"WHITHER SOCIALISM?—
VALUES IN A CHANGING CIVILISATION"

AUSTEN ALBU, M.P.

SOCIALISM AND THE STUDY OF MAN

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SOCIALISM AND THE STUDY OF MAN

Fabian Autumn Lecture, 20th October, 1950

FOREWORD

For the 1950 series of traditional Autumn Lectures the Executive Committee of the Society decided to depart from the practice of recent years. It was natural, since the return of the Labour Government in 1945, that the Society should have concentrated on discussion of some of the immediate problems encountered in the course of carrying out the policy it had so long advocated.

The 1950 Lectures were intended to give direction to the current re-examination of Socialist thought in the light both of experience and new knowledge. The emphasis is therefore on political philosophy and sociology rather than on economics and administration. The purpose of this lecture was to direct attention to the latest developments in the Social Sciences and the lessons to be learnt from them.

Austen Albu.

NOTE.—This pamphlet, like all publications of the Fabian Society, represents not the collective view of the Society but only the view of the individual who prepared it. The responsibility of the Society is limited to approving the publications which it issues as worthy of consideration within the Labour Movement.

January, 1951.

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SOCIALISM AND THE STUDY OF MAN

AUSTEN ALBU, M.P.

1. HISTORICAL

(i) The Growth of Utilitarianism

To the river of Socialist thought and inspiration many streams have contributed. It is not my purpose to-night to argue the relative contributions of Marx and Methodism, of Empiricism and Theory. In order, however, to understand the background against which our present thinking must be done it is necessary to remind ourselves of the influences which have been successively brought to bear on Socialist ideas in the last 150 years.

Modern Socialism was the natural inheritor in the industrial age of ancient feelings of revolt against conditions of tyranny and inequality that were as old as history. In some of its early forms it attempted hopelessly to stem the tide of industrialisation and proletarianisation which was advancing so rapidly with the growth of machinery. Once the industrial revolution was completed it became the vehicle for the feelings of hatred and frustration generated by that social upheaval in its victims. In a recent series of broadcast lectures,[1] Canon Demant has reminded us of the enormous shock given to the social system by the sudden expansion of *laisser-faire* capitalism in the nineteenth century, and he has reminded us that as a form of social organisation it is an abnormality in history and that its life—for it is already in universal decline—has been extremely short. At no previous period in history had religious sanction been given to the principles that economic life was the operation of natural, Divine law, and that the relationship between man and man should be left to the making of individual economic contracts.

It was the belief, held most strongly by the Puritans, that it was man's duty to allow the laws of nature freely to operate, and that it was therefore encumbent on him to understand them, that led first to the great advances in discovery in the physical sciences of the seventeenth century and then to the attempt to find similar laws for man's behaviour in the nineteenth. The Benthamite school, with its basic principle that man's actions are determined by his rational attempt to increase pleasure and diminish pain, provided the explanation of the working of God's will and appeared to support with the authority of science the political and economic

developments of the time. In the words of Sidney Webb's Fabian Essay: "Utilitarianism became the Protestantism of Sociology."

It was against this pseudo-science, based entirely on theory and deductive reasoning, that Marx brought his powers of argument and research. The first part of the Communist Manifesto was an attempt to explain what was happening in sociological terms and when, twenty to thirty years later, *Das Kapital* appeared, the arguments were supported by a wealth of detailed factual material obtained either by personal observation or from the increasing number of reports of Committees and Royal Commissions that the miseries of the industrial revolution had brought into being. Whether or not the workers understood the theory of surplus value or dialectical materialism, here was a description of the life that they experienced and an explanation of the break up of traditional human relations which they could understand. Whatever the theories that Marx derived from his work and whatever the myths that have been built on them since, he started the process of debunking the classical economists by an examination of the facts that has been the backbone of Socialist thinking ever since. It was this empirical approach that distinguished the Fabian contribution to British Socialism—but the early Fabians soon gave up the attempt to produce general theories about human actions and tried to apply their knowledge to immediate problems.

From the beginning, however, they had been opposed to the 'rabble hypothesis': the view of society as a mass of unrelated, self-seeking, individuals; a view which, as Elton Mayo has pointed out, owed most to Ricardo, whose main experience of the motives of human action was the seven years he spent in a stockbroker's office between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one.[2] Sidney Webb wrote that "... a society is something more than an aggregate of so many individual units ... it possesses existence distinguishable from those of its many components." The Fabians, therefore, strove to restore the sense of community which had been destroyed by the industrial revolution and, for this purpose, it was to the State that they mainly looked.

Meanwhile, the advance of political democracy and individual liberty under the influence of the liberal philosophy of the age had ensured that the British Labour movement was resistent to totalitarian solutions, and British Socialism appeared as the child of the conflict between Individual Freedom and Social Order.

The end of the nineteenth century saw a great advance in the study of social conditions, the very exposure of which undermined the self-confidence of the defenders of capitalism themselves. The methods employed and the conclusions drawn, however, continued to be based on the assumption adopted by the Utilitarians, that man's actions were taken for rational reasons. The warnings of the French Sociologists, Le Play and Durkheim, who drew atten-

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tion to the effects of the social disruption of industrial society on the psychological satisfactions and personal relationships of community life, were little known. Graham Wallas, in his brilliant book " Human Nature in Politics," uttered an unheeded warning against the effects of the growth of political institutions based on intellectualist assumptions about human thought and motives, and drew attention to the harmful effects of separating the study of politics from the study of human nature. He complained that sociology had had little influence on political science, and pointed out the dangers that arise in modern mass society from the use by politicians of non-rational arguments when dealing with issues beyond the direct experience of their hearers; explaining the process of non-rational inference, based on the psychological association of ideas, by means of which these arguments come to be accepted. Practically no further Socialist thinking took place along these lines until Evan Durbin published his " Politics of Democratic Socialism " in 1939.

(ii) Fascism and the Irrational

The warnings of Graham Wallas prepared the ground for the final blow to nineteenth century rationalism and the vindication of its critics, which was delivered by the rise to power of the irrational, obscurantist movement known as Fascism. Succeeding first in two of the apparently most civilised countries in the very heart of the rational world, one of them pre-eminent in the physical sciences, and finding a not inconsiderable following in many others, Fascism was bound to give an enormous impetus to the study of individual and social psychology. As the Fascist régimes consolidated their internal support against little open or underground opposition, it became clear that the facile early explanations that they were dictatorships of capitalists maintained solely by brute force were inadequate, and research workers turned to a study of the real feelings of men and women in the insecure world of the inter-war years. In particular, several studies of unemployment in Great Britain and in the United States and the classical investigation of a community of unemployed, made in Marienthal by a group of social psychologists from Vienna University, brought out not only the physical but also the psychological effects of prolonged unemployment. The breakdown of normal standards of domestic planning; the lack of interest in social and political institutions; the loss of any sense of time, which these studies disclosed, drew attention to the large part played in any society by commonly accepted values and modes of behaviour and so threw light on the question of incentives and motivation.

The advantage which these research workers of the 1930's had over their predecessors of the turn of the century was in the

great progress made in the science of psychology, due very largely to the psycho-analytical theories of Freud based on a large number of clinical case studies. It was Freud's work which demonstrated the great importance of the subconscious, and proved that it is possible to discover the causes of apparently irrational emotions. After Freud no serious student of human relations could neglect those latent causes of human behaviour, which were none the less real and powerful because they appeared to be irrational.

2. ADVANCE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

(i) The New Sociology

Freud, however, dealt with the individual, and there was a danger that, in the enthusiasm for the new theories, his followers would parallel in the field of psychology the errors of the political economists and develop a view of human nature built up entirely on a study of isolated individuals. Some may certainly have done so; but our knowledge of society and of men's behaviour within it has been greatly increased by the considerable advances made in recent years in other branches of the social sciences. The branch of the social sciences which deals with the development of human relations and organisation in their broadest aspects is sociology. In the past sociologists have dealt mostly with institutions, and these they have studied from documents or from written material. In other words, being concerned with the knowledge possessed by a tiny minority, their conclusions were coloured by an intellectual interpretation of phenomena. There has developed, however, chiefly in America, a sociology, based on the study of widely held opinion, which deals with the masses. The older, European, sociology is concerned with expressed ideas; the American, with emotions and generally inarticulate opinions. The growth of this newer empirical branch of sociology has begun to expand our understanding of social relations which were previously almost entirely the field of speculation and deduction. As soon as one starts real research into the facts of human behaviour one is brought up immediately against the major fact of the infinite variety of human characteristics and the institutions built on them. Deductions made from hypotheses assumed to be valid for all human beings; such as that human beings will always act in their own self interest; that children always love their parents; that the teaching of the Bible makes people more religious; that all Englishmen love animals; that the possibility of increased profit for the owners of shares in public joint stock companies is an incentive to greater efficiency, are found to be quite insufficient. Their place is more and more being taken by exact observation of a representative

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number of persons or units, and the analysis of the results by statistical methods.

It is, in fact, the great advance in the use and method of statistical science that has enabled us to present the varied picture of man's behaviour in a comprehensible form. Already at the beginning of the century Graham Wallas was drawing attention to the fact that the quantitative study of facts was taking the place of reasoning from *a priori* assumptions in the preparation of new legislation. He quoted the difference between the Poor Law Commission in 1833, whose conclusions were deduced from Benthamite principles, and that of 1905, which collected and considered a vast amount of data on the factors which made people paupers and which affected the way they behaved. These methods have made considerable advance; but the enormous gap in our knowledge of social conditions at the beginning of the war is brought out very forcibly in R. M. Titmuss's " Problems of Social Policy," published as the second volume of the official history of the war.

(ii) Sample Surveys

Physical characteristics are, obviously, the simplest on which to collect figures, and it is only in recent years that the statistical method has been brought to bear on the more complex features of human nature. The collection of the material for such analyses must involve finding out from individuals facts about aspects of their behaviour, which they do not normally remember or which, because it is, or is thought to be, in contravention of law or custom, they are unwilling to disclose. An example of the first is the detailed weekly expenditure of a family; and of the latter the subject-matter of the Kinsey Report. When the information required is about opinions, then the problem becomes much greater. Most people do not normally express their thoughts in words, and their replies to questions are likely to be greatly influenced by the way the question is phrased, the personality or views, if known, of the questioner or the temporary emotions of the person replying. It is for this reason that exaggerated attempts to predict public opinion have brought discredit on some methods of opinion survey such as the Gallup Poll. The fact that these methods of enquiry are sometimes badly done or misused does not, however, detract from their great value when carried out under strictly scientific conditions, with trained interviewers, and without undue claims being made for their results. They are becoming increasingly used, in the form of market research, by commercial undertakings, and then form the basis of production planning for the individual factory. They were greatly developed during the war by the wartime Social Survey, which made studies not only of

aspects of public opinion and morale, but also of such directly practical issues as the needs of families for clothing and household goods on which rationing and production policies were based. Similar enquiries were made by the Ministry of Food to find out exactly what people in each part of the country and in every class were eating. Since the war, the Social Survey has been established within the Central Office of Information, as a permanent piece of Government machinery. The Survey now makes a regular monthly survey of sickness to fill a gap in our statistics to which attention had frequently been called. The value of information of this kind, on which to base the administration of the National Health Service and any legislative changes that may appear necessary, is obvious. The Survey was used to study the effects of changes in clothes rationing and, as a result, the Board of Trade was able, successfully, to make the decision to end it. Similar enquiries into domestic fuel consumption have shown the Ministry of Fuel and Power that it would be dangerous to abolish the present system of coal allocation. If only the Ministry of Food had used the Survey last year they would have learnt that the conditions did not exist in which sweets rationing could be abolished.

For some time the Survey has been making enquiries into detailed fields of consumer expenditure. This is done by obtaining particulars from housewives in a scientifically selected sample of their weekly expenditure on different items in the family budget. The last survey of this type was that made by the Ministry of Labour in 1937-38, and that only covered so-called working-class households. It is on the basis of the weight of different items in working-class expenditure revealed by that enquiry that the present Retail Price Index is based. A revision of the basis of that index is certainly overdue, but that is not the only reason for undertaking continuous surveys of this type. The foundation of economic planning in the field of consumer goods is missing if we have no knowledge of the pattern of consumer demand and the way it changes for different commodities as family incomes rise and fall.

Unfortunately there is an unwillingness in some Government departments to recognise the value of this form of research as a basis for administrative action. This is partly due to the belief that the department can obtain the information required from its own sources, although these are generally much more cumbersome if they are not insufficient; but also to the continuance in the outlook of Senior Civil Servants of that deductive theoretical approach to problems which Graham Wallas condemned and which is the result of their education and methods of selection.

(iii) Social Anthropology

Sample surveys, in spite of the publicity they receive, are not the only, or even the main, new research technique that sociolo-

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gists have developed in this century; nor are statistical enquiries, by themselves, sufficient to produce new hypotheses on human behaviour. They will, however, generally be required to validate such hypotheses. The reason for this is the impossibility of conducting in this field the controlled experiments which are the means of proving hypotheses, and so of developing new theories, in the natural sciences. In a controlled experiment it is possible to isolate the effects of certain conditions and to observe the effects of changes in others. Statistical analyses, either of all the material being investigated, or of representative samples of it, are the alternative in the social sciences to the controlled, laboratory experiment. The uselessness of conducting laboratory experiments for the development of theories of human behaviour was finally demonstrated twenty-five years ago in the famous experiments conducted by Elton Mayo and his colleagues from the Harvard School of Business Administration. Mayo was an anthropologist, some of the members of his team were psychiatrists. They were called in to assist the engineers of the Western Electric Company of America, who were trying to find out the effect of illumination on productivity at their Hawthorne Works. The experiments were being conducted on a group of girls carrying out a simple assembly operation, and for this purpose they were installed in an experimental test room. The results were inconclusive until the attempt was made to secure the active co-operation of the girls, and after some changes had been made in the group. After that the conditions of work were changed, one at a time, and the results were observed. Rest periods were introduced; shorter hours of work; free snacks in the morning break. Output rose and the girls seemed happier. After twelve weeks of this the conditions of work were reversed and all these privileges abolished. To the surprise of the research workers, output remained as high as ever. It was only then that they realised what should have been so obvious: the workers were human; they were not being bawled out by a foreman all the time; they were being consulted and treated as individuals; they were interested in the experiment; the group itself had become an important factor and within it there was informal leadership. This led to much further work in which very large numbers of workers were interviewed and their opinions recorded and analysed, this time with the aid of statistical methods. As a result, considerable changes were made in the methods of management and supervision; the training of foremen; the services provided for employees and so on. Much of this has become common practice in progressive firms, and much of the results of the experiment has been mis-interpreted and used as the basis for phoney ideas. Its importance lay not so much in what it disclosed as the lesson it taught of the difficulty of relating cause and effect in human actions. It did, however, draw attention to the import-

ance of the small and often informal group in any organisation; a matter to which the macrocosmic view of human beings as a mass of atomised individuals would not have led and which overall statistical surveys would not disclose.

The connection between this anthropological method of investigation in order to develop hypotheses and the statistical validation of them was demonstrated in a war-time investigation into absenteeism in the California aircraft industry. The numbers employed in these war-time plants were enormous—40-50,000—and most of the workers were newcomers to the district. When statistics of the absentees in each plant were divided up into categories according to the number of times each worker was absent, the usual pattern was found. A comparatively large number was absent a large number of times; a similar number was absent a very few times; and between the two there were smaller numbers of people absent a varying number of times. Examinations of the figures for each department of perhaps a thousand or two workers gave the same results; but when, in accordance with hypotheses based on the behaviour of small groups in previous experiments, the figures were broken down to the level of small sections of workers in daily contact with each other a very different pattern emerged. Some groups consisted mostly of those with good attendance records; some chiefly of those with large numbers of absences per year. It was clear, therefore, that the morale of these factories was based not on individual propensities, but on group characteristics; and further study showed the part played by leadership, formal or informal, within the groups.

The anthropological method of studying behaviour and institutions in advanced societies owes much to those modern anthropologists who have had the advantage of studying primitive societies in the light of modern psychological knowledge. The primitive society, little touched by machine civilisation, is sufficiently small-scale to be completely comprehensible by the observer, and almost forms a substitute for laboratory experiment. The social anthropologists can not only study the great variety of patterns in which human beings can organise their communal lives, some leading to greater, others to less, satisfaction and happiness; but can also, in the light of present understanding of the effects of environment and upbringing in infancy on personality and temperament, trace the causation of social attitudes and customs in the societies they are studying and provide clues to useful lines of research in more complex communities. The social anthropologist, as Margaret Mead has written, goes ". . . to primitive societies to find material beyond which society cannot deny man's biological inheritance and also to find variations in human behaviour that we might not otherwise be able even to imagine as possibilities." [3]

There are few opportunities in modern society for the purely

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anthropological method to produce conclusive results; it can only do so when dealing with small face-to-face groups; that is to say groups with whom the investigator can come in daily and intimate contact. More usually the results of this method are general pictures without conclusions, but pin-pointing facets of behaviour that need more detailed research. Examples are the studies by the Lynds of an American small town, published under the names of "Middletown" and "Middletown in Transition"; the study of "Race and Caste in a Southern Town" by J. Dollard; and the rather less scientific studies undertaken by Tom Harrisson and Mass Observation in this country.

There is, however, an extension of the anthropological method which has been used by some social-psychologists and which went originally by the name of "functional penetration"; but which seems, in America, to have become known as "participant observation." This was the method employed in the Austrian study of an unemployed town which I have already mentioned, and it was also used in an extremely interesting, but unfortunately unpublished study, undertaken by Dr. Marie Jahoda, of the Production Subsistence scheme in South Wales. This was a community scheme under which unemployed miners worked for nothing on material provided for them and were able to buy the results of their labour for the cost of the material. The results of this research brought out certain very interesting facts about incentives and motives and their relation to social environment and culture. The method employed in these studies is for a research worker, or preferably a team of workers, to enter the community being studied and actively to participate in its life. In this way, after a time, it is possible to overcome the normal effect of the personality of the research worker on the people being studied and to make observations of behaviour under normal conditions. Behind this method is again the concept that, in human behaviour, the whole is more than an addition of its parts; a melody is more than the attributes of its isolated notes; a family is more than just Mr. and Mrs. John and Mary. What is added is not a mystical group mind but the relationships of the constituent elements to each other.

A more recent adaptation of these anthropological methods, with a more specifically psychiatric approach, goes by the name of group dynamics and is used in this country by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. The Institute has been undertaking a lengthy study, of which a first report is shortly to be published, on industrial relations in the Glacier Metal Company, an engineering factory of about 2,000 employees. The Institute is also associated with studies being undertaken in two London boroughs by the Family Welfare Association into the much neglected field of family relations. The methods, which are similar to those employed in clinical work, resemble a form of group psycho-analysis; in

the course of which tensions and conflicts between members of the group and between the group and outsiders are brought out into the open; examined for their causes and, if possible, released. It is hoped that these case studies will yield useful data on the nature of the behaviour of people when associated for any purpose; but the method is still in a crude and early form, and already it has received more publicity than its results to date warrant or its practitioners desire. Clinical work in large organisations can also be carried out by balanced teams of different sorts of scientists such as physiologists, psychologists, sociologists, economic statisticians, engineering technologists, working together and each looking at the same problem in the light of his own knowledge and experience. This is the method that became known during the war as operational research. Properly used it can be of great assistance to the administrators of large organisations and, as in all types of case work, it often leads to conclusions that can be proved generally valid. It is this type of research that ought to be, but so far is not, general in all large industrial concerns, including the nationalised industries.

(iv) The Future of the Social Sciences

It will be seen, as Professor Sargant Florence has recently shown, that there are clearly recognisable patterns emerging to-day in social research.[4] First, it integrates several branches of the social sciences. Secondly, it follows the research procedure of hypothesis leading to factual study leading to theory, which is normal to the natural sciences. And thirdly, it lends itself to operational research; that is to say research directed to the solution of specific problems encountered in current practice. The extraordinary thing is, as Florence points out, that the vitally important subject of economics has not, in general, followed this pattern; but remains isolated, based largely on deductive reasoning and, as a consequence, is useless in the solution of current problems. It was about time that this was said by someone, himself a social scientist, with authority in academic circles. It is frankly alarming that, at a time when we are more and more trying to control the economic conditions of our existence, the branch of learning (I cannot call it a science) which should contribute most to our understanding of the problems involved should be mainly taught in our universities as a philosophic and theoretical exercise; and that its students should never be encouraged to go out into the field they are supposed to be studying and, by observation and analysis, test the hypotheses from which their elaborate theories, and even more elaborate mathematical equations and curves are deduced. Unfortunately, few even of our Socialist economists recognise the futility of policies developed on no stronger basis of knowledge of the behaviur

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of individuals and institutions than satisfied the Utilitarians of the last century. Some of them seem to conceive the task of Socialism as the destruction of the barriers without which they imagine that the free play of economic forces, acting in conformity with a human nature they have never studied, would automatically produce the greatest sum of material advantage; a result which, by itself, would be neither Socialism nor a guarantee of human happiness. Some of them, after a wistful glance at their theories, are falling back on commonsense. If it were not for the practical experience gained by many university economists in wartime administration we should never have been as successful in our economic affairs as, in fact, we have been over the last five years.

I do not want to give the impression that the Social Sciences in general are very far advanced, or that they have yet produced many theories which are generally accepted by all who call themselves Social Scientists in the way that theories are accepted in physics, chemistry, and, to a lesser degree, in biology. The types of study comprised in the Social Sciences have not, in many cases, got past the position of the Natural Sciences in the seventeenth century, but they are making progress and, with the experience of the Natural Sciences to guide them, and with the development of the statistical method and of psychological knowledge, they may, given sufficient encouragement, advance very rapidly indeed. There is, however, a reluctance to grant them a place in the academic sun, especially in this country. The Government has made some money available, both through the University Grants Committee and, for studies in Industrial Relations, through the Medical Research Council on the advice of the Schuster Panel of the Cabinet Committee on Productivity. There seems some doubt whether these specific grants will be continued, and, meanwhile, the opposition of the older established faculties and the dispute between the theoretical and empirical schools of sociology is preventing the growth of Social Science studies on anything like the scale needed.

Part of the resistance to field research work comes, of course, from the resistance that any body of people puts up to having their habits studied. This may take the form of not wishing to disclose, even in confidence, one's innermost feelings about one's little brother or sister, or a quite rational desire, on the part of the managing director of a company, or of the secretary of a trade union, not to disclose the extent to which his actions are controlled by those who, in theory, appointed him. It is one of the tasks of sociologists to develop techniques and codes of professional behaviour to overcome this resistance and the fear on which it is based. Another of the difficulties which prevent the findings of social research from being fully utilised when policy is being formulated or administrative decisions taken is the difficulty of

communicating its results in a way which can be readily grasped and, when they appear contrary to popular beliefs, as they often do, freely accepted. Politicians in particular are prone to think that they know best what the public thinks and wants, and the substitution of scientific analysis for the politician's " hunch " produces a conflict similar to that which occurs when the hospital-trained doctor starts taking the place in the tribe of the local medicine man.

3. THE LESSONS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

(i) Exaggerated Claims

There are some people who believe that the advance in knowledge of human behaviour and human emotions will lead to the point where all political decisions can be automatically decided on the basis of the ascertainable facts. This, I believe, to be a totalitarian heresy. It arises out of the failure to recognise the variety of forms in which society can be organised so as to provide both political stability and a mass contentment equivalent to happiness. I should also point out in passing that it presumably involves the choice of happiness as the absolute goal of human activity. Any political decision, even if founded on the fullest information and understanding of the latent feelings and desires of the people, must involve an acceptance of one set of values rather than another. The social scientist who claims that decisions taken on his conclusions need involve no value judgment is merely mistaking the system of values which he has accepted for an absolute truth. This is the thinking that leads to totalitarianism.

For instance, it is quite possible to imagine a form of society in which there were rigid class divisions, but in which everybody was made to feel contented by every device of subtle propaganda and psychological manipulation. Provided this society was wealthy enough to provide everybody with a good standard of living, men and women living in it might well feel that they were happy. Most of us would not consider this a desirable society. This is, in fact, the very danger that the growth of sociological knowledge creates when it puts at the disposal of powerful groups of men the means to manipulate other men's thoughts and feelings. In the United States, for example, there has been a great development of what the American trade unions call " cow-sociology " because its purpose is to induce in the worker the cow-like mentality of acceptance. This is based on considerable research, following the work of Elton Mayo, on the subconscious urges and desires of industrial workers; as if, to quote the American sociologist, Robert Merton, they alone were ". . . subject to pre-occupations, obsessive reveries,

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defects and distortions of attitude, and irrational dislikes of co-workers or supervisors." [5] In countries where there is a great concentration of economic power, as there is in the United States, the new techniques based on sociological knowledge can be used primarily for the purpose of ensuring that the will of the managers is accepted by the workers in their factories and by the people at large. Too many sociologists, especially in America, have accepted the view that it is their business to assist the maintenance of existing social systems and to eliminate all forms of conflict in existing organisations. It is a form of infantilism to believe that conflict can be eliminated in human activity. What the sociologists and social-psychologists can do is to enlarge the area of rational thought and make clearer the part which the apparently irrational plays in people's attitudes. In this way they can assist in making the inevitable conflicts in society more about real things and less the symptoms of hidden emotions. There has been a tendency to treat all forms of revolt as deviations from the normal, whereas in most societies the refusal to accept existing conditions is, for large numbers of people, far more likely to be psychologically normal than the reverse. Sociologists need to devote far more attention to social dynamics : the mechanics by means of which desired social changes can be achieved with the minimum of friction. All this involves the very highest standards of integrity in those who work in these fields; both because of the temptations to which they are particularly likely to be exposed and also because of the difficulty in checking their conclusions at the present stage of the development of knowledge. The scientific integrity that is required is that implied in the statement that ". . . a good half of most research consists in an attempt to prove yourself wrong. Intellectual honesty is discouraged by politics, religion or even courtesy." That was written by J. B. S. Haldane in 1927.[6] There is also needed a sense of professional responsibility by which it will be no more possible for the social scientist to subject the characteristics of those he studies to exposure or attack than it is for the doctor to disclose the medical history of his patient.

(ii) Lessons for Socialists

When we ask ourselves what Socialists can learn from the results to date of the objective study of human behaviour, we should first remind ourselves that most humanistic thinking, as the Webbs pointed out in " Methods of Social Study," has tended to confuse facts with intentions, and this applies equally to Socialist thought. All men are not born equal; although it is the intention of the constitution of the United States that they shall be given equal opportunity. It is obvious that the dictatorship of the proletariat will not lead to the withering away of the State. It leads instead

to the managerial society, and this is likely to remain unless an active group of people set out with the purpose of changing it. Neither nationalisation, municipalisation nor co-operation leads to a sense of common purpose in an enterprise unless measures are taken to bring it into being. Humanistic ideas were derived from the liberal view of the inevitability of progressive change, and this change was associated with man's increasing technological advance and control over his environment. Any change which appeared to increase this material power was, therefore, welcomed without consideration of other factors which might be affected by it. But the truth is that every institution in society not only serves for the performance of its obvious function, but also satisfies other communal needs not capable of immediate perception. Malinowski showed that for a primitive race the co-operative task of building a canoe served not only the obvious technical function, but also that of establishing and reinforcing inter-personal relations. In the Hawthorne experiment, to which I have already referred, the main discovery was of the secondary effects of taking a group of girls into collaboration in an experiment on the effects of physical changes on production. Sociologists, borrowing a psycho-analytical concept, refer to these two levels as the manifest and latent functions of an institution or relationship, and it is the distinctive contribution of the modern sociologist to study both of them together. The existence of these latent functions imposes limitations on the possibility of changes in existing institutions, failure to consider which is the hall mark of Utopianism. In the words of Robert Merton, " To seek social change, without due recognition of the manifest and latent functions performed by the social organisation undergoing change, is to indulge in social ritual rather than social engineering . . . Any attempt to eliminate an existing social structure without providing adequate alternative structures for fulfilling the functions previously fulfilled by the abolished organisation is doomed to failure." [7] It is these new conceptions of the functions of the elements of which society is composed that have led to an understanding of the important part played by groups of people, whether organised formally or informally. Liberal thought developed with the growth of the nation-state and its insistence on individual liberty overlooked the important role played by group relationships in previous societies. Those who have seen modern civilisation as a process of disintegration have drawn the comparison between the modern state as a community of individuals and the clan as a community of groups. The State by itself cannot restore that sense of community which market economy nearly destroyed by treating people only as individuals.

We have always accepted the existence of overt groups whether natural, such as the family, or voluntary, such as trade unions, clubs and political parties : but we have overlooked the informal

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groups which form in the work place and the local community. Certainly the right of voluntary membership of formal groups is basic for democratic Socialism, and its absence in Russia may become the most potent source of disintegration in the Soviet regime: but the institutional forms of such larger groups must correspond as nearly as possible to the latent functions of the informal groups on which they are based. There is no doubt that, in the past, one of the latent functions of trade unions was to act as a vehicle for the normal aggressive emotions of groups of workers in our industrial society. There is a danger that in performing only their representative functions in the planning state they are frustrating these feelings in their members which will find a less constructive outlet. The transfer of functions from small local authorities to county councils or central departments may be an administrative convenience and appear conducive to greater efficiency, but what are its effects on the communal relationships on which the stability of society ultimately rests?

Only recently has the State begun seriously to consider the family as a group worth protecting and assisting. This is in direct contravention of some earlier Socialist views, including those of Graham Wallas himself who, in his Fabian essay, anticipated the lessening of the internal coherence of family life and its absorption by society. Family allowances and social services have begun to substitute the criterion of income according to group need for income according to the value of the individual; but we know little about the way to assist good family relationships. What we do know is that those relationships have a profound effect on the young child and so on the psychology of the adult and on his irrational attitudes, as frequently displayed in the institutions of which he forms part. The Socialist philosophy envisages the spread of democratic behaviour through every aspect of communal life; but experience has taught us that such behaviour is only possible from balanced, democratic personalities.

What chance has the average person to develop such a personality? He starts life at the whim of anxious parents who know little of the psychological effects upon him of their behaviour. He goes to school in classes the size of which makes inevitable the use of authoritarian methods by his teachers, and he passes into adult life either in the army or in an industry managed on authoritarian lines.

For Socialists the important point is that good group relationships starting with the family are democratic, co-operative relationships: relationships of self-abnegation and mutual help, involving freely accepted leadership: the individual relationships of the Utilitarians were competitive relationships based on the primacy of self-interest which had to be controlled by imposed authority.

Canon Demant has emphasised the important part played by

the social disciplines and group relationships surviving from the feudal era in easing the drastic change to the capitalist market economy. Capitalism reaches its most serious crisis when these disciplines have been destroyed by Utilitarian rationalism. It may even be that trusts and price-fixing associations, in addition to their open and anti-social purposes, as well as the so-called restrictive practices of the trade unions, owe something to the subconscious recollection of a society of order and the just price, and that this has prevented European capitalism from reaching the competitive extremes reached in some parts of the United States economy.

It has been suggested that our stable society has only been possible because we have been living in accordance with habits of unselfishness based upon centuries of established routine, but that these habits have been undermined by a century of individualist philosophy and capitalist institutions just at the time when they are most needed for a successful change to a Socialist society.

(iii) The Significance of Socialist Values

It is important for Socialists, therefore, to have clear in their own minds, and to make clear to others, the values on which they are attempting to build the new society. If they do not, there is a serious danger of a conflict of values which is one of the main causes of social disintegration. The effects of the contrast between what is taught and what is practiced in our industrial society have been frequently noted by social workers as the cause of anti-social conduct. Mr. J. H. Bagot, the headmaster of a secondary school, recently told a conference of industrial training officers that many children, on leaving school, where their life was based on spiritual values, were profoundly shocked by the lower standards of value which they met at work. We have to be sure that the new social institutions which we are creating correspond to the values which, as Socialists, we proclaim, and that the means by which the Socialist society is to be achieved correspond to the ends we desire. If we do not, there will be intellectual and moral confusion.

If the individual is to be helped to think and behave rationally he must also feel that there is a real relation between the rewards which society offers to those who accept its values and his own work. Gilbert Murray, writing of Greek religion, wrote that ". . . the best seed-ground for superstition is a society in which the fortunes of men seem to bear practically no relation to their merits and efforts. A stable and well-governed society does tend, speaking roughly, to ensure that the virtuous and industrious apprentice shall succeed, while the wicked and idle apprentice fails. And in such a society people tend to lay stress on the reasonable and visible chains of causation." But in a society suffering from

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every sort of unexplained disaster or governed by the whim of a despot ". . . the ordinary virtues of diligence, honesty, and kindliness seem to be of little avail. The only way to escape destruction is to win the favour of the prevailing powers, take the side of the strongest invader, flatter the despot, placate fate or fortune or angry God that is sending the earthquake or pestilence." [8] I invite you to translate that pregnant passage into modern terms.

When there is a great contrast between ends and means, between values proclaimed and values practiced, between individual merit and reward in accordance with those values, frustration often turns into impotent resentment. This resentment may not, in the first place, show itself in revolt, but may lead to apathy and non-participation in the social and political life of the community. When this occurs, democracy is already in danger.

It is for these reasons that we must, as speedily as possible, get rid of the social and class distinctions that still remain a barrier to talent in our society. This means dealing not only with education, but also with the methods of selection and training for positions in every sort of organisation. We also need to consider carefully whether we are to encourage competition or co-operation as the basic principle of industrial activity, and whether income is chiefly to be based on reward for value contributed or on need. It seems likely that the supposedly normal instincts of competition and desire for pecuniary reward as an incentive for effort are really in conflict with basic human needs, and that the attempt to act in accordance with values based on these assumptions causes considerable unhappiness to normal personalities. What human beings need most, from infancy onwards, is love and approbation. In adult life they need to feel that they are valued, that they are playing a recognised part in the life of the community, that their work has significance and provides status. It is this feeling of significance and status that modern technological advances in industry have destroyed by increasing the gap between the highly trained technical staff and the mass of productive workers, whose jobs can be learnt in a few hours. The old craft occupations—carpenter, baker, blacksmith, and so on—had a real social significance which is completely lacking in the unnamed jobs performed in a mass-production factory, where every process has been splintered into its elements. I frankly do not know the answer to this problem, which cuts at the root of the insistence of democratic socialism on the value of individual personality. We can make a start by reconciling the emotional desire for significant status with the varying capacities of individuals, by providing equal opportunity, and taking care that everyone is doing work which is best suited to their abilities—including jobs requiring intellectual or administrative ability of a high order, as well as jobs for the 5-10 per cent. whose intelligence is subnormal.

These are the factors which underlie all our recent discussions on incentives in the planned society: a problem almost completely neglected in the past by Socialists, although some of us started to examine it, in a little paper called "Labour Discussion Notes," in 1941. There have been signs in recent statements of Labour Party policy that we have run away from the problem and are seeking refuge in the assumptions of Utilitarian philosophy. Our re-discovery of the blessings of competition seems to me to be an example of this development.

Meanwhile, there is a danger that propaganda and exhortation may be used to cover up the social disorganisation to which a system of conflicting values will give rise. I am not such a pessimist as Canon Demant, who foresees a decaying civilisation compensated for by external organisation and frantic appeals to "loyalty" to a pattern of life which no longer appeals by its intrinsic excellence. There is much in our present society which men and women value and will make sacrifices to maintain, but from Socialism they expect something else. What they expect and will respond to cannot be expressed in words alone: one of the signs of our advancing maturity which Graham Wallas envisaged was that an increasing proportion of the population would, even if only half-consciously, "see through" the cruder forms of emotional appeal. That this is happening is the reason why the popular Press is not the menace that it at first sight appears to be and why speech-making is no longer the most important activity of a politician. The best propaganda is personal and public action in accordance with a set of values which have been constantly proclaimed and consistently applied. It is this consistency in the behaviour of public authorities which people recognise as justice and which provides that inner, psychological security which enables people to exercise forethought and reason in their political decisions and which is as important for happiness as the new conditions of material security of which we are so proud.

London, 20th October, 1950.

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