THE STATE IN THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER

By HAROLD J. LASKI

With a Note by EDWARD R. PEASE dealing with the history of the Fabian Tracts, on the occasion of the issue of No. 200 of the series.

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FABIAN TRACTS.

Fabian Tract No. 1 was printed in 1884, a few months after the foundation of the Society; the publication of Fabian Tract No. 200 in 1922 affords an occasion for some reflections on the series. Probably no other organisation, certainly no other English political society, has ever before issued a continuous series of Tracts, all in the same format, with a total of two hundred spread over a period of thirty-eight years. Very few of the little group which prepared Tract No. 1 are still alive, and the present writer is the only one of them who is still an active member of the Society. But the work started by that little group has been carried forward chiefly by others who soon joined it, and has accomplished more than its founders anticipated.

Fabian Tracts have been the instrument of much of the activities of the Fabian Society. After the first and enduring success of "Fabian Essays," we have achieved but little by larger publications. Our members have written innumerable books, but the Society has had but little to do with them. It is as a producer of Tracts that the Society will be remembered.

The two hundred Tracts are a miscellaneous collection. The largest class deals with the application of the principles of Socialism to particular subjects, Education, Poor Law, Agriculture, etc. Another class describes the organs of local government, Parish Councils, Town Councils, County Councils, and explains how their powers can be used for social amelioration. Our "best seller" was a penny pamphlet describing the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1896. Trade Unions bought it by the thousand to distribute amongst their members. A good second is "Facts for Socialists," first published in 1887, and still selling vigorously in its twelfth edition.

The number of Fabian Tracts issued to the public between 1890 and 1922 is 2,775,000. For a short time we gave away propaganda leaflets, but the cost of this soon proved prohibitive. Apart from the copies of new publications supplied to members, the above figures represent sales. Pamphlets, unless by Prime Ministers, are not a commercial proposition, but Fabian Tracts have on the whole nearly paid their way. Their success may be attributed in the main to two causes, the use of a single format enabling sets to be bound in a volume, and each number in the series to advertise the others; and in the second case, to the great care exercised by the Executive Committee that a high standard of literary excellence, and extreme vigilance for accuracy in statements of fact should always be maintained.

Some of the early Tracts are still in print in new and often revised editions, but very many are altogether out of date for the excellent reason that the legislative reforms which they recommended have long ago become law.

EDW. R. PEASE.
THE STATE IN THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER.

The English political scene has always changed its perspective after a crisis in the national fortunes. The civil wars of the fifteenth century produced the centralised despotism of the Tudors. The sense of national confidence gained from the victory over Spain led the Puritans to resist the Stuart attempt at further usurpation; and the ultimate result of the Great Rebellion was to put the Crown in fetters. War always transforms the foundations of national thought, and the scale of our last experiment has been vast enough to leave no institution or doctrine untouched. It is clear already that its onset marked a new and pronounced epoch in our affairs. Just as the Napoleonic struggle freed the commercial classes from the last remnants of aristocratic control, so, in the long run, it is probable that the main result of the recent conflict will be to bring the working classes to a new position in the state.

The emergence, indeed, of the Labour Party as the main Parliamentary Opposition is not the least important index to the new temper. It means that the Third Estate has ceased to associate the idea of government with the ownership of property. Exactly as the main consequence of the Reform Act of 1832 was the destruction of those political privileges which separated the middle classes from the seat of power, so, it may be suggested, the result of the Reform Act of 1918 will, in the background of war-experience, be the slow destruction of those economic privileges which prevent the access of the workers to the moral assets of the state. It is not, of course, likely that the process will be either logical or straightforward. The English people is not accustomed to make a direct highroad to its intellectual goal. The national method is rather to mitigate the evils we have than fly to obvious benefits of which doctrine can demonstrate the substance. But, based upon the reforms of 1832, the ultimate character of nineteenth century legislation in England was to make a world in which the profits of business men were economically possible and legally secure. So upon the basis of the reforms of 1918 it will be the tendency of legislation in our own day to make a world in which men who have no commodity to sell save their labour will share in a fuller way in the riches that civilisation can offer.
The directions in which that effort will be made are already becoming clear. There is abroad, however half-heartedly, a new sense of the significance of education. If the democracy is to be master in its own house, it must be adequately equipped for its task. Control of the sources of knowledge is the one sure road to power; and it is evidence of high import that the workers themselves are foremost in demanding an educational system which gives them access to that control. Hardly less urgent is the feeling that basic monopolies, coal, power, transport, land, must be directly managed by the people themselves. Nationalisation is a word that has manifold interpretations; but nationalisation, in some form, of the obvious basic monopolies is an inevitable corollary of democratic government. Not less certain, as the future expands, will be the conference upon the workers of definite institutional security against the tragedy of unemployment. That the resources of the state must be used to safeguard its citizens against the hazards of trade is already a commonplace; and since the principle was admitted in the Insurance Act of 1911, it is rather with its administrative application than its legislative substance that the next age will be concerned.

Second only in importance to education, and in large part dependent upon it, is the growth of industrial self-government. It has become intolerable that the mass of men should be the mechanical recipients of orders they are compelled to execute without scrutiny. It has become finally clear that the release of individuality—after all, the ultimate purpose of the state—is utterly impossible so long as the control of industry is confined to a small number of men whose decisions need not take account of the wills of those who work under them. It may be admitted that the transformation of industrial control presents immense difficulties. The mass of the workers has not been trained to work that is instinct with responsibility. The capitalist régime has sought not the men who think but the men who obey. It has subordinated to the acquisitive impulse whatever spirit there is of service and creativeness in those who are subject to its dominion. It has obscured the processes by which it governs. It has so divorced the actual work of production from the business of direction as to leave the industrial pattern unintelligible to those whose lives are dependent upon its right arrangement. So complex have its mechanisms become that no single formula—guild socialism, consumers’ co-operation, the multiplication of small peasant proprietorship—has any but a limited application. In the discovery, therefore, of institutions which enable the industrial worker to be something more than a tender of machines it is inevitable that there should be hazardous experiment; and the corollary of experiment is failure. But that feeling of unfreedom which Mr. Justice Sankey discovered among the miners, which interferes with the quantity and quality of their work, is typical of labour as a whole. It demands, as is now recognised, channels of response which will minimise its intensity.

These are, of course, predominant currents of effort in their largest outline. There is no aspect of our social life which remains
unaffected by the impact of new desires. The Industrial Revolution turned urban England into a slum, and since Mr. Sartorius, ably seconded by Sir Alfred Mond, shows no sign of abdication, he is destined, sooner or later, to be supplanted by a community at last awakened to its responsibilities. Housing is the bedrock upon which the health of the nation depends. Parallel with its improvement, there is certain to be a realisation that the development of the medical services is a vital public concern. What are now half-casual and half-starved amenities, the public libraries for instance, are bound, as education develops, to be regarded as charges upon the public income not less fundamental to the general well-being than the army and navy. Nor can such amenities be adequately enjoyed unless the working-day is adjusted to meet their claims. The worker cannot respect the obligations of citizenship if he is simply and solely an unreflecting unit in the productive system. It is, moreover, becoming probable that the centre of importance for most men in the future will be the period of leisure rather than the period of work. In that aspect, the limitation of the hours of labour is fraught with deep consequence to them at a vital point. Nor can the substance of our civilisation remain unaffected by the changing prospects of women. Marriage for most has meant a position akin to that of a trusted servant in an upper-class family, with the added right to frequent the sitting-room, in the rare cases where there is one, when the day's work is done. But women have not only invaded industry in wholesale fashion; they have also come to see that they may make of marriage a career as significant as the bar or the church. They have thus come to regard it in a sense very different either from the faded spinsters of Cranford or the gentile harpies of Jane Austen. What influence their views will have upon our social economy we cannot yet tell; it is clear only that it will be profound and decisive.

Nothing of all this implies either that such changes are immediately impending, or that their path will be easy and straightforward. Their consequences go too deep into the fabric of the state for most of them to be welcome. They involve an assault upon tradition which will invoke the resistance of all the forces of conservatism and inertia. They imply a change in the property-relation so vast as to alter in their implication the very purpose of the state. They will have to proceed piece by piece, advancing here, there suffering defeat, until most of them become in turn traditions. Then, perhaps, in typical English fashion, because they have become institutions to which we have grown accustomed, we shall regard them as the necessary foundations of society. They will, in part, be dependent upon the possibility that we can avoid revolution, on the one hand, and foreign warfare upon the other. If we recognise sufficiently the inevitable basic infirmity in all human institutions so as to be convinced that with all its slowness the path of reason is preferable to the path of violence, that the inadequate good of peace may be preferable to the cost of ideal good attempted by war, an atmosphere of constructiveness may emerge from the present reaction. But only upon the condition of peace. For it is clear that the resources
now at the command of conflict may, if utilised, destroy any possibility of civilisation. If force should triumph over reason in the next age, ideas such as these may well pass into dim memories; and, as in Mr. Wells' dramatic picture, some ancient survivor of the struggle may seek to explain them to grandchildren who do not understand even the primary notions of civilised life.

But if we may count—it is a large assumption—upon a peace as long and as extensive as that given to England in the Victorian age, we may be confident that social theory will undergo a radical transformation. A new world will arise from the ashes of the old; and a new political science will be necessary to the statement of its meaning. Already, it is possible to discern some at least of the elements that will go to its making. It is likely, in the first place, to be far more complex than the old. The sanction of our institutions will not be divine right, as with the Royalists of the seventeenth century, or fear, as with Hobbes, or the facile simplicity of direct and omnipresent consent, as with Rousseau. It is likely to come from the slow development of a social psychology based upon inductions about human nature far wider than in any previous time. It will take account of the magistral demonstration by Marx that political power is the handmaid of economic power; and it will therefore insist as integral that the existence of great wealth and widespread poverty in the same state are incompatible with the attainment of social good. It will seek to discover the largest way commensurate with national efficiency of associating the creative energies of men with the actual business of government. It will realise that the main reason why social systems have decayed in the past is their inability to make adequate response to the primary impulses of men. For the onset of revolution does not mean the existence of a will to wrong in the people. It is they who always, and most deeply, are the sufferers from disorder. Revolution never comes from the effort of chance conspirators or malevolent ideas. It is the outcome always of wrongs that have become too intolerable to be borne; and the moral judgment it involves is decisive against the government which has failed to see in reform the only real safeguard against it.

The coming of the democracy to power involves a change in the purpose of the state. It means placing the riches of civilisation at the disposal of that democracy. But, still more, it means a change in the methods by which that effort is made. In the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, it was believed that the conflict of private interests would result in a well-ordered commonwealth. The duties of government were the duties of a police force. The atmosphere of the courts—always the surest index to the temper of the governing class—was mainly an insistence that in nothing was the public welfare so essentially protected as in the safeguarding of industrial private rights; and the classic case of *Morgan Steamship Co. v. McGregor* was evidence that restraint upon freedom of action in

the name of public policy was regarded as a definite evil. It was somehow assumed that since every person is, in the main, the best judge of his own happiness, the larger the boundaries of freedom of contract, the greater would be the happiness of the nation. It was not understood that there is a difference between judging what is for one's happiness, and having the means to effect it. Freedom of contract only begins, as Mr. Justice Holmes has said, where equality of bargaining power begins; and there is no real equality of bargaining power, so far as the means of adequate subsistence are concerned, unless there is approximate equality of property. When Bentham and his disciples set an individualistic perspective to the theory of the state, what in reality they did was simply to put that state at the disposal of the owners of political and economic power. The second half of the nineteenth century was mainly occupied with the effort to relax the rigours of an individualistic régime, while retaining an active and profound faith in its main assumptions. Such measures as Factory Acts, Employers' Liability Acts, Housing Acts, were, at bottom, concessions made to humanitarian sentiment which shuddered at the cost of laissez-faire. They did not involve a belief that it is the business of the state to see that the citizen realises the full power of moral development which is in him.

Until, roughly, 1870, Benthamism held practically unmitigated sway over the English mind. From then onwards, T. H. Green and the Oxford idealists wrought something akin to revolution in the English theory of the state. Trained in a Platonism sharpened by contact with Hegel, they recognised that the Benthamite opposition between state and individual was at once artificial and dangerous. The individual was a citizen, and he therefore had no meaning apart from his citizenship. Unless, then, the state could guarantee to each man the powers without which he could not realise himself, it became devoid of ethical content. The state was, for them, an instrument through which and in which its citizens realised themselves; and it was thus its main function to secure to each such rights as would achieve his full moral development. There can be no doubt of the high service rendered by the idealist philosophy in destroying the notion that state-intervention is, in its nature, an evil thing. Unfortunately, the failure of idealism lay in its inability to differentiate between state and government. It did not with any sharpness disentangle the acts of principal and agent, with the result that it confused the temporary acts of the latter with the permanent purpose of the former.

The idealist philosophy of the state so highly exalted its power that individuals and societies obtained their meaning, and, therefore, their rights, only by its permission. It was so occupied with the theoretic purpose of the abstract state that it hardly, T. H. Green apart, regarded the actual achievement of concrete states. It did not see that a purpose abstractly noble may, in the hands of human agents, be stripped of every whiff of moral splendour. By insisting that every institution was the incarnation of a spiritual principle idealism failed to develop a theory of moral values, and was therefore
unable to distinguish between degrees of right. It thus provided no solution for the situation where social obligations conflict. It so confounded the actual motives of social agents with the ideal purpose by which they ought to have been informed, that it detected the existence of benevolent progress where none in fact existed. It beatified Imperialism, for example; and the noble picture of the white man’s burden blinded the eyes of its devotees to the natives who were in fact bearing it. It did not help a miner called upon to choose between his union and the Prime Minister to be told that the latter represented an institution whose abstract end was good. It afforded no real direction to a Quaker who believed in the moral wrong of war to be informed that war might be exalted when the state undertook it. Idealism, in short, tended to beatify things as they are. It was too occupied with abstract ends to be sufficiently critical either about the time-factor in the process of their achievement, or the methods by which they were effected. It asserted, and with justice, that right and truth ought to prevail; but its actual result, in the hands of its chief exponents, was to identify right and truth merely with the decisions of the governmental authority legally competent to make them. It did not penetrate beyond those decisions to the sources from which they were derived.

It was possible, in the years before the war, to see that idealism as a political creed was rapidly losing ground. It had become a commonplace that the authority of the state, neither in its forms nor in its achievement, justified the allegiance it demanded. Socialism came in its varied guises to offer proof that the state did not secure either the freedom or the happiness of its members. Churchmen like Figgis came to see that its assumed pre-eminence might deprive voluntary organisations of powers necessary to the fulfilment of aims not less noble than its own. Lawyers like Maitland urged that the state was merely one form of human association, and that it could make no moral claim to sovereignty other than that which it could prove on the ground of moral achievement. The survival of its power, especially in the background of European revolution, has become dependent, in part upon the national inertia of men, in part also upon its ability to respond to new wills and new demands that had, before the war, been hardly organised or articulate. It is true, of course, as Mr. Barker has said, that the state being with us, we must make the best of it. But what has moved into the hinterland of doubt are the motives which underlie its institutions and the forms they use for their expression.

The society in which we live is organised upon the basis of property. Ownership confers rights, and rights are legally unrelated to the performance of service. The society towards which we are moving will be organised upon the basis of functions, and the rights it will confer will be dependent upon the functions we perform. For it is obvious to anyone who scrutinises the present social order that the one thing it has secured is a continuously larger production. It has not regarded equity in the distribution of the product. It has not achieved even a minimum level of decent existence for the mass
of the producers. It has never, above all, sought to stimulate at
their highest level the creative energies of men. But the test of
social institutions is the extent to which they develop those creative
energies for social ends. If we assume a moral ideal that is capable
of being aimed at by the state, each individual is clearly entitled to
those rights which enable him to contribute to its attainment; he
must be enabled, that is to say, to fulfil his moral vocation as a man.
But the outstanding feature of the present society is that most men
have, substantially, no rights at all, while those who do possess them
are not bound to the service that they ought to involve.

The consequence may be seen in the absence of a common
purpose binding men together in the state. There is, of course,
common dependence in the sense that if an employer secures orders,
his men secure work; and that he, in turn, depends upon their
labour for the fulfilment of his contract. But the absence of any
principle in the method of distribution leaves the partition of the
product simply to the pressure of opposing forces, and the result is
what is called the class-war. So long as that social disharmony per-
sists, the currents of social activity can never so flow together as to
converge into a single channel. Nor can any institution which is
touched by that disharmony really attract the motives which promote
civilisation. For the absence of principle at the root is bound to
affect the upper branches of the tree. If we start, not from the
assumption that property has rights because it is property, but that
socially valuable functions require rights in order that the individuals
fulfilling those functions may achieve their end, in proportion as
those ends are realised, the foundation of disharmony disappears.
We then move to the conception of a minimum basis of civilisation
secured to each individual in order that his citizenship may be
possible. Beyond that, because the interest of the state in the
happiness of its members is equal, we attempt the maximisation of
equal opportunity. We do not, that is to say, associate opportunity
with a status that is mainly economic, but with the mere fact that
the individual, as a member of the state, must be given the fullest
chance to prove his worth.

It is perhaps worth while insisting that this is not an effort after
identity. Equality of opportunity is simply the admission that
unless each citizen has an equal access to the heritage of the state,
the persistence of disharmony, with the internecine warfare it
entails, is certain. It is, moreover, clear that men will very variously
avail themselves of the equal opportunities conferred. Their tastes
are not the same. Some are by nature leaders; to others, the
temptation to inert acceptance of direction is irresistible. In par-
ticular, it does not seem probable that the increase of interest in
politics will be as intense as is usually supposed. The social nature
of men must always be carefully distinguished from the political
nature of some few. The average member of Parliament, even, is
not there because he has a love of state-building. He is there, like
Sir Frederick Banbury, to defend an economic interest threatened
from within, or, as in the case of many retired business men, because
the House of Commons is an avenue towards certain social distinctions that are prized by their class. Equality of opportunity will undoubtedly multiply the number of citizens fit for political function. But the two important possibilities it opens are, first, that the state becomes informed by a common purpose, and, second, that it is enabled to utilise the reservoir of talent that, with the present disparity, is bound to remain largely undiscovered.

Nor does this doctrine involve the abolition of property as such. It simply limits the rights of ownership by insisting that they shall be conditioned by the performance of service. It must, of course, further limit those rights by organising social institutions in such a fashion that they leave each citizen who desires the sense of freedom in their working to perform, where he has the capacity, responsible functions. It involves, that is to say, the democratisation of industrial control, and the decentralisation of political control. It means for the mines such a form of organisation as that, for instance, which Mr. Justice Sankey has depicted. There, at least, in pit, in district, and in the industry as a whole, the abolition of private ownership would remove barriers which now stand in the path of service and achievement. The miner who could convince his fellows that he was competent to direct their labours could test his powers in an increasingly wider field. So, too, in another sphere, with local government. At present, the amenities the latter can secure are limited by parliamentary enactments devised at every point in the interest of ratepayers and ground-landlords. If, apart from the need of general reorganisation, a compulsory minimum were fixed centrally, and the degree of effort beyond that minimum left to the local authority, many of the shadows that now lie across the face of English life would disappear. For the truth is that, in the eyes of property owners, extravagance is not the sin of Peplar, but the desire of its councillors to make the lives of their constituents less empty of the aids to well-being that Belgravia can afford. It is the notion of using the national resources for the purpose of promoting equality against which the defenders of the present system are adamant.

Yet, whether in industry or politics, democratisation tempered by 

expertise 
is the only path to creativeness.

In any philosophy which seeks the grounds of national co-operation, a thorough grasp of the significance of such equality is fundamental. The miners who went on strike in 1921 knew not less well than other citizens that they imperilled by so doing the foundations of the economic security afforded by the present system. But because that system was unequal in its operation they had the less interest in the maintenance of its stability than those who, owning it, denounced them. Just as, during the war, the system of rationing produced better health in the nation because the food consumed, though less in quantity and quality, was more fairly distributed, so in the general organisation of social life, men who feel that the product is equally available in return for equal service will be willing to serve gratefully and in full measure. Let it be added, too, that equality implies a higher standard of knowledge and effort than can
now be secured. Democracy, it is obvious, has as much need to test the standards of its performance as the chemist to test the accuracy of his balance. Equality must always be conditioned by the establishment of criteria of qualification for the performance of functions. But these criteria will not be resented where they bear equally upon all. Where they are destructive of social solidarity is in their inequality of operation. The son who inherits his father's business because he is the accident of an accident, the nobleman who becomes a company director, the judge's son who becomes clerk of assize, are examples of the acquisition of status without qualification which imperil the co-ordination of effort. The average working-man does not begrudge the standards of entrance to the civil service; but he rightly resents the inequalities of an educational system which, practically speaking, prevents his children from being able to attain that standard. The absence of an equal interest in the assets of the state inevitably begets an inferior interest in the maintenance of its foundations; and it is the obvious lesson of our experience that the inferior interest of the many is the active hatred of the few. No state can long survive in which a group of citizens aim, through profound moral conviction, at its overthrow. That is why the movement towards equality is the one sure safeguard against revolution.

It is doubtful, indeed, if ends such as these can in any full measure be attained through the classical institutions of representative government. We have evolved the great society without any real effort to see that our political methods keep pace with the changes in social and economic structure. No one who examines the large outlines of the English governmental system can point to any capital discovery in the past fifty years. The emergence of the Labour Party has altered the general perspective of their effort. The transference of the centre of importance from the House of Commons to the Cabinet, the consolidation of that pre-eminence given by Mr. Gladstone's long career to the office of Prime Minister, a superb improvement in the quality of the civil service, these, and things like these, have an importance beyond denial. But the normal assumptions which, for example, Bentham had in mind in the prophecy he made for the future of the representative system have ceased to work. The private member is a pale ghost of his former self. Debate has become utterly unreal; and divisions merely register mechanically decisions the real grounds of which are rarely determined in the House of Commons. The old system of party government has lost its mainspring; and the suspicious inertia of those who are not active in the machine itself is a commonplace. Nor is all this true of England alone. In France, in Italy, and in the United States, the same disharmony between political method and the social process may be detected. The legislative assembly is not merely overburdened by the pressure of its work; it is, in its classic form, unfitted to carry out the functions for which it exists.

It is, of course, possible to improve the actual machinery we have. Members of Parliament could be given direct contact with the business of administration by the creation of committees to watch
the work of each department. They might be in part organs of consultation, and in part an effective and necessary liaison between the bureaucrat and the House of Commons. The transformation of the present committee-stage of bills into a process akin to the working of committees upon municipal bodies would not only destroy much deliberate obstruction, but it would also ensure to the private member a more real understanding of the measures upon which he votes, and a more real consideration than he now receives. A reduction in the size of the Cabinet has become clearly essential to the vital habit of corporate decision; and it is at least equally clear that there does not exist in the civil government any body whose business it is to undertake the investigation and research that are necessary to the proper working of policy. Nor are the functions of the different departments allocated upon any coherent principle. Until each department has before it a properly organised field of activity, there is bound to be waste and confusion. At present, there is overlapping and cross-division to a degree that makes officials surrender to contests for control with other officials that time that should be given to creative work. No one can doubt that the serious consideration of political institutions could result in inventions for their improvement of capital importance.

Yet even if these and similar changes were effected the modern legislative system would be inadequate to its task. That there are many functions, the provision of law and justice, the maintenance of the national health, the provision of public education, defence and foreign policy, which require an undivided communal organ for their general direction, is clear enough. But when we pass from functions such as these, which concern men as citizens rather than men as producers, analysis makes it obvious that the simple formulæ of representative government do not apply. What we need, then, is to take the services that have to be performed and devise institutions for their government. We have so to devise them that we may secure to each function the rights without which citizenship is impossible, and, within the boundaries of that limiting principle, to free the general legislative assembly from the task of intimate and incessant supervision. It is not, in any case, fit for such a task; for, as Mill long ago pointed out, a popular assembly is in its nature unfitted to administer or dictate in detail to those who control administration. Here it becomes necessary to depart from the narrowly geographical habit of our political thinking. We must learn to think of railways and mines, cotton and agriculture, as areas of government just as real as London and Lancashire. They are relatively unified functions which need, just as much as geographical units, organs of administration. Clearly, of course, it is easier to give a simple form of institutionalism to an industry like mining, which is susceptible of immediate nationalisation, than to an industry like cotton-spinning, in which the formulæ of nationalisation are far more dubious. But, granted the conference of powers to a representative assembly for the cotton industry, granted, also, the principles of citizenship within which it must work, it is not difficult to imagine mechanism
through which a constitutional system of government might work there. As with the mines, it is necessary to give representation in such a functional assembly to interests which need special protection—the consumer, the technician, allied industries in a special sense related to cotton. It is necessary, also, to use such associations as the trade unions and the employers’ federations as the basis upon which selections of personnel must be made. Nor should any barriers be put in the way of joint consultation between industry and industry. Whether a national economic council is implied in such a scheme as this it is very difficult to say. The problem of its constitution is extraordinarily complex; and the solution of general industrial questions is, as a rule, really the solution of problems of citizenship which come within the scope of Parliament. Their administration is almost always a special problem of a particular function, and is better left to the function for settlement. When the German Economic Council has had a longer life we shall be better able to judge the possibilities it involves.

It may be useful at this stage to indicate the institutional pattern implied in a social philosophy of this kind. We visualise a Parliament with the taxing power, which lays down fundamental rules, and administers, through the Cabinet, the matters of general citizenship. Below it would be territorial and functional institutions. The one would be concerned with the normal subject matter of local government; and, under the revised areas of control, they would possess that greater complex of powers characteristic of the first-class German municipality, rather than the narrow delegation inherent in the British system. Each industry would possess an industrial council in which management and labour, technicians and the representatives of allied industries, together with the representatives of the public, would take their place. Such a council would have as its business the application to the industry it controlled of the minimum basis of civilisation we have suggested as now fundamental. It would consider all questions affecting industrial relations within its scope of reference. It would issue decrees, perhaps of the nature of provisional orders, where it was desired to go beyond the principles of the national minimum. It would undertake research; and it would have a special costing and audit department of which the task would be to secure complete publicity upon the details of the business process within the trade. It is possible, also, that a National Industrial Council would be required; but it is doubtful whether it is possible to build it, and uncertain whether the questions it would seek to resolve are not, in fact, problems with which the ordinary Parliament is better able to deal.

At the back of all this lies an implied insistence upon education as the main channel of hope in our ultimate relief. For if the object of the state is to enrich the social heritage through the enlargement of individual personality, then individual personality must be given that power of adequate expression which comes through knowledge to make its needs known. At bottom, therefore, the problem is the instruction of individual wills, and the building, as
in our institutional pattern, of channels through which those wills can flow. It is not suggested that wills can or should function equally, since abilities are unequal. But it is suggested that the general environment in which these wills function must be at a certain minimum level. It follows, therefore, that the charges of maintaining and raising that level are the first national burden to be borne; and the whole concept of property must undergo a radical change to that end. For, ultimately, the real implication of a national minimum is the replacement of the spirit of acquisitiveness by the spirit of service. That may not mean destroying the legal notion of property; but it does mean spiking its guns.

If we approach in this way the central problem of the state we make it, as Plato made it, that notion of justice which is the right ordering of human relationships. It involves the view that each citizen has an equal claim on the common good in respect of equal needs; and the corollary is therein implied that differences in response to claims are differences that the common good itself requires. This would, in all likelihood, rule out any rigorous scheme of communism on the ground that it leaves no room for the recognition of the social importance of individual differences; though we must ceaselessly remember that the tribute paid to those differences has its marginal utility. It would also allow the payment of a monopoly-rent to ability only when we can be certain that a social need can be satisfied in no other fashion. Broadly then, justice implies equality where human beings are equal in their needs. But justice must function in that psychological atmosphere in which we get the best out of our ablest men. The principle of the payment for service, the standard, therefore, by which property can be justified, is a measure of remuneration which harmonises individual interest with the common good. It ought here to be emphasised that the importance of profit-making as a motive has been greatly exaggerated, and that experiment with its replacement could not effect other than benefit. The state owes to each of us the opportunity of useful service; but it does not owe us the occasion to spend the substance of other men's lives.

We are seeking to visualise a state in which the individual citizen is entitled to an effective voice in collective decisions. Admittedly, of course, the power he can have is limited by the inherent needs of large-scale organisation. But it ought still to mean that the ordinary man can help to select his rulers and to get himself elected if he can. It ought to mean his right to unfettered criticism. It should involve the right to be informed of all important decisions and the consequent opportunity to revoke, in concert with his fellows, the mandate to government. So, in the economic sphere, every capable individual must have a right to work, with, of course, the corollary that it is his duty to work well. Within the limits of social requirement, he ought to have the opportunity, as few now have, to choose and to vary his occupation. If he has merit, he ought to be able to advance by it. If he has initiative, he ought to be able to exercise it through the structure of his function. He should be able by his
work to purchase a reward of service that meets all material needs; and from the accidents of unemployment and sickness, as from the cares of old age, he should be protected. This, at least, is what the state in substance means; and if its institutions have so far failed to give content to that meaning, it seems to follow that they stand in need of change.

The political science of the next generation will be mainly occupied, if it is to be fruitful, with the explorations of channels through which this end may be attained. It will seek to discover ways in which the individual may be made significant. It will have to remember that he is not absorbed by the state; within the mind of every man there are reserves into which organisation does not, and ought not to, enter. Society is the harmony of a system of selves, not a harmony over and above them. It is the milieu in which they live; it is not itself the life. Control is social because individuals act directly upon each other, and it is necessary, therefore to have criteria of right action. Here, we have argued that control must not lie in any vocation, or area, or rank, but in the citizen-body as a whole. For, otherwise, the lives of the many lie at the disposal of the few; and they are used, as history makes evident, not for the common good but a perversion of it. Our business is to give to the common man that access to his inheritance of which he has hitherto been deprived. Of that inheritance he has become aware; and the future most largely depends upon the response we make to his awareness. Our complex civilisation is being tested by men who do not judge it by the thought and effort that have gone in its making, but by the happiness it brings to ordinary men and women. It is only by endeavouring to meet their desires that we shall be able to await their judgment with confidence.
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