

Individualism vs. Socialism.

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Outline of Thesis.

Individualism vs. Socialism.

Introduction.

Scope of this Paper.

Individualism Defined.

Philosophical Individualism.

Socialism Defined.

Socialism of the Chair.

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Philosophical Anarchism.

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The Government under Individualism.

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The Government under Socialism.

Organization and Structure.

Capital. (Land, etc.)

Suppression of Competition.

The Private Home.

Individualism v.s. Socialism.

To the American people these terms are comparatively new. Twenty years ago they were not used in this country. Today, they represent two great economic systems of Government, and just what is implied by each is not yet clearly defined. It will be the object of this paper to put together some of the thoughts of writers of political economy, upon these two opposing terms. It will be impossible to go into detail with the many complex subjects arising under each, hence they must, at best, be treated in a very general form. Of the two terms, Socialism is perhaps the older, for it was not till the new form of government began to be contrasted with the old that either of the terms was at all needed. Socialism is especially new and more especially to Americans. Till recently the American considered the socialist as a mysterious being — one type of desperado, who with his foul means and base followers, was planning to strike

at the very foundation stones of civilization. Only a few years ago, it was believed that Socialism could find no footing upon the soil of free, liberty-loving America. It has been held that Socialism is the product of the despotism of Europe, and there it must remain at its principles would never find nourishment in a society such as we have in the United States. But whatever may have been the thought prevalent in the minds of Americans a few years ago concerning the introduction of Socialism into this country, it is a well known fact that it has gained a very strong foothold and is steadily increasing in power. It is represented in this country largely by the Christian Socialists, of whom Rev. W. D. P. Bliss, of Roslindale, Massachusetts, is one of the recognized leaders; also by the Socialist party which has quite strong organizations in Boston, New York, and other eastern cities. A paper called "Justice," published in Boston, is one of their publications. The strides municipal powers have taken in the

last few years have been very encouraging to the Socialist, but, on the other hand these municipal movements point out to the Individualist one of the most destructive tendencies of our system of government.

It would be wrong to suppose that Individualism and Socialism are new systems of government. Such is not the case. Both forms have existed almost since man has inhabited the earth. They have however, only existed in the latent form and have been brought forward by the changes created by our wonderful industrial development of the last century.

In the study of these two terms it will be well to observe some definitions that can be found. It is a noticeable fact that exact definitions are hard to find. We notice that when a writer is brave enough to write down a definition, for either Individualism or Socialism, he calls the reader's attention to the fact that he should receive some

honor for doing so.

Individualism as defined by Webster means an excessive or exclusive regard for one's personal interests. Thus we can see that it would imply a greater regard for one's personal interests than that of society at large, which is directly opposed, as we shall observe, to the principles of Socialism. Edward Bellamy hits off a definition as the "every-man-for-himself-and-the-devil-for-the-hindmost way of getting a living."

Dr. Westcott, Bishop of Durham, has the following to say of Individualism: "Individualism regards humanity as made up of disconnected or warring atoms; its aim is the attainment of some personal advantages, as riches, place, or fame; seeks primarily the satisfaction of the particular wants of each one, in the hope that the pursuits of private interests will, in the end, secure public welfare."

The philosophical individualist is well represented by Herbert Spencer

who holds that "all Socialism involves slavery." Mr. Spencer insists that it is wrong to expect the State to do anything which man can do for himself; thus Spencer says that a man has no right to ask the State to educate his children; and asks that, when this is conceded, does it not follow that the State must also feed and clothe them? The Socialist answers, certainly, that is just what we propose to do; clothe, feed, and educate the poor and in this way raise humanity to a higher plane of living. Spencer holds that government ownership for anything, other than that for national defense and the like, is wrong; that there is a tendency to belittle one's course in life. The necessity of competing with others is taken away and progress checked. Men no longer have to think; Government, under Socialism, superintends the whole sphere of one's life and each is to work and do the will of government just as a beast of burden does the work of his master.

Of the many definitions of Socialism only a few can be noticed. While chapters and books have been written defining Socialism and yet the question is constantly asked, "What is Socialism?" This comes about largely because there are so many opinions held and also because of the many forms in which Socialism is met with. "By Socialism in a general form, says one writer, is meant a form of government having a just and equal distribution of property and labor; also by Socialism is implied that the government owns all public works; while under "pure Socialism, says Graham Wallas, to use the word in the narrowest sense, the State would offer no advantages at all to any citizen except at a price sufficient to pay all the expenses of producing it." Our school system in this country furnishes a good example of this; the total expenses of the school being paid by taxes. Socialism is again defined by Edward Bellamy as the application of democratic methods

to the economic administration of a people. Socialism aims by substituting public management of industry and commerce in the common interest, for private management in diverse personal interests; to more nearly equalize the distribution of wealth and at the same time increase the volume of wealth for distribution." Socialism is a system of government which requires that the land and all instruments of production shall be the property of government, not of individuals.

A few words relating to "Socialism of the Chair" and Christian Socialism will not be out of place here; also a word in regard to a common error of considering Socialism and Anarchism as identical, or at least, closely related.

"Socialism of the Chair" is a phrase which has been used only since 1872. It was first used to ridicule those who proposed to settle all social questions by "university lectures," "Socialists of the Chair" themselves took up the name that by so doing they might

take the edge off of the nickname given them by their opponents - The German Liberalists. In their first meeting held in Germany in 1872, one of their members declared that the wrongs to the laboring classes and the evils of the industrial system existing in Germany at that time, were due to the undying faith which the Liberalists held in the economic doctrine of "laissez faire", or the principle of "let-alone."

Christian Socialism is represented by Rev. W. D. P. Bliss in this country, and by G. Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, of England. These men believe that Christianity and Socialism go hand in hand. They also represent a reaction from the older materialistic school represented by Marx, Engels, and Lassalle. The Christian Socialists do not expect immediately to secure happiness and prosperity for all people, but look to the spiritual well being of mankind. They reason that when the human race shall have reached a higher spiritual plane the new perplexing economic problems will cease to exist,

for all men will respect each other as a brother.

To the uninformed there seems to be a confusion between Anarchism and Socialism. One often hears, and it sometimes gets into our daily newspapers, that Anarchism and Socialism are one and the same thing and at all times to be avoided. The tendency of each is supposed to be toward the destruction of the present system of government. A study of either will reveal the fact that they are exactly the negative of each other. Anarchy rightly belongs to Individualism and does not necessarily mean lawlessness. Anarchism is upheld by many intelligent people. The anarchist has for his motto: "Let him take who hath the power; let him keep who can." This may be thought to be contrary to morality, but it is held that "morality" is coextensive with self-interest. To show that the motto can stand upon ethical grounds would require more time and space than can be

given here.

The state under Individualism can best be represented by supposing a case where true Individualism exists. In a government of this kind the great responsibilities would rest with the individuals. The state would have no officials; as Spencer says, no man has a right to exercise power over another only as he has physical power. The Individualist favors no protection to rich or poor because he insists that the fittest will survive and that none but the fittest should live. All possibilities of any class getting hold of the reins of government and establishing a tyrannical rule would be obliterated from the minds of the people. Individualists today point out the case of Germany, where it is a known fact that the class in office are enabled to perpetuate their term of office because they appoint men under them who will vote for them at the elections; thus controlling the politics of the country.

It is argued for Individualism that all competition will be free and that all schools and colleges will be conducted better than under the present system, because each school and college will be compelled to compete with others. Hence, were our schools and colleges under individualistic principles each would necessarily be kept on the alert and would put forth their best efforts that they might at least be classed in the front rank. This would carry with it the incentive for students to work harder, study hypothesis and theories, establish new thought, search the unknown regions of science, and promote art.

Competition is said to be the "Life of Trade," for instance one railroad competing with another, one, either by having a better road-bed or better rolling-stock can obtain higher speed and more regular time than its competitor. This will not continue long as the better road will get all the business. The poorer road must therefore make improvements and out-do its antagon-

ist. This gives an impulse to invention and progress. The same phenomenon is experienced in all lines of business. The individualist and nearly all opponents of Socialism argue that when Individualism is destroyed, competition will be killed; all freedom and liberty taken away, the industrial system strangled, and poverty and distress be found in every home of the common people. Then will the French Revolution be fought a second time and war and strife be brought upon the nation.

It is unfortunate for the Socialistic system that a non-ethical system was first promulgated and received with favor in Germany and France. However Socialism is largely overcoming this drawback and now receives the larger part of its strength because of its ethical principles. Under Socialism the state will be constructed upon an entirely different basis from that of Individualism. The socialist believes that the earth

is the inheritance of the race, not of a few individuals. Socialism teaches man so to direct his efforts that humanity will profit by them, teaches him to repress his selfishness and to keep in check his brutish nature. Government will own and control the land and all implements of production; this, by most writers, does not include the home, nor would "implements of production" include a kit of tools with which an artisan works. The railways, street car lines, telegraph lines, telephone lines, electric power plants, gas works, and all public works would be the property of government. The socialist is pleased to note the concentration of all industries. He says it is just what is wanted, for by whatever means the government proceeds to obtain possession of such industries they can be obtained much easier when concentrated than when scattered. He concludes that the forming of large stock-companies and trusts marks one long step toward Socialism. Laurence Gronlund has a Socialistic

society, all worked out in his "Co-operative Commonwealth". He would have captains of industry to manage the public works. Supply and demand would be regulated by a public officer, called the chief statistician, who would first determine just how much of an article is needed and then set to work to produce what is wanted and no more. The administration of justice will be simple, there will be no lawyers. A handy, compact, and accurate code of statutes will take the place of the thousands of volumes in existence today. This code cannot be changed by "judge-made law". There will be trained men to ascertain the truth, where facts are in dispute, and from their decision there will be no appeals. Every department of government will be under the control of an officer, just as the different parts of an army are at the present time. From this fact arises much criticism as Socialism is declared to carry with it too much militarism and officialism.

Which way society is at present tending as regards to Individualism and Socialism has been a subject of much speculation. It is probably that neither the individualistic system nor the socialistic will ever be wholly realized at any one time, but that society will fluctuate one way and then another. At one time there will be a tendency to extend the powers of government to each individual and at another time to concentrate the power all at one place. Whether this state of things will continue for ever, no one knows, but it may be that a compromise will be reached and society become settled.

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