socialism, Trade Unionism, and Co-operation.

CHAPTER IV

Communism

THE Communist Party, founded in 1920, is the most extreme of our political parties, since it aims at the complete overthrow of the capitalist system and its replacement by a "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Communism in the broad sense of the term was once practically universal, for primitive man shared his land and cattle, and perhaps his women as well, with the other males of his clan ; and even when barbarism had given place to the beginnings of civilization it still persisted or was revived in many parts of the world. Farming in Russia, for instance, has always been conducted on communal lines, and in England until a century or so ago a large part of the country was composed of common lands. The Essenes, the sect of Jewish ascetics to which John the Baptist very probably belonged, were communists ; and it was possibly due to their influence that the early Christians "had all things common." There have been some who have maintained that this influence was perpetuated in Catholicism, and that the medieval church was a species of communist society ; but even if the claim be disallowed there can be no doubt that many of the heretical sects that came into prominence both before and after the Reformation were essentially communistic. The medieval agitators, John Ball and Jack Cade, were communists ; so too, were the "Levellers" and the "Diggers" of the Cromwellian epoch, and those enthusiastic idealists who followed Robert Owen and peopled his settlements at Orbiston and New Harmony.

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The translation of communist ideals into practice has never been very successful, however, and we must go to the realm of fancy to discover the fine flower and fruit of the communist spirit. From the task of reforming a world grown old in sin and ugliness the eager minds of every age have willingly turned to build "New Jerusalems" in the purer air of their own imaginations. Plato and Thomas More, William Morris and H. G. Wells—these are some of those who have constructed communist Utopias as beautiful as they are well ordered, peaceful and happy.

But present-day Communists would be decidedly out of place in the Republic of Plato or the Utopia of More. They dream, not of beauty, but of mechanical efficiency, not of peace but of revolutionary ardour, not of personal happiness but of stern, uncompromising duty. "Communism to-day," Eden and Cedar Paul wrote not long ago, "signifies an organized attempt to overthrow the existing social order and to replace it by a better"; it is "a political method based upon the dictatorship of the proletariat, the soviet system, and a belief in the imminent necessity of the world revolution." Modern Communism, it is clear, is indebted far more to the teaching and practice of Moscow than to the imaginative excursions of the literary Utopians.

When in November 1917 the Bolsheviks assumed the direction of the Russian state, they promptly set about the establishment of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," a phrase coined by Marx many years before to describe the transition stage between capitalist or bourgeois and communist society, during which the government would be wielded not by the people as a whole, but by a revolutionary *élite* of class-conscious proletarians. ("Proletariat," by the by, is derived from *proletarii*, the name

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given to that class of Romans who were so poor and unimportant that they were valuable to the State only as rearers of *proles*, offspring). A government of a new kind was set up, based not upon the people's will, for that was undiscoverable, but on the bayonets of the Red Army—government not by bureaucrats but by "soviets."

Perhaps the easiest way for us to visualize the soviet organization is to imagine a system of local government, here in England, where each parish elects a council, groups of parish councils elect district councils, groups of district councils elect county councils, and finally, the county councils elect parliament. Substitute the Russian word "soviet" for the English "council"; instead of our Parliament at Westminster think of the "Congress of Soviets" at Moscow, and we have in outline the society that was established by the Bolsheviki. (Of late years it has been somewhat modified, so as to allow of direct election to the Supreme Soviet.)

But dictatorship and soviets are of quite secondary importance compared with the revolution that makes them possible. In Russia by 1922 the Revolution had triumphed over all its foes. But this was not enough. Every country in the world (it was then the belief of the orthodox Communist) must travel the Moscow road; in every country, therefore, Communists went to work, doing their utmost to hasten the glorious day of revolution. This was their first objective. Destruction, we were told, is the revolutionist's first task, for he cannot begin to build until the ground is cleared of its accumulations of capitalist and imperialist lumber.

The capitalist system must be smashed, shouted the Communist "agitator" from his soap-box on the dusty street corner. There was no question of reforming its abuses, of making it work more efficiently; it was so

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essentially evil that it should be swept away in its entirety. Capitalism was denounced as a system of exploitation, robbery, and oppression by which the vast majority of mankind is condemned to narrowing poverty, to drudgery, and to a future full of gloom and menace. It flourishes by exploitation ; it grows fat on the "surplus value" produced by its gangs of "wage-slaves." The British worker produces, on the average, the value of his week's wages in less than two days' work ; the value of the remaining four days' labour is appropriated by the "boss" and the parasitic hangers-on of the present economic system—shareholders, brokers, bankers, and greedy crowds of middlemen. None of these people plays any useful part in production, yet all have to be carried by the worker on his back.

While this system of fraud and robbery continues it is less than useless to talk about industrial peace. There is a war on, asserted the Communist, a real war, a war of rival classes. On the one hand there are the exploiters, backed up by all the forces of the capitalist state—the army, navy, and air force, the police, the Press, the Church, the great mass of the wealthy and comfortable ; on the other there stand the exploited, the toilers, the wealth-producers, the hard-working, long-suffering, much-enduring proletariat. The field is set and the battle joined ; in these circumstances only a fool can talk of a truce or a peace by negotiation. We are engaged in a fight to a finish, the Communist went on ; there must be no compromise, no weakening, no mercy. For the constitutional activities of the Labour party, therefore, he had nothing but undisguised scorn. "Do you think the capitalist will go quietly?" he asked ; "do you really believe that, even if you do get a clear majority in Parliament—a possibility which appears to be very remote—

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you will be allowed to establish that Socialist Commonwealth which you have in mind? Parliament is a sham, a 'talking-shop.' The real power is in the hands of the Press lords, the top men in the civil service, the officers of the armed forces, the aristocracy, and, in the last resort, the Crown. The moment you take in hand a really drastic measure all these forces will be arrayed against you. There will be small talk then of democracy, of parliamentary government, of constitutional methods. Threatened with the loss of their privileges and possessions, the capitalists will not hesitate to resort to force. Why, then, waste time and energy in attempting to effect a revolution by peaceful persuasion? Why not face the facts, why not become political realists—realize that if force is to be their argument *then*, it should be ours *now*?"

"Parties of illusion"—so the Communist styled his opponents.

Just as forthright was his denunciation of Imperialism. The British Empire is the logical outcome of British Capitalism, he declared, and both alike must be destroyed. He seemed to hate the great red splashes on the map which mark the countries of the Empire. For a century and more, he asserted, our government has employed British workers in the diabolical process of depriving free nations of their liberty. He declined to believe that our colonizing activities have ever been undertaken from any motive other than that of a sordid profit-seeking; he denied that we have helped or benefited the natives, save perhaps incidentally; he refused to believe that our missionaries have been inspired by the desire to spread the gospel, or that our doctors are really concerned only with the combating of sickness and disease; he laughed to scorn the suggestion that "the white man's burden" is anything more than a pious fiction, invented by an

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imperialist word-spinner. Behind the official, the missionary, the doctor, the trader, he professed to see the sinister figure of the "bloated capitalist," rich with the gains wrung from helpless Asiatics and Africans, yet greedy for still more plunder. The Empire, according to the Communist teaching of those days, is not a commonwealth of free nations but a conglomeration of slave states, originating in and held together by the desire on the part of British capitalists to possess exclusive markets for their goods, fields for investment, sources of cheap labour and raw materials. As an empire of exploitation and a source of war it should be ended at the earliest opportunity.

And when it was asked how the fortress of capitalist imperialism was to be demolished, the Communist was wont to reply that that would depend on circumstances. The Revolution might come as a result of the next great war, or it might take its rise in the chaos and confusion of a General Strike. But whenever it came, and under whatever circumstances, the Revolution would be no gentlemanly affair of resolutions and compromises. The passing of the old order and the coming of the new would be accompanied by strikes and lock-outs, street fighting and rioting, hunger, suffering, extreme discomfort, and sudden death. There would be no half measures. The motto of the revolution would be Thorough, and its object would be the establishment of a Workers' government—the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

The first concern of such a Government would be to ensure that its hold on power should be permanent, and hence it would at once arrange to arm its supporters amongst the working class, and to establish a special "Workers' Defence Corps," ready and willing to meet the counter-attack of the expropriated capitalists. Then

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supposing the Workers' government firmly installed in office, its programme would probably include : nationalization of the land, mines, railways, banks and other large-scale industries, without compensation and with workers' control ; State control of foreign trade ; a capital levy on all fortunes over £5,000, and no interest to be paid on National Debt holdings over that figure ; a national minimum wage of, say, £4 per week for all who work and a maximum 44-hour working week ; full maintenance of the unemployed at trade-union rates by the State ; declaration of independence of the colonies, and withdrawal of British troops therefrom ; and an intimate association with Soviet Russia.

This "dictatorship of the proletariat," operating by and through a Workers' government, would continue until the success of the revolution was completely and finally assured, until the capitalists had been so thoroughly repressed that they had neither the power nor the desire to attempt a counter-revolution, until the old ideas of individualism, of liberty, and of democracy, had been entirely driven out and superseded by those of an all-embracing Communism.

Then when all these things had been accomplished, the dictatorship would gradually merge into a new freedom, a freedom not of the individual but of self-governing occupational groups or soviets. A real Commonwealth of Humanity would be born—a commonwealth composed neither of classes nor of nations, but a race of disciplined freemen. Humanity would thus at last come of age.

INFLUENCE OF THE WORLD WAR. Such was the policy and programme of the British Communist party before the outbreak of the World War in 1939. Very frequently and generally it was asserted that the Communists took

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their orders, if not their funds, from Moscow. There was a bitter and unending feud between them and the Labour party, the latter resenting the way in which Communists undermined its authority in the local parties and still more in the trade unions and factories; and it may be recalled that a letter from one of the Bolshevik chiefs in Moscow—the famous and for long mysterious “Zinoviev letter” or “red letter”—contributed in tremendous measure to the smashing defeat of Labour at the general election of 1924. The Communists were the most vigorous of the left-wing parties, but only three of their candidates managed to secure election to the House of Commons before the World War—S. Saklatvala, J. T. W. Newbold, and William Gallacher—and then not at the same time. Nor was Communist popularity with the great mass of the people enhanced by its tactics at the beginning of the war in 1939. The Communist party had been most fiercely uncompromising in the struggle against Fascism, and the fights between the “reds” and Sir Oswald Mosley’s “blackshirts” of the British Union of Fascists had been taken so seriously that Parliament had passed an act forbidding the wearing of political uniforms. So it was not surprising that Harry Pollitt, the Communist spokesman, was at first inclined to view the war as an anti-Fascist crusade. But the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of August 23, 1939 created the sorest confusion in the Communist ranks. Approval of the war was withdrawn almost overnight, and the conflict of Britain and France against Germany was now described in Communist literature as one of rival imperialisms. For nearly two years the Communist party campaigned in favour of a negotiated peace, finding temporary allies in the I.L.P. But then in June 1941 there was another political somersault. The German invasion of the

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Soviet Union, the supreme object of Communist devotion, converted the British Communists into wholehearted supporters of the war effort. With undisguised relief and a happy abandon the Communist party threw itself heart and soul into the task of stimulating and sustaining the patriotic toil in the factories ; and its newspaper, the "Daily Worker," was at length permitted to reappear after its suspension by Government order in 1940.

In international politics there was a similar transformation in the Communist attitude and practice. For many years after the Russian Revolution of 1917 the Communist parties in all the countries of the world were closely linked to—indeed their activities were directed by—the leaders of the Comintern, the Communist or "Third International" with its headquarters in Moscow, while most of the Social Democrat or moderate Labour parties, including the British, were members of the Second International operating from Amsterdam. (The First International, it may be noted, was founded by Marx in 1864 but endured only to 1876. The Second International was founded in 1889, the Third in 1920. There has also been a Fourth International, founded in 1936 by the supporters of Leo Trotsky after his break with the Stalinists in Russia and his exile and final withdrawal to Mexico.) But in 1943 the Comintern was officially dissolved by the Soviet chiefs in Moscow, and its activities in the countries outside Russia—activities which were generally believed to be in the interests first and foremost of the Soviet Union, and had made for a tremendous amount of friction and ill-feeling and downright antagonism between the parties of the Left—came ostensibly to an end.

Almost the only mourners for the Comintern were the Trotskyists, who still held to their murdered master's

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belief that Communism could not possibly be established successfully in one country alone but must have a continent, if not the whole world, as its stage. In the result the actual effect on Communist propaganda was not very marked, since in all the countries under the Nazi yoke the Communists formed some of the most vigorous and undaunted of underground "partisans" and "men of the maquis"; and when each country was liberated the Communists came out into the open and secured a large measure of popular support, and in many countries took a hand in the government.

The marked change in the Communist party in Britain during the War was carried over into the peace. From being the spearhead of a bloody revolution it developed along constitutional lines. Indeed, the differences between it and its old rivals and foes of the Labour party seemed to be resolved into a matter of degree and no longer of basic principle. At this stage in its history the Communist party revealed itself simply as the most "left" of the parties endeavouring to secure the support of the British masses. But as the World War receded into history, the two surviving really Great Powers, Soviet Russia and the U.S.A., were ranged ever more obviously and tragically as the opposing champions of "capitalism" and "communism." In 1947 the "Cominform," an organization which seemed to many to be the Comintern under a new name, was established with its headquarters in Belgrade, and the Communist parties in every country turned to Moscow for guidance and inspiration.

APPENDIX A

PRIME MINISTERS SINCE 1721

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Party</i>
1721	Sir Robert Walpole	Whig
1742	Lord Carteret	"
1744	Henry Pelham	"
1754	Duke of Newcastle	"
1756	William Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle	"
1762	Earl of Bute	Tory
1763	George Grenville	Whig
1765	Marquess of Rockingham	"
1766	William Pitt, Earl of Chatham	"
1767	Duke of Grafton	Tory
1770	Lord North	"
1782	Marquess of Rockingham (2)	Whig
1782	Earl of Shelburne	"
1783	Lord North (2)	Coalition
1783	William Pitt the Younger	Tory
1801	Henry Addington (Viscount Sidmouth)	"
1804	William Pitt (2)	"
1806	Lord Grenville	Coalition
1807	Duke of Portland	Tory
1809	Spencer Perceval	"
1812	Earl of Liverpool	"
1827	George Canning	"
1827	Viscount Goderich (Earl of Ripon)	"
1828	Duke of Wellington	"
1830	Earl Grey	Whig
1834	Viscount Melbourne	"
1834	Sir Robert Peel	Conservative
1835	Viscount Melbourne (2)	Whig
1841	Sir Robert Peel (2)	Conservative
1846	Lord John Russell (Earl Russell)	Liberal
1852	Earl of Derby	Conservative
1852	Earl of Aberdeen	Coalition
1855	Viscount Palmerston	Liberal
1858	Earl of Derby (2)	Conservative

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Party</i>
1859	Viscount Palmerston (2)	Liberal
1865	Earl Russell (2)	"
1866	Earl of Derby (3)	Conservative
1868	Benjamin Disraeli	"
1868	W. E. Gladstone	Liberal
1874	Benjamin Disraeli (Earl of Beaconsfield) (2)	Conservative
1880	W. E. Gladstone (2)	Liberal
1885	Marquess of Salisbury	Conservative
1886	W. E. Gladstone (3)	Liberal
1886	Marquess of Salisbury (2)	Conservative
1892	W. E. Gladstone (4)	Liberal
1894	Earl of Rosebery	"
1895	Marquess of Salisbury (3)	Conservative
1902	A. J. Balfour	"
1905	Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman	Liberal
1908	H. H. Asquith	"
1915	H. H. Asquith	Coalition
1916	D. Lloyd George	"
1922	A. Bonar Law	Conservative
1923	Stanley Baldwin	"
1924	J. Ramsay MacDonald	Labour
1924	Stanley Baldwin (2)	Conservative
1929	J. Ramsay MacDonald (2)	Labour
1931	J. Ramsay MacDonald (3)	National
1935	Stanley Baldwin (3)	"
1937	Neville Chamberlain	"
1940	Winston Churchill	"
1945	Winston Churchill	Conservative
1945	Clement Attlee	Labour

APPENDIX B

A SHORT BOOK LIST

THE following list of "Books to Read" is not intended as a bibliography in the usual sense of the term, but as a guide for the general reader. All the books mentioned are both "readable" and authoritative, and many of them contain bibliographies which will point the way for further study. Most, too, are issued in cheap editions.

GENERAL

- English Social History.* G. M. Trevelyan. (Longmans.)
Guide to Modern Politics. G. D. H. Cole. (Gollancz.)
Penguin Political Dictionary. (Penguin Books.)
Law and Public Opinion in England. A. V. Dicey. (Macmillan.)
English Political Theory. Ivor Brown. (Methuen.)
Modern Political Theory. C. E. M. Joad. (World's Manuals, Clarendon Press.)
Political Thought in England: from Bacon to Halifax. G. P. Gooch.
Political Thought in England: from Locke to Bentham. H. J. Laski.
Political Thought in England: the Utilitarians from Bentham to J. S. Mill. W. L. Davidson.
Political Thought in England: from Herbert Spencer to the Present Day (1914). Ernest Barker.
Parliament. C. P. Ilbert.

The five preceding are volumes in the Home University Library, now published by the Oxford University Press.

- Outlines of Central Government.* J. J. Clarke. (Pitman.)
Plain Man's Guide through World Chaos. G. D. H. Cole. (Gollancz.)
The English Constitution. Walter Bagehot. (World's Classics, O.U.P.)
Full Employment in a Free Society. Lord Beveridge. (Allen & Unwin.)

CONSERVATISM

- Conservatism.* Lord Hugh Cecil. (H. U. Library.)
Writings and Speeches. Edmund Burke. (6 vols. O.U.P.)
A History of the Tory Party. Keith Feiling. (Oxford U.P.)
Case for Capitalism. Hartley Withers. (Grayson.)

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LIBERALISM

- On Liberty.* J. S. Mill. (World's Classics.)
Liberalism. L. T. Hobhouse. (H. U. L.)
Britain's Industrial Future. (Benn.)
Essays in Persuasion. J. M. Keynes. (Macmillan.)
Full Employment in a Free Society. Lord Beveridge. (Allan & Unwin.)
Why I am a Liberal. Lord Beveridge. (Allen & Unwin.)
History of the Liberal Party. Sir H. Slessor. (Hutchinson.)
The Road to Serfdom. F. A. Hayek. (Routledge.)

SOCIALISM

- Fabian Essays in Socialism.* (Fabian Society.)
Fabian Socialism. G. D. H. Cole. (Allen and Unwin.)
The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, and Fascism. G. Bernard Shaw. (Constable.)
Everybody's Political What's What? G. B. Shaw. (Constable.)
Theory and Practice of Socialism. John Strachey. (Gollancz.)
Roads to Freedom. Bertrand Russell. (Allen and Unwin.)
Principles of Social Reconstruction. Bertrand Russell. (do.)
The Acquisitive Society. R. H. Tawney. (Bell.)
The Labour Party in Perspective. C. R. Attlee. (Gollancz.)

COMMUNISM

- The Communist Manifesto.* Marx and Engels. (Lawrence and Wishart.)
Communism. H. J. Laski. (H. U. L.)
Capital. Karl Marx. (Everyman, 2 vols.)
Handbook of Marxism. Emile Burns. (Gollancz.)
Soviet Communism. S. and B. Webb. (Longmans.)
Selected Works. Lenin. (Lawrence and Wishart.)

POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

- Burke.* Lord Morley. (Macmillan.)
Robert Owen. Frank Podmore. (Allen and Unwin.)
Palmerston. Philip Guedalla. (Hodder & Stoughton.)
Cobden. Lord Morley. (Nelson.)
Beaconsfield. W. F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle. (Murray.)
Gladstone. Lord Morley. (Macmillan.)
Lord Randolph Churchill. Winston Churchill. (Macmillan.)
Lord Shaftesbury. J. L. and B. Hammond. (Constable.)

A Short Book List

POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY (CONTD.)

- Asquith (Lord Oxford)*. J. A. Spender & Cyril Asquith (Hutchinson.)
Campbell-Bannerman. J. A. Spender. (Hodder & Stoughton.)
Balfour. Blanche E. Dugdale. (Hutchinson.)
Joseph Chamberlain. J. L. Garvin. (Macmillan.)
Grey of Falloden. G. M. Trevelyan. (Longmans.)
Austen Chamberlain. C. Petrie. (Cassell.)
Neville Chamberlain. D. Walker Smith. (Hale.)
Lloyd George. War Memoirs. (Odhams.)
Winston Churchill. Lewis Broad. (Hutchinson.)

UTOPIAS, ETC.

- The Republic*. Plato. (Everyman.)
Utopia. Sir T. More. (Bell.)
News from Nowhere. William Morris. (Longmans.)
Looking Backward. Edward Bellamy. (Routledge.)
Erewhon and Erewhon Revisited. Samuel Butler. (Everyman.)
Brave New World. Aldous Huxley. (Chatto & Windus.)

POLITICAL NOVELS

- The New Machiavelli*. H. G. Wells. (Collins.)
Coningsby. B. Disraeli. (Everyman Library.)
Sybil. B. Disraeli. (World's Classics.)
Alton Locke. Charles Kingsley. (Collins.)
The World of William Clissold. H. G. Wells. (Benn, 3 vols.)
The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists. Robert Tressall. (Penguin.)

Note. Much political literature of not only ephemeral importance is issued in the form of pamphlets and leaflets. In particular, the official programmes of the great parties are generally published as pamphlets. Complete lists of the publications and, of course, particulars of membership, may be had on application to the party headquarters, viz :—

The Conservative and Unionist Central Office, Palace Chambers,
London, S.W.1.

The Liberal Party, 8 Gayfere Street, S.W.1.

The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.1.

The Communist Party, 16 King Street, W.C.2.

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