

**SOCIALIST  
THOUGHT**  
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**THE  
FORERUNNERS**

**1789-1850**

**G. D. H. COLE**









SOCIALIST THOUGHT:  
THE FORERUNNERS  
1789-1850



A HISTORY OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT : Volume I

SOCIALIST THOUGHT  
THE FORERUNNERS  
1789-1850

BY  
G. D. H. COLE

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## PREFACE

THIS book, although it stands by itself, is designed to be the first of a series forming together a general history of Socialist thought. It covers, roughly, the years from 1789 to the middle of the nineteenth century; but even within the limits of space which I have set myself, it obviously leaves out some things which belong to that period. The biggest of these omissions is that of Russian Socialism — from Pestel's projects of land nationalisation in the 1820s to Belinsky, Herzen, and Bakunin, who were all active well before 1850. This omission is deliberate, and will be made good in the second volume. I found it more convenient to postpone discussion of Herzen and Bakunin in order to be able to link them directly with later developments — Herzen with Chernishovsky and the Narodniks, and Bakunin with the struggles which split the First International and with the development of Anarchism. As against these omissions, I have carried the story of a number of thinkers with whom I have dealt in the present volume a long way beyond 1850. Blanqui and Proudhon are outstanding instances. In the case of Marx and Engels, on the other hand, I have tried to deal only with the earlier phases, leaving the later development of their thought to be discussed in connection with the movements which they created or influenced in the second half of the century. Thus, no full exposition of Marxism is attempted in this volume, which stops short, not quite at the *Communist Manifesto*, but at the dissolution of the Communist League after the eclipse of the European revolutionary movement at the beginning of the 1850s.

I wish to make it clear that this book is not meant to be a history of Socialism, but only of Socialist *thought*, with such references to actual movements as are necessary to explain the thought. Indeed, the writing of a comprehensive history of Socialism would be an impossible task for any single author, and would have to be on a much bigger scale than anything

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I have in mind to write — or should have, even if I possessed the requisite knowledge. Even within the more modest limits of what I am attempting I am very conscious of my shortcomings. I have no Russian, almost no Spanish, very little Italian, and not much German; and I hate reading German, and avoid it whenever I can. I tend therefore to use English or French translations of works in these languages where they exist, and to refer to German originals of translated works only when I want to be sure a passage has not been wrongly rendered. I also tend to take my German material much more at second hand, where translations do not exist, than either English or French writings; and I expect my more expert readers will easily discover this for themselves, though I hope I have not allowed myself to be led badly astray.

The second volume of this work is already half in draft. Besides picking up the omitted Russian pioneers, it deals mainly with the later phases of Marxism up to the rise of the various Social Democratic Parties in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with the First International, the Paris Commune, and the split between Marxists, Anarchists, and those, such as the British Fabians and Independent Labourites, who were neither, and also with the continental developments of Christian Social doctrine after 1850 and with the peculiarly German movement often called 'Academic Socialism', or 'Socialism of the Chair'. I mention these facts because they help to explain the omission from the present volume of a number of non-Russian Socialists who had begun to be active well before 1850 — for example, Rodbertus, Lassalle, and von Ketteler in Germany, Colins, Kats, and de Kayser in Belgium, and some of the Italian and Spanish pioneers.

In connection with the present volume, I have a number of obligations to acknowledge. The greatest of all is to my colleague, Isaiah Berlin, who has read the whole book in proof and has helped me to improve it greatly in accordance with his admirably sagacious criticisms. I also owe valuable suggestions to my colleagues, Dr. H. G. Schenk and John Plamenatz, who read a number of chapters and put me right in not a few places where I had gone wrong. I am also most grateful to my brother-in-law, Raymond Postgate, and to my friend, H. L. Beales, for the loan of books which I should

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have not found it easy to obtain elsewhere ; and, as always, I owe a great deal to the untiring help of my secretary, Rosamund Broadley, who, by a miracle, can read my writing and forgive me for it.

My wife I am in debt to so often that I usually end by not thanking her at all.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

THE impossibility of defining Socialism has often been emphasised, and sometimes regarded as a reproach. But neither in Politics nor in Morals is any important idea or system ever capable of being exactly defined. Who can satisfactorily define democracy, or liberty, or virtue, or happiness, or the State, or, for that matter, individualism any more than Socialism? The most that can be attempted in such cases as these, with any prospect of success, is the discovery of some central core of meaning, present with varying additions in all or most of the manifold uses of the words in question, but in all probability never found alone, without any addition. The discovery of this central core will not enable us to understand these words; for the added significances form no less essential parts of their acquired meanings. A word means what it is used to mean, or, for practical purposes, at least what it is commonly used to mean, or has been commonly used to mean by persons to whose utterances we need to pay any attention. Nevertheless, if we can find a central core of meaning, we are better placed for understanding the varieties of usage; and in the search for this core it is a valuable first step to find out how a word first came into use.

It is not known who first used the words 'Socialism' and 'socialist'. So far as is known, they first appeared in print in Italian in 1803, but in a sense entirely unconnected with any of their later meanings. Thereafter there has, so far, been found no trace of them until 1827, when the word 'socialist' was used in the Owenite *Co-operative Magazine* to designate the followers of Owen's Co-operative doctrines. The word '*socialisme*' made its first known appearance in print in a French periodical — *Le Globe* — in 1832. This paper was then edited by Pierre Leroux, who had made it the principal organ of the Saint-Simonians; and the word '*socialisme*' was

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used as a characterisation of the Saint-Simonian doctrine. The word was freely used by Leroux and Reynaud during the 1830s in their *Nouvelle Encyclopédie* and in other writings, and soon came to be employed in a wider sense to include a number of groups aiming at some kind of new social order resting on an economic and social conception of human rights. Thereafter, both 'Socialism' and 'socialist' were used quite frequently both in France and in Great Britain; and they soon spread to Germany and to other European countries and also to the United States. In all probability they had been used in speech before they came to be written down: the earliest known uses of them do not suggest that they were conscious new coinages, though they may have been. They were convenient and quite natural terms for describing certain attitudes and projects of social reorganisation for which, by the third decade of the nineteenth century, a broadly identifying label had come to be needed in everyday speech.

It is easy enough to see, in a general way, what those who used these labelling words intended to convey by them. They were formed from the word 'social', and were applied to persons advocating doctrines which were felt to merit the label 'social', and to the doctrines such persons professed. The word 'social' was in this connection contrasted with the word 'individual'. The 'socialists' were those who, in opposition to the prevailing stress on the claims of the individual, emphasised the social element in human relations and sought to bring the social question to the front in the great debate about the rights of man let loose on the world by the French Revolution and by the accompanying revolution in the economic field. Before the word Socialism came into use men had spoken of 'Social Systems', meaning much the same thing. The word 'Socialists' denoted those who advocated one or another of the many 'Social Systems' that were at once contending one with another and united in hostility to the prevailing individualist order in economics, and to the pre-eminence accorded to political over social and economic questions in contemporary views and attitudes about human relations and the right ordering of public affairs.

The groups thus originally dubbed 'socialist' were principally three, though there were many lesser groups representing

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broadly similar tendencies. These three were, in France, the Saint-Simonians and the Fourierists, and in Great Britain the Owenites, who, in 1841, officially adopted the name of Socialists. Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Robert Owen had in common, despite their many differences, an essentially social approach. This was true in at least three different, though related, senses. In the first place, all three regarded the 'social question' as by far the most important of all, and insisted that it was, above all else, the task of good men to promote the general happiness and well-being. Secondly, all three regarded this task as wholly incompatible with the continuance of any social order which rested on, or set out to encourage, a competitive struggle between man and man for the means of living. Thirdly, all three were deeply distrustful of 'politics' and of politicians, and believed that the future control of social affairs should lie mainly, not with parliaments or ministers, but with 'the producers', and that, if the economic and social sides of men's affairs could be properly organised, the traditional forms of government and political organisation would soon be superseded, and a new world of international peace and collaboration would replace the old world of dynastic and imperialist conflicts. This distrust of 'politics' and this belief that the 'political' order was destined soon to be replaced by a new and better management of men's affairs were of course shared by many thinkers of the early nineteenth century who were not Socialists in any precise sense — for example, Victor Hugo. The contrast between the 'political' and the 'social' attitude to the problems of mankind runs through much of the thought of the period after the Napoleonic Wars.

Within this common agreement there were wide diversities. The Fourierists and the Owenites were community-makers; they set out to supersede the old societies by covering the earth with a network of local communities founded on a truly social basis, and believed that these new foundations could, without violence or revolution, supersede the existing structures by the sheer effect of their evident superiority in terms of the promotion of human welfare. The Saint-Simonians, on the other hand, were strong believers in the virtues of large-scale organisation and scientific planning, and aimed at transforming national States into great productive corporations

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dominated by the men of science and high technical capacity, and at linking these regenerated States together by means of master-plans of world-wide economic and social development. The Owenites and the Fourierists for the most part eschewed political activity, in the ordinary sense of the term ; whereas the Saint-Simonians were bent on capturing States and Governments and on transforming them to suit their new purposes.

Again, whereas Fourier's disciples thought mainly in terms of intensive cultivation of the land and relegated industry and commerce to quite minor positions, the Owenites were well aware of the significance of the Industrial Revolution and thought in terms of a new society resting on a balance of agricultural and industrial production ; while the Saint-Simonians' attention was given mainly to great engineering feats — canal-cutting, irrigation, road- and railway-building — and to the organisation of banking and finance as the instruments of large-scale economic planning.

These were big differences ; but the common element in the three doctrines was, none the less, enough to endow them, in popular parlance, with a common name. They were all enemies of individualism, of the competitive economic system, and of the idea of a natural economic law which would work out for the general good if only the politicians would, while enforcing the rights of property, keep their hands off the further regulation of economic affairs. They all stood, against *laissez-faire*, for the view that economic and social affairs needed collective organisation of a positive kind for the promotion of welfare, and that this organisation should rest, in some sort, on a co-operative, and not on a competitive, principle. In 1839, the economist, Jérôme Blanqui, in his pioneer *History of Political Economy*, characterised them all as 'Utopian Socialists' — a name which was to become lastingly attached to them through its adoption by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*.

Thus, Socialism, as the word was first used, meant collective regulation of men's affairs on a co-operative basis, with the happiness and welfare of all as the end in view, and with the emphasis not on 'politics' but on the production and distribution of wealth and on the strengthening of 'socialising' influences in the lifelong education of the citizens in co-



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operative, as against competitive, patterns of behaviour and social attitudes and beliefs. It follows that all the 'Socialists' were deeply interested in education, and regarded a good social education as a fundamental 'right of man'.

It will be observed that in this description of the common characteristics of early 'Socialist' doctrine there is not a word about the proletariat or the class-struggle between it and the capitalist or employing class. There is nothing about these concepts because, save quite incidentally, they found hardly any place among the ideas of these Socialist schools, though they had, of course, been prominent in Babeuf's movement and were soon to become so again in the social struggles of the 1830s and 1840s. Neither Saint-Simon nor Fourier nor Robert Owen thought at all in terms of a class-struggle between capitalists and workers as rival economic classes, or envisaged the putting of their schemes into effect as involving a grand contest between the proletariat and the *bourgeoisie*. They all agreed that, as things were, the workers were victims of exploitation; they all stood forth as advocates of the claims of what Saint-Simon termed '*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*'; they all attacked the undue inequality of property and income and demanded the regulation and limitation of property rights. But they thought of the abuses of the property system as arising rather from the overweening claims of *les oisifs* — again Saint-Simon's phrase — than from the exploitation of the worker by his direct employer; which latter they regarded as in the main a secondary consequence of the system of oligarchical privilege. Nor must it be forgotten that '*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*' still consisted, in every country, mainly of peasants and not of industrial workers. Saint-Simon expected *les industriels*, employers and workers together, to join hands in the struggle against the old privileged classes and the old States which upheld their power. He wished men to be rewarded strictly in accordance with their real services — a doctrine from which his followers drew the logical deduction that inheritance should be done away with. He was quite prepared for *les grands industriels* to draw large incomes in return for large services to the public. Fourier wished to limit the shares of capital-providers and managers to fixed proportions

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of the total product, and also, in effect, to impose a steeply graduated tax on incomes from property; but he did not propose to take away the rights of property or to impose equality of incomes. Owen wanted capital to receive only a fixed or maximum dividend, all surplus profit being devoted to the development of social services for the general benefit; and he also believed that, in course of time, as the institutions of the new society developed, the desire to be richer than others would die out and the capital-owners would voluntarily renounce their share. Neither he nor Fourier, any more than Saint-Simon, conceived their plans as calling for a massed struggle between the employing and the working classes.

Thus, Fourier sat, day after day and year after year, waiting in vain for responses to his advertisements for capitalists who would be prepared to finance his proposed communities; while Owen threw his own and his friends' money into his 'Villages of Co-operation', and was always looking for rich men capable of understanding the beauty of his ideas. Saint-Simon too dreamed of rich backers; and his successors sometimes found them. Indeed, his best-known disciple, *Enfantin*, became a railway director, and other Saint-Simonians, such as the *Pereire* brothers, came to play leading parts in the financial world. Socialism, in its early days and as the term was then understood, was emphatically *not* a doctrine of class-war between Capital and Labour.

The class-war doctrine, however, not only existed long before the word 'socialist' came into use, but had its own schools and variations of opinion, which were regarded as distinct from those of 'Socialism'. The principal exponents of the class-war in the 1820s and 1830s were those on the extreme left of Radicalism who looked back for their inspiration to *Gracchus Babeuf* and the *Conspiration des Égaux* of 1796. The words '*babouvisme*' and '*babouviste*' were in frequent use in France, especially after the Revolution of 1830; and the word '*prolétarien*' was particularly associated with the *babouviste* tradition. The followers of *Babeuf*, fully as much as the *Owenites*, the *Fourierists*, and the *Saint-Simonians*, gave prominence to '*la question sociale*'; and they were sometimes lumped in with these groups under the general name of 'Socialists'. But until well after 1830 it was more usual to draw a distinction,

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the more so because, whereas the Saint-Simonians and the Fourierists were organised and recognised groups (as were the Owenites in Great Britain), *babouvisme* was rather a tendency than a sect, and its exponents were found among the members of democratic and revolutionary clubs and societies which did not collectively profess it as a doctrine, but treated it rather as an outstanding expression of left-wing Jacobinism, and as a first attempt to carry the Revolution of 1789 right through to its logical conclusion.

'Communism' was another word which came into use in France during the social ferment that followed the Revolution of 1830. How and when it originated cannot be exactly said; but we hear of it first in connection with some of the secret revolutionary societies of Paris during the 'thirties, and we know that it came into common use in the 1840s mainly as a designation of the theories of Étienne Cabet. It seems to have carried with it, right from the beginning, something of a *double entendre*. As used by Frenchmen, it conjured up the idea of the *commune*, as the basic unit of neighbourhood and self-government, and suggested a form of social organisation resting on a federation of free communes. But at the same time it suggested the notion of *communauté* — of having things in common and of common ownership; and it was in this aspect that it was developed by Cabet and his followers, whereas the other element connected it rather with the underground clubs of the extreme left, and, through them, with the clubs of exiled revolutionaries through which it passed on to be employed in the name of the Communist League of 1847 and of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. In Great Britain the word 'communist' seems to have been first used in 1840 — imported from France by the Owenite John Goodwyn Barnby, in his letters from Paris published in *The New Moral World*. He used it chiefly with reference to the followers of Cabet, who had been much influenced by Owenism. In the 1840s it was often used in connection with 'Socialism', but usually as distinct from it, and as carrying a more militant implication. It was chosen deliberately by the group for which Marx and Engels prepared the *Communist Manifesto* because it carried with it more than 'Socialist' the idea of revolutionary struggle, and had, at the same time, a clearer

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connection with the notion of common ownership and enjoyment. It was, Engels has explained, less 'utopian': it lent itself better to association with the idea of the class-struggle and with the Materialist Conception of History.

So far, we have been speaking in terms of words and of the ideas and schools of thought and action they were first used to designate. But, of course, many of the ideas had existed long before the schools in question came into being. There was nothing novel in stressing the claims of society as against those of the individual; nothing new in denouncing social inequalities or in accusing the rich of exploiting the poor; nothing new in asserting the need for an education of all citizens in the principles of social morality; nothing new in proposing community of goods. Assuredly, there was nothing new in writing social utopias, or in claiming for all men economic as well as civil and political rights. Accordingly it was quite natural that the words which had come into use to denote the Fourierists, the Saint-Simonians, the Owenites, the Icarians (followers of Cabet), and the other sects of the early nineteenth century should be applied before long to earlier thinkers and projectors whose ideas in some measure seemed to resemble theirs. The labels 'socialist', 'communist' (and, later, 'anarchist') came to be used with reference to all manner of past doctrines in which emphasis had been put on living in common, on collective ownership, on education in social morality, or on collective social planning and control of the environment of habits and institutions which shaped men's lives.

In France, where so much of Socialist theory had its birth, men's thoughts naturally turned back first of all to the immediate precursors of Saint-Simon and of Fourier — to those who, as *philosophes* of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, had put forward, often in the form of utopias, the most trenchant criticisms of contemporary society. They found anticipations of Socialism and of Communism in the works of Morelly (*Code de la nature*, 1755, at one time attributed to Diderot), of the Abbé Bonnot de Mably (*Entretiens de Phocion sur les rapports de la morale avec la politique*, 1763, and other works), and, earlier still, in the *Testament* of the Curé Meslier (died c. 1730), then known only in an incomplete version edited by Voltaire. They found elements of Socialist doctrine in

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Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* (1755), with its passionate denunciations of the evils arising out of private property, and even in the *étatisme* of *Du contrat social* (1762). They went back to Condorcet's pleas for education as a human right, as well as to his prophetic *Esquisse* of the progress of the spirit of man.

These reachings back into the eighteenth century necessarily led them to look much further into the past. Mably had built consciously on Plato's *Republic*; and he, Rousseau, and many others had harked back to Plutarch's account of the constitution of ancient Sparta. Through these intermediaries the ancestry of Socialism and Communism was traced back to the classical world; while others rediscovered the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, or other peasant uprisings, or harked back to the 'Communism' of the early Christian Church and the communistic elements in the monastic life of the Middle Ages. Yet others traced Socialism back to More's *Utopia* (1516), Campanella's *City of the Sun* (1623), and other writings of the Renaissance. In Great Britain, Robert Owen had his attention drawn by Francis Place to the late seventeenth-century tract of *Colledges of Industry*, by the Quaker, John Bellers, in which Owen found an anticipation of some of his own ideas for dealing with the problems of poverty and unemployment; and it was not a far cry from Bellers to Peter Chamberlen, or to the more radical groups among the Puritans of the Civil War and Commonwealth periods — to Levellers and Diggers, though this quest was not much followed till a good deal later.<sup>1</sup> The Anabaptists of Münster, also, were called into requisition, by both foes and friends, to contribute to the pedigree of Socialist and Communist doctrines.

In this volume I do not propose to retell the story of these anticipations, real or fancied, of the Socialist and Communist movements of the nineteenth century. I put them aside, not as unimportant, but as falling outside the subject on which I am at present setting out to write. I propose, however, to go back to a date some forty years before the names 'Socialism' and 'socialist' came into common use, because the history of the

<sup>1</sup> The revival of interest in Gerrard Winstanley's *Law of Freedom* (1652), with its remarkable anticipations of modern Socialist ideas and its advocacy of agrarian Communism, is quite recent.

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movements of the period after the Napoleonic Wars cannot be understood at all except against the background of the great French Revolution and of the political, economic, and social changes which the Revolution let loose. It is now a commonplace to say that from 1789 onwards Europe was in the throes of three kinds of revolutionary change — *political and social*, symbolised by the events in France and their repercussions in other countries, *industrial*, marked by the advent of steam power and the extended application of scientific techniques in manufacture and in civil and mechanical engineering, and *agrarian*, involving vast changes in methods of land-cultivation and stock-breeding, and in the character of rural life. These three linked revolutions did not, of course, all begin in 1789. The industrial and agrarian revolutions cannot be pinned down to a single year or event: the steam-engine, as Watt left it, was the outcome of a long chain of inventions and improvements, and the new husbandry developed gradually, with no one outstanding event to mark its onset. Only the political Revolution can be assigned to a particular year in which it began; and its social content was being prepared long before the Fall of the Bastille proclaimed to the world the ending of the *ancien régime*.

1789, then, is not, and cannot be, an exact starting-point; but it will in general serve my purpose well enough because I am concerned in this book primarily with ideas and only secondarily with events and movements. In the realm of ideas, 1789 is the dividing line, because men felt it to be so, and shaped their ideas and projects thereafter in a different frame of mind, as adventurers faring forth into a new world in the making.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GREAT FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE CONSPIRACY OF GRACCHUS BABEUF

ALTHOUGH Socialism, in one sense, began long before, and in another sense some decades after, the great French Revolution, there is, we have seen, a good enough reason for taking 1789 as a starting-point for a study of the development of modern Socialist ideas. This is the point from which it is possible to trace, not only a continuous development in the field of thought, but also a growing connection between the thought and movements seeking to give practical expression to it. The socialistic or communistic theorists of the eighteenth century had no movements behind them, even in the realm of theory: they were almost isolated thinkers standing on the periphery of a vast intellectual movement which had in it a large democratic and liberal content, but nothing specifically socialist in its essential ideas — at any rate, nothing more than a belief in human happiness as an objective of social policy and in human perfectibility as a possible goal to be reached by the continued progress of *les lumières*. The eighteenth-century 'Socialists' were, first and foremost, moralists and moral reformers. They denounced with strong humanitarian fervour the co-existence of riches and poverty, of luxury and sheer indigence, and they traced the sources of these evils and of the depravity that went with them to bad political and social institutions. Men were depraved, they held, not because of natural wickedness, but because they lived in a bad environment which encouraged luxury, pride, and oppression and condemned the many to exist under degrading conditions of servitude and want. These social critics were by no means necessarily revolutionaries or rebels: some of them made only modest practical proposals for change, and most of them put their hopes much more on education and the growth of reasonableness than on any uprising of the oppressed.

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They tended either to write 'Utopias' or to construct models of a perfect society and rules for its conduct ; but the eighteenth-century utopias were not so much practical projects of social reorganisation as pleasant dreams conveying lessons in moral attitudes and behaviour. There was initially no connection between these visions of a new society and any popular movement — much less any proletarian movement — for bringing it into existence. The very notion of the proletariat as a revolutionary force goes back no further than Babeuf. The 'social' doctrines which prepared the way for the Socialist movements of the nineteenth century were predominantly ethical expositions of human relations as they were not, but ought to be.

But during the years which immediately followed the taking of the Bastille and the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, the 'social question' forced its way for the first time to the front, not merely as a moral problem for a limited group of intellectuals and reformers of manners, but as an insistent practical issue involving a real and menacing conflict between the rich and the poor — between the propertied and the propertyless — as well as between the privileged orders of the old society and the unprivileged *Tiers État*. The first clear sign of this came from the countryside rather than from the towns : it was the burning of title-deeds, the sack of châteaux, and the flight of many of the feudal nobility and of their agents. But the towns also showed indications of the coming struggle in the demands embodied in the *cahiers* from working-class areas and in the growth of clubs and societies with a predominantly working-class, or at any rate an artisan, following. Of these two manifestations, that of the peasants was of course much the larger, and the more significant immediately ; and it was also much the more successful, for, broadly speaking, the peasants got what they most wanted — land and freedom from feudal exactions. The urban artisans did not : the Revolution had nothing to offer them in the way of immediate economic advantages. They became citizens, but not property-owners ; and even their rights of citizenship were soon a matter of acrimonious debate between the rival factions which were contending over the new Constitution of the French Republic. In 1793 they seemed, for a moment, certain at any rate of



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political rights ; but the democratic Constitution of that year was never allowed to come into force. The urban poor saw themselves cheated of the fruits of the Revolution, denied the anticipated recognition of their rights as 'men and citizens'. A section among them reacted by adhering to the leaders who promised them the vindication of these rights, and began to link the demand for political equality to the demand for work and for bread on behalf of the many workers who had been thrown out of employment by the economic dislocations accompanying the Revolution.

In effect, the events of the period between 1789 and the defeat of the Conspiracy of the Equals led by Gracchus Babeuf a few years later made the class-struggle for the first time, albeit on a small scale and only for a moment, an open reality in a modern society, and in the course of the battle between rich and poor led to a formulation of socialistic doctrines which, never commanding more than a small number of direct followers, nevertheless represented a new element in the historical development of Western society.

In order to appreciate the character of these conflicts, in which activist movements anticipatory of modern Socialism first took shape, it is necessary to say something of the meaning of the great French Revolution as a social force — that is, in more than its purely political implications. It has often been said that the leaders of the Revolution — moderates, Girondins and Jacobins alike — proclaimed themselves firm upholders of the rights of property as well as of civil and political liberty, and that nothing was further from their thoughts than to challenge private property and set about putting in its place any sort of common ownership of the means of production. This is true enough if we except the small group which presently gathered round Gracchus Babeuf. The Jacobins, fully as much as the parties to the right of them, believed in the necessity of individual property, and, indeed, in the need for its diffusion over a much larger section of the people. They stood for the break-up of the great estates as well as for the abolition of feudal exactions and the alienation of the great privileges and property rights that had become vested in the Church ; but they aimed at diffusing property rather than at destroying it, and the attacks which they made upon established property rights

were justified by them either on the ground that the forms of property which they were attacking were anti-social and indefensible invasions of the rights of man, or, presently, after the outbreak of the revolutionary wars, on the ground that the necessities of public safety must, for the time being, override all other considerations. In abolishing the feudal rights of the nobility and in placing the property of the Church at the disposition of the new State, the leaders of the Revolution drew a sharp distinction between the 'wrongs of property' which they were attacking and those rights of property which they were concerned to defend and to render more sacred by striking away the undergrowth of indefensible claims that had grown up around them. Feudal dues seemed to them not forms of legitimate property but intolerable interferences with the legitimate rights of property, which belonged, or should belong, to the mass of the rural population. They felt themselves to be, not attacking property, but liberating peasant property in abolishing these dues, and, at the same time, to be liberating the property of all the productive classes from exactions levied upon it by an unproductive nobility and a parasitic court. Similarly, in the case of the Church, they felt that the property which the Church had accumulated to itself, as well as its claims to dues from the rest of the people, stood for an illegitimate exaction rather than for any indefeasible right. Brought up in the tradition of the *ancien régime*, they inherited its doctrine of political absolutism of the State over the Church, and, in this, they were reinforced by the Erastianism of the social doctrine proclaimed in Rousseau's *Social Contract* — and, indeed, in most of the writings of the eighteenth-century enlightenment. They felt that, in attacking the feudal claims of the nobility and the exactions of the Church, they were moving with the current of national opinion. This, indeed, advanced in the momentum of the Revolution well ahead of the legislative enactments, which, to a large extent, merely sanctioned what had been already achieved by the direct action of the people.

In the early years of the Revolution the new leaders of the people made no attack on the property of the rich except where it took the form of feudal claims or of ecclesiastical exploitation. Many of them had, indeed, a deep belief in the evil conse-

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quences of excessive economic inequality — an attitude inherited from the political philosophers from Fénelon onwards, and preached in season and out of season throughout the eighteenth century as a moral doctrine. The eighteenth-century philosophers who can be regarded as significant forerunners of Socialist doctrine — such as Mably and, in a different sense, Rousseau — had never wearied of denouncing the evils of luxury, or of proclaiming the virtues of the life of simple sufficiency; and the leaders of the Revolution were deeply imbued with the moral fervour of these intellectual reformers. Nevertheless, they did not attack the rich, as such, until they were positively driven to do so by the necessities of the time — first, by the prevailing scarcity which compelled them to fix prices of necessaries and to proscribe hoarding, forestalling, and other monopolistic exactions in order to prevent sheer famine, and, before long, by the added necessities of war, which compelled the French State to meet its rapidly mounting expenses by laying hold of every bit of surplus property or income which seemed capable of being made available for meeting the immediate necessities of the nation. In all this, the leaders of the new régime were no more than inheritors of the traditions of the old, for the *ancien régime*, equally with them, had proclaimed the doctrine that the State had a full right, in case of necessity, to lay hands on the property of individuals where it was needed for the salvation of the kingdom. The leaders of the French Revolution inherited the conceptions of universal sovereignty that had been dominant under the *ancien régime*. They simply transferred these conceptions to the new society resting on a foundation of popular sovereignty. But attacks on the rights of property in the interests of public safety had been, and continued to be, thought of as exceptional and as based on the temporary necessities of a nation at war or beset by famine. There was nothing in them, consciously at any rate, of an attack on the fundamental rights of property, certainly nothing of a desire immediately to substitute a régime of common ownership for the system of individual property rights which the old conditions were felt to have thwarted instead of furthered. Above all, the Revolution was engaged in spreading the rights of property among the peasants, in purging them from illegitimate

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feudal accretions, and in freeing urban trades and industries from the bureaucratic trammels and exactions of the corporative system. It was fighting for the 'true', the 'natural', right of property against the false and 'unnatural' system of privilege and monopoly; and its leaders, or most of them, conceived of this battle as being waged in the common interest of the unprivileged — property-owners, new and old, and artisans and workers together.

No doubt, quite a number of the more advanced leaders of the Revolution had imbibed notions of utopian Communism from the eighteenth-century philosophers — above all from Mably and Morelly — and had drunk deep of the doctrine of Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, with its tracing of the evils of civilisation to the inordinate development of property rights in the more advanced types of civilised society. Even, however, if some of these leaders speculated in terms of communistic utopias based on the fullest social equality, few of them incorporated their dreams into the practical policies which they urged the Revolutionary Assemblies to adopt. For example, Jean-Pierre Brissot — the Girondin leader — has sometimes been regarded as a Socialist forerunner, but nothing was further from his thoughts than to espouse any sort of Communism or communal ownership as a basis for the immediate reconstruction of French society. Indeed, many of those who had been most influenced by utopian theories of Communism *à la* Mably and were most prone in their speeches to extol the virtues of Lycurgus and of ancient Sparta were, in respect of social policies, among the most moderate in their immediate claims.

Broadly speaking, it is fair to say that the main body of leaders of the French Revolution, including the Jacobin leaders no less than the more moderate groups, envisaged the task of the Revolution as the diffusion of property rights in such a way as to diminish the more glaring social inequalities and to abolish the ancient forms of privilege, and hoped, in doing these things, to liberate economic forces which, under a régime of unprivileged competition, would, in accordance with the doctrines of the *économistes*, make for maximum production of wealth and, therewith, for the greatest well-being of the greatest number. This did not prevent the Jacobins, in particular,

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from denouncing continually the evils of inequality and the exactions of the rich or from demanding drastic reforms in the system of taxation so as to relieve the poor from all their burdens and to place the entire cost of the State upon the surplus incomes and property of the rich. But these denunciations represented in part a reaction to the actual anti-social behaviour of the rich under stress of the Revolution and to the prevalence of counter-revolutionary forces among the property-owning classes, and, in part, a desire for greater social equality, which was felt to depend on the diffusion of property rather than to involve any attack on fundamental property rights.

It was stress of war, excess of suffering, and the defeat and decapitation of the Jacobin Party that lay behind the emergence of the communistic conspiracy of Babeuf and his group. There had been before Babeuf a few voices crying in the wilderness for an immediate application of the principles of community and common ownership. Chappuis, in particular, had presented to the Constituent Assembly projects which anticipated no small part of Fourier's social doctrine, including a plan for collective communities, which were to be very like Fourier's *phalanstères*; but Chappuis and the few others who produced similar ideas remained unknown except to a very few, and their schemes had no influence at all on the course of events. It was left for Babeuf and his group to put forward, on the morrow of the eclipse of the Jacobin Party and of the sharp reaction against the *élan* of the Revolution which took place under the Directory, an almost fully fledged scheme of proletarian Communism, in which can be traced the forerunner not only of later Socialist doctrines of common ownership and exploitation of the means of production, but also of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a means of subjugating the other classes and of defeating the endeavours of the counter-revolution.

Despite the essentially novel character of Babeuf's *Conspiration des Égaux* as the first essentially socialistic movement among the people, there was, as has been said frequently, little or nothing that was new in the social aspirations of the conspirators. They were taking over and applying to the contemporary social situation doctrines of Communism and social

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equality which they had imbibed from Mably and from other utopian philosophers of the eighteenth century. What was new was the conversion of these utopian notions into the shape of a social movement aiming at the immediate *bouleversement* of the existing society and of its economic as well as of its political institutions. Not, of course, that Babeuf's movement ever really took shape as a nation-wide revolutionary campaign. It found its support, as the Jacobins had done, mainly in the larger towns and pre-eminently in Paris, where its following was attracted to it mainly by the conditions of scarcity and unemployment which followed upon the Revolution and upon the reluctance of emancipated peasants to keep the towns supplied with the necessaries of life. Nor did it ever command more than a small fraction even of the urban proletariat. It was a conspiracy of a few who aimed at drawing after them the large elements of urban discontent arising mainly out of sheer hunger. It was never anything in the nature of a mass movement, even of the urban workers. That was partly why it was so easily nipped in the bud ; but even if it had commanded a much larger urban following, it could not possibly have succeeded in face of the state of opinion in the countryside, which was still, in the last resort, the socially dominant factor. The more fortunate peasants, having become emancipated from feudal and ecclesiastical claims and having thereby established their rights of property, were certainly in no mood to rally behind any movement which took as its aim the establishment of community of goods and common exploitation of the means of production. The divorce between the country dwellers and the less wealthy classes in the towns had already gone too far as a consequence of the first acts of the revolutionary régime for any mass movement based on ideas of Communism or Socialism to stand a chance. Accordingly, not only *babouvisme* but also the ideas of the Jacobin left wing had been rendered inapplicable by the very success of the Revolution in the countryside ; and the urban proletariat, even reinforced by many artisans and small masters, was far too weak to serve as the foundation of the new France.

Indeed, *babouvisme* was essentially a product of revolutionary disenchantment. So much had been hoped of the Revolution ; and what seemed to have come of it, for the

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poorer sections of the urban population, was deeper poverty and distress. The peasants had got the land, the workers only hunger and unemployment. For this, someone must be to blame: the Revolution must have been betrayed by someone. By whom, then? Surely, by the well-to-do, who had continued to live in luxury while the many suffered, and by those who, in the name of property, had allowed such things to occur. But such slogans were not very effective, despite the distress; for they divided the revolutionaries, even in the towns, and in the villages they found no response at all.

The Socialism, then, which made its fleeting appearance in the 'Conspiracy of the Equals' in 1796 was, in relation to the main development of the French Revolution, never more than a side issue. Its importance lies not in what it achieved or could have achieved under the circumstances of the time, but in its anticipation of later movements which developed after the Great Revolution had spent its force, and were the outcome mainly of subsequent developments of capitalism and of the new rights of the *bourgeoisie*. What the French Revolution did was, not to bring Socialism into force as a living and continuous social movement, but rather, by developing for the first time into a political struggle the antagonism between rich and poor and substituting this antagonism for the earlier antagonisms between the privileged and the unprivileged classes, to set the stage for the long-drawn-out social struggles of nineteenth-century Europe, out of which the modern Socialist movement arose.

I have already said something of the general character of Babeuf's Conspiracy. The story of it was first told in full in the account published in 1828 at Brussels by Philippe-Michel Buonarroti (1761-1837), a descendant of Michelangelo, who himself played an important part in its development. This work of Buonarroti came to rank almost as a 'Revolutionists' Handbook' during the troublesome years that followed the French Revolution of 1830, and again during the revolutionary outbreak which culminated in 1848. Translated by Bronterre O'Brien, with interpolations of his own, it had some influence on left-wing Chartist thought in Great Britain, as well as on the development of theories of revolutionary dictatorship over most of Europe. Later, the story was retold more fully, with

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access to additional papers, by Advielle, whose book to-day remains the most useful source for students of Babouvism. Its influence lasted on. I have in my possession the copy of Advielle's book which William Morris presented to Ernest Belfort Bax, with the inscription: 'Given to E. Belfort Bax from William Morris on condition that the said Bax writes a clear account of the Babeuf episode'; which 'the said Bax' proceeded to do. Babeuf's Conspiracy continued to be regarded by revolutionary Socialists, and is to-day regarded by Communists, as the first plain manifestation of the proletariat in revolutionary action, proclaiming from afar the new revolution which was destined to complete the work begun in 1789.

In Buonarroti's and in Advielle's accounts it is easy to see how the Conspiracy developed. The overthrow of the Jacobins and the execution of their principal leaders had left a large discontented following with no one to guide it, and the combination of this Jacobin rank and file with the leadership provided by Babeuf's small group of 'Conspirators', including a few military men, provided the material for the outbreak. In Babeuf's original Society — the Union du Panthéon — there had been diverse social and ideological elements, from which the small group closely associated with Babeuf withdrew into a secret conspiracy after the suppression of the Union by the Directory. This group, after difficult negotiations, combined with the underground leadership of the remaining Jacobins, only to have its plans betrayed on the eve of the projected outbreak by one of its military associates, who had been throughout the affair acting as a spy on the Directory's behalf. Babeuf and his fellow-leaders were arrested and the Conspiracy fell to pieces. At their trial they were accused of all manner of sanguinary intentions; but the papers which can be regarded as authentic show only that they had projected a seizure of power by a small revolutionary group of leaders, who were then to establish a revolutionary government based on their following among the Parisian local societies, with the intention of summoning as speedily as possible a National Assembly, to be elected under the democratic franchise of the abortive Constitution of 1793, which had never been allowed to come into force.

Pending the bringing into action of this Constitution,



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Babeuf and his followers proposed to establish a temporary dictatorship, based mainly on the Paris workers; but they had no theory of revolutionary — much less of proletarian — dictatorship as more than an expedient of transition over a short period to a fully democratic Constitution based on manhood suffrage. They did, however, propose to proceed immediately — without waiting for the Constitution to be brought into force — to large measures of expropriation and redistribution of property holdings on a basis of communal appropriation and enjoyment of all goods. 'Nature', they proclaimed in the opening section of the *Manifesto of the Equals*, 'has given to every man an equal right to the enjoyment of all goods', and on this basis they proposed to expropriate at once all property belonging to corporations and to enemies of the people and, at the same time, to abolish all rights of inheritance, so that property still left in private hands would lapse over a single generation into communal ownership. In accordance with plans prepared by Babeuf, France was to be divided up into new administrative areas within which property passing into public ownership was to be socially administered by popularly elected officials who were to receive only the same salaries as the workers. Labour was to be compulsory for all, and only persons engaged in useful labour were to have the right to vote. Education was to be made available to all, and was to be directed to teaching the people the principles of the new society based on communal property. In Babeuf's schemes landed property was still mainly considered, as it was bound to be; but the expropriation of industrial corporations was also clearly contemplated, and a special appeal was made to the urban workers, who meantime provided the movement with its main support.

The trial of Babeuf and his associates ended, as it could not but end, in the condemnation and execution of the leading conspirators — Babeuf and Darthé. Many, however, were set free, now that the danger was over; and a number were spared execution and only deported. Among the deportees were Sylvain Maréchal, who actually drafted the *Manifesto of the Equals*, and Buonarroti. Buonarroti probably owed his life to his early friendship with Bonaparte, who later offered him administrative posts under the Empire. He lived on until 1837,

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mainly in Belgium, publishing his book at Brussels in 1828, and then returned to France after the 1830 Revolution.

Babeuf's — or rather Sylvain Maréchal's <sup>1</sup>— *Manifeste des égaux* was in effect the first Socialist political pronouncement. Babeuf and his followers regarded the socialisation of both land and industry as necessary to complete the Revolution begun in 1789. They proclaimed the equal natural right of all men to the enjoyment of all goods provided by nature, the universal obligation to labour, the universal right to education, and the necessity of abolishing both riches and poverty in the interests of human happiness. But after the suppression of Babeuf's Conspiracy egalitarian Socialism as a revolutionary political movement disappeared from view under the rule of Napoleon and under the stress of war, to reappear only after the French Revolution of 1830 had released the forces held in suppression both under Napoleon and under the Restoration in its earlier phases.

<sup>1</sup> Maréchal (1750-1803) was the leading theorist among the conspirators. He had been imprisoned for his radical writings before the Revolution, and had been a leading revolutionary journalist, known especially for his attacks on religion. He is the author of a once-famous *Dictionnaire des dthées*.

### CHAPTER III

## GODWIN, PAINE, AND CHARLES HALL

IN Great Britain the eighteenth century produced no movement at all comparable with that of Gracchus Babeuf. The epoch before 1789 gave some signs of advanced liberal but not of revolutionary thought. The American Revolution had a notable effect in stimulating Radical doctrines and Radical popular opinion in England, but with no hint of Socialism in them. There is nothing even remotely socialistic in the writings and projects of John Wilkes, Major Cartwright, Richard Price, or Joseph Priestley, or even of Tom Paine in his earlier American phase. The question posed in Great Britain up to 1789 was almost exclusively one of political rights — including taxation — and not of a change of social system. Not until we arrive at the second part of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* do we find the first fundamental social programme put forward on behalf of the people since the days of Winstanley and the Diggers. Moreover, as we have seen, even the French Revolution in its earlier phases, though it raised the social problem in an acute form throughout the countryside, was concerned rather with questions of agrarian grievance than with the entire social system; and it was only when the disturbances caused by the Revolution and by the outbreak of war brought acute misery to large masses in the towns that the issue of property rights as a whole was directly raised, or any Communist or Socialist solution put forward except in a purely utopian form. Even the London Corresponding Society and the other bodies which arose in most of the bigger English provincial towns on the morrow of the French Revolution, though they had no dearth of economic as well as political objectives, had no clear vision of any new social system. Their main endeavours were centred upon political reform, and there is little trace among the doctrines of their leaders, with one exception, of anything that can be called Socialism, or even

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an anticipation of it. There was, indeed, much in common between the views of Babeuf on landed property and those of certain British eighteenth-century land reformers (Robert Wallace, 1697-1771, William Ogilvie, 1736-1813, and Thomas Paine, 1737-1809). But the only reformer who approached Babeuf in the amplitude of his social designs was Thomas Spence (1750-1814), who was active in the London Corresponding Society (and earlier in Newcastle upon Tyne). But never during his lifetime did Spence command any substantial following or attract any widespread notice for his ideas. Spence stood for communal ownership of the land by local Communes, which were to take over ownership and were to let the land out to cultivators for a rent. Out of this rent the entire expenses of government were to be met. Spence contemplated that these expenses would be small, for he envisaged a system of very simple government by the local Communes, with a loose federation to provide for the simple needs of co-ordinated administration over a wider area. Spence first published his plan in Newcastle in 1775, and continued thereafter to produce new versions of it. The fullest and best, *The Restorer of Society to its Natural State*, appeared in 1801. But only after Spence's death in 1814 did the Society of Spencean Philanthropists, which had been formed in 1812, acquire any political importance. Even in the troubled years after the peace of 1815 it had only a small following, though its influence was greatly exaggerated by the Government and by Parliament in their attempt to represent the Spencean movement as a widespread conspiracy threatening the public safety. The reports of the Committees of Secrecy set up by both Houses after the troubles of 1816, when a small group of Spenceans organised a semi-riotous demonstration in London, were made the excuse for the discovery of a deep-laid plot of insurrection which seems in fact never to have existed in any organised form. That there were insurrectionaries among the Spenceans can be taken as proved by the Cato Street Conspiracy of 1820, in which a small group of Spenceans, led by Arthur Thistlewood, planned to murder the entire Cabinet while it was in session and to seize power by a sudden *coup*. But this outbreak of violence, which was betrayed to the authorities in advance, has been shown to have been, at least in part, the work of *agents pro-*

*vocateurs*. The whole affair was, in any case, on an extremely small scale and in no way implicated more than a handful of fanatics, even among the Spenceans. It was, of course, in no respect countenanced by any of the outstanding leaders of the Radical Reform movement, such as William Cobbett and Henry Hunt. The writings of Thomas Spence make an interesting study in British Socialist origins, but they had little practical bearing on the contemporary development of British Radical or working-class thought. Infinitely more important in their practical influence were the theories of William Godwin (1756-1836) and of Thomas Paine (1737-1809), but neither of these can properly be regarded as a Socialist save in a very wide sense of the word, though each, in his own way, was an important anticipator of doctrines that contributed to the making of the Socialist movement.

William Godwin's *Enquiry into Political Justice* (1793) is the work, to use modern terms, of a philosophical Anarchist rather than of a Socialist. The ideal which Godwin put before his readers was that mankind should set out to dispense with all forms of government and to rely entirely on the voluntary goodwill and sense of justice of individual men guided by the ultimate rule of reason. He believed in reason as an infallible guide to truth and goodness, implanted in all men, though overlaid in existing societies by irrational conventions and coercive practices. A true disciple of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, he believed absolutely in the perfectibility of the human race, not in the sense that men would ever become perfect, but in that of a continuous and unending advance towards higher rationality and increased well-being. He put his entire faith in this assurance of human progress, which he envisaged essentially as a continuous development of individual men in knowledge and in reasoning power using this knowledge. He had no doubt that to know the good and to do it were one and the same thing: the reason he exalted was a moral reason, which would lead men by their very natures to act justly to the full extent of their understanding of the laws of justice. It seemed to him to be self-evident that all men, even if they differed in natural capacities or in knowledge, had equal claims one on another and on the means of life. He denounced not only the appropriation by some men of the natural resources

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which should belong to all, but also the retention by any man of a superfluity, even of his own products, as long as any other man was in greater need of them. His doctrine was that of pure 'communism' in the enjoyment of the fruits of nature and of men's labour upon what nature provided.

But Godwin was not only a disciple of the French philosophers of 'reason', but also a descendant of the English Puritans. His Anarchism rested on an absolute exaltation of the claim of individual conscience, involving a complete repudiation of any duty of obedience save to its demands. This indeed followed from his belief in universal reason as an infallible mentor. He could discern no right in any collective body, however democratically organised, to order an individual to act save as his conscience, enlightened by reason, bade him act. Moreover, Godwin's Puritanism had a strong tinge of asceticism, or at least of contempt for every form of unnecessary personal consumption. He sang, *con amore*, the praises of high thinking and frugal living, and, more completely than any of his French mentors, except perhaps Rousseau, regarded luxury in all its forms as utterly destructive of the conditions of the good life. This view made it the easier for him to assert that all men could afford to live well and happily, sharing the fruits of their combined labours, with but a very small stint of toil, which it could be no hardship for anyone to render. He thought in this mainly of the cultivation of the land, asserting that there was plenty of it to go round and that its productivity would be vastly increased as soon as the abolition of landed property had restored free access to it to every citizen. His hostility to the multiplication of wants did not, however, lead him into any opposition to the progress of invention. On the contrary, he looked forward to a day when the progress of mechanisation would have brought the need for manual labour virtually to an end. What he did oppose was the kind of mechanisation that compelled large numbers of persons to work together under an imposed discipline, or that led to the heaping up of unneeded products for which markets had then to be sought. He thought of good mechanical progress as that which aided the individual worker by making his toil less arduous or prolonged; and he looked forward as an ideal to a time when it would be possible for a single man, helped by the right machines,

to execute alone great labours which now called for the collective toil of great gangs working under orders.

Godwin's ideal man was the man who relied on his own, masterless efforts. He regarded, not only government, but all kinds of enforced collaboration among men as evils, bound to result in the subjection of man to man. Recognising the necessary interdependence of human beings living in societies, and taking as the very basis of his moral doctrine the duty of every individual to pursue the course of happiness with equal devotion to that of every person on earth, Godwin nevertheless regarded association as at best a necessary evil. He denied that society itself, as distinct from the individuals who made it up, had any claim at all on the individual's loyalty or moral duty; and his conception of human relations at their best was that of a number of independent individuals, each seeking the welfare of all the others without any bond between them save that of mutual claims and duties. He knew, however, that man could not in fact manage without social organisation, or even altogether without coercion — though he hoped that one day they would. In the meantime, he was prepared to accept some mild degree of association; but he wanted to keep it within the narrowest possible limits and to rest it on the natural neighbourhood relations of small local groups, with no more link between them than the facility of individual movement and intercourse. National governments he desired to sweep wholly away; for in his view they were bound to generate wars between nations, and to involve a separation between governors and governed that was fatal to liberty. He wanted to see a world of independent small local communities, each governing its own affairs with the bare minimum of coercion and the utmost possible reliance on free debate leading to agreement, and with no coercive or federated power superimposed upon it. To such small communities he was prepared to allow a bare minimum of coercive power for the restraint of evil-doers, on condition that restraint should never be extended to retributive punishment or to deterrent measures, but should be strictly limited to preventing the individual ill-doer from making further mischief, and, if possible, to reforming him by reasoning with him and tendering him good advice.

It went with this that Godwin wanted, not so much to

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make property collective, as to do away with the very conception of it. Such claim to possession as he allowed he rested entirely on the capacity and the will to make good use of the thing possessed in the general interest of the individuals composing the society ; and he proposed no means of regulating such possession except the common sense and good-will of these individuals. He was opposed to all laws regulating such matters : he held that any issue that arose should be settled as an individual case, by good-will and common sense, and as far as possible by agreement. Indeed, he denied that men could legitimately make laws about anything : the only valid laws being those of reason, men should at most seek to apply reason's laws to particular cases, with the smallest possible element of merely interpretative rule-making for convenience in guiding their judgment.

Godwin rested this opposition to laws and regulations on his conviction that the goodness of an action depended on its motive, and that it was accordingly worthless to attempt to make men good by ordering them to do good things. Such ordering, he held, would dry up in them the natural propensity to follow the light of reason, would destroy the feeling of responsibility, and would thus obstruct the natural tendency for men to become more reasonable with the growth of knowledge. He did not hold that this tendency could work itself out in the individual's own mind without the aid of his fellows : on the contrary, he thought it needed the support of constant free discussion. He wanted his small communities to be holding continual debate about their affairs, so as to arrive at clearer and clearer notions of good, reasonable conduct and to become more and more adept at acting collusively in the common interest without needing to take votes or lay down rules or commands.

This insistence on individual conduct as depending for its goodness entirely on the motives behind it Godwin paradoxically combined with an absolute determinism and denial of moral responsibility for evil-doing. The malefactor, he insisted, is no more responsible for his action than the dagger he plunges into his victim ; for both alike are determined to act as they do. What Godwin means by this is that the wrongdoer can act as he does only because he is mistaken, and not



because he wishes to do evil. To know the good is to will it ; and a man cannot be held responsible for his ignorance — at any rate in a society which has not taken proper measures to instruct him. Thus, Godwin's curious doctrine does hang together, if his identification of knowing and doing the good is admitted. But of course that is just where he goes wrong.

This was the gospel of reason which, in the years following the French Revolution, inspired the young Coleridge and the young Wordsworth with their notions of Pantisocracy. This was the gospel which, later, the young Shelley transmuted into the golden poetry of *Hellas* and of *Prometheus Unbound*. In the realm of ideas, it was an intensely revolutionary gospel : in that of action, as Godwin formulated it, hardly at all. Godwin did, indeed, assert the ultimate duty of resistance to maleficent authority, and even of martyrdom in the last resort. He insisted that a man must do nothing against conscience and reason ; but he was equally insistent that reason only could serve as a fit weapon for furthering the kind of society he had in view, and that the use of force for this purpose would be futile, because force could do nothing to change the minds of men. The revolution that was needed was primarily in men's minds, and the transformation of their institutions could only follow upon this process of mental enlightenment.

This view involved putting the utmost stress on free speech and on education. In defence of the rights of free speech Godwin showed himself able, at the time of the Treason Trials of 1794, to fight valiantly. But in the matter of education his hostility to coercion and his strong individualism led him to oppose all those reformers who wanted a public educational system as a means of developing the reasoning powers of the rising generation. No child, and no adult, he insisted, should ever be taught anything they did not want to learn : coercive education was as bad as coercive government, and would inevitably have like effects. It would degenerate into indoctrination, either with false notions or, even if with true notions, in such a way as to undermine the self-reliance of the taught on their own powers of arriving at the truth. Accordingly, the kind of education Godwin wanted rested on the spontaneous teaching and learning of individuals within the local community groups. Of this voluntary, natural education he

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wanted a great deal : indeed, he relied on it to keep his communities continually advancing along the paths of knowledge and rational common sense.

Thus Godwin in reason's name questioned the legitimacy of every form of government and coercion, and pinned his hopes entirely to a future of free, friendly, enlightened co-operation of individuals grouped in small communities and living simply and frugally without either poverty or the desire for wealth. In *Political Justice* he carried his trust in the sheer light of reason so far as to contemplate the absolute expulsion of sentiment and emotion as guides to conduct, and to assert that it was irrational, and therefore wrong, for an individual to show in his actions any preference for one human being over another, not merely among his neighbours, but over the whole extent of the human race. Later, he retracted this extreme intellectualist conception of rational conduct, and admitted the necessity of enrolling the sentiments and emotions on the side of reason in the promotion of right social behaviour. But it was in the earlier, more extreme, form that his doctrine exercised its deep influence on the young intellectuals of the closing years of the eighteenth century.

Godwin took over from the French philosophers of the Enlightenment the belief that environment was the main factor in the shaping of human conduct. He believed that men behaved irrationally because the conventional institutions of organised society led them astray from the natural light of reason. He never went to the length of such writers as Helvétius, who claimed that all children were born with equal capacities for good and evil and that everything could be explained by nurture. He admitted congenital inequalities, but made light of them, and considered that every human being was born with a like propensity towards reasonable conduct, and that this propensity would come swiftly into its own if men were enabled to live under undemoralising conditions of simplicity. This emphasis on the influence of environment in the formation of character was to be taken over from Godwinism by Robert Owen and developed as an integral doctrine of Owenite Socialism. Owen too, as we shall see, believed in the simplification of human wants, in the easy practicability of producing, with light universal labour, enough

## GODWIN, PAINE, AND CHARLES HALL

for all men to live well, and in the virtue of the small community of neighbours as the essential unit of social well-being. But Owen had none of Godwin's extreme individualistic dislike of organisation, and by no means shared his fears about the effects of indoctrinating the young with good social ideas and habits. There is much in common between Godwin the Anarchist and Owen the Socialist ; but there are fundamental differences.

Godwin's three-guinea philosophical treatise appealed directly to a narrow, intellectual public. The writings of Tom Paine exercised a much wider and more popular influence. They were read mainly not by the intellectuals but by the more active spirits among the common people. Paine had begun by espousing the cause of his fellow excisemen, on whose behalf he had written a pamphlet urging the redress of their grievances ; but he first came to celebrity on account of his part in the American Revolution. His American writings, *The Crisis* and *Common Sense*, had an enormous influence in forming public opinion in America on the side of independence and the establishment of a new democratic State, completely separated from Great Britain. Acting for a time as Foreign Secretary at the Continental Congress, Paine established a great reputation not only as a propagandist but also as an acute political thinker on the democratic side. In many respects, his views were the direct antithesis to Godwin's, though he too looked forward in some of his writings to a gradual disappearance of governmental coercion as men grew in capacity for voluntary rational conduct. This, however, was no more than a distant ideal : in the meantime Paine had a profound faith in the virtues of representative government, based on the fullest democratic equality, as a means of solving the basic problems of social relations. At the same time, he believed coercive government to be a necessary evil needing to be kept within narrow limits, wherever there was danger of it interfering with the exercise of men's natural rights. As the title of his most famous book proclaims, he was a firm believer in the 'rights of man', and regarded their claims as prior to all legal enactments. Unlike Godwin, however, he stressed the collective aspect of human affairs, and looked to government as a necessary instrument for the effective recognition

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and development of individual claims and opportunities. He wanted the State — a reformed, democratic State, of course — to establish a strong framework of political institutions within which the individual would be free to exercise his natural rights. Every right admitted to public recognition should be regarded, in his view, as 'a natural right exchanged' — that is, given form according to the necessary conditions of living in an organised society. These underlying natural rights are regarded as absolute and inalienable, though they could be 'exchanged' for legal rights not inconsistent with their fundamental character.

Among natural rights Paine, no less than the leaders of the French Revolution, was prepared to include the right to property. He was no Socialist, if Socialism involves the belief that the means of production should be publicly owned. But, like the more Radical leaders of the French Revolution, he drew a sharp distinction between legitimate and illegitimate forms of property, attacking strongly in his *Agrarian Justice* and in other writings the monopoly of the great landed proprietors. When the French Revolution broke out, he was ready to give the fullest endorsement to the onslaughts of its leaders on all forms of property right that rested on exclusive privilege, and to assert his faith in the revolution as carrying with it the promise of a fully democratic system.

It falls outside the scope of this book to give any account of the main doctrines of the *Rights of Man*, in which Paine engaged in his celebrated controversy with Burke. Paine's defence of the Revolution, like the Revolution itself, is not a matter that can be squeezed into a book about the development of Socialist theories. But his *Rights of Man* cannot be set aside because, having vindicated the Revolution and formulated his own conception of democracy in its political aspect, Paine went on from his forthright assertion of men's political rights to claim for them economic rights as well, and to consider how, in organised democratic societies, they could be afforded a fair exchange of economic rights guaranteed by law in compensation for the abeyance of their natural right to use the fruits of the earth freely for their enjoyment.

This is the main theme of Part II of *Rights of Man*, pub-

lished a year after the first part, and fully as remarkable in its social doctrine. In Part II Paine presented the outline of an economic and social policy which he considered to be requisite and just for a democratically ordered society. The programme which he put forward can fairly be regarded as the forerunner of all later programmes for the use of taxation as an instrument for the redistribution of incomes in the cause of social justice. In particular, he advocated a system of old-age pensions, public provision of educational services, and a number of other social reforms which have a distinctly modern ring. Developing his proposals further, in *Agrarian Justice*, Paine rested his case for these measures on the natural community of rights in land, which had been done away with by the institution of private property and therefore called for compensation in the form of a social right enjoyable by every citizen. On this basis, he demanded a tax on all landed property, to be levied at the death of the owner. This tax was to provide a fund out of which every citizen was to receive a sum in compensation for man's loss of his share in the natural right to the land. The compensation was to take the form of a single payment of £15 at 21 years of age, and further of an annuity of £10 payable from the age of 50. The tax was to be at the rate of 10 per cent of the capital value of the land, and to this a further 10 per cent was to be added when the inheritor was not a direct descendant of the previous owner. Paine further proposed to levy his tax on personal as well as on landed property, on the ground that a part of every form of wealth should be regarded as essentially a social product. He did not, however, propose in any way to abolish or restrict individual ownership, save to the extent to which this was involved in his proposed taxes. To the extent to which Socialism is to be identified with the institution of the 'Welfare State', based on the use of redistributive taxation as an instrument of democracy, Paine can assuredly be claimed as its first practical policy-maker. In no other sense than this can he be treated as a Socialist forerunner, vastly important though his writings are in the evolution of modern notions of complete political democracy.

Apart from Paine and Godwin and Spence, who had all begun to write well before the French Revolution, the final decade of the eighteenth century produced no British thinkers

who hold an important place in the development of Socialist ideas. The Radical societies of the time did throw up men who might have become outstanding leaders had not their careers been abruptly cut off. Such were Thomas Muir of Huntershill, the Scottish Radical, whose lifework was cut short by the Treason Trials of 1793; Joseph Gerrald and Maurice Margarot, the London Corresponding Society's delegates, who shared his fate; John Thelwall, who lectured eloquently about contemporary affairs under the disguise of Roman History. But these young men were all orators rather than original thinkers—whatever they might have become under more fortunate conditions. In Great Britain, under the repression which set in after 1792 under the double influence of war abroad and fear of revolution at home, the Radical movement was snuffed out, until by the end of the 1790s there was practically nothing left of it. There had been no great home event to shake the very foundations of society as these had been shaken in France by the Revolution; nor had the Industrial Revolution yet advanced far enough to generate new conceptions of class-structure and economic organisation. There was plenty of discontent, both before and after 1789; but it was either a matter of particular economic grievances—scarcity, high prices, unemployment, or the supersession of skilled workers by new machines—or was focused on the question of parliamentary reform—extension of the suffrage, reform of the rotten boroughs, abolition of pensions and sinecures, and the like. There was, no doubt, a small revolutionary left wing after 1789, partly inspired by Irishmen; but it was weak, and the Government was highly successful in rooting it out. Moreover, the British left wing, which had applauded the Revolution in France and had sent a host of congratulatory addresses to the revolutionary societies across the Channel, was before long sharply divided as the new French Republic passed through the Terror to military dictatorship and imperialistic aggression. Some of the English Radicals, such as Thomas Hardy, of the London Corresponding Society, continued to defend the achievements of the French Revolution despite these developments; but many were sharply disillusioned, and few were prepared to regard Napoleon with any feeling except aversion. The ideas advanced by Tom

Paine and by Godwin lay dormant until they were recalled to life by the discontents arising out of the long war and by the disillusionments of the victorious peace.

Only one writer helps to span the gap between the generation of Paine and Godwin and that of Robert Owen and William Cobbett and Richard Carlile; and it is significant that we know practically nothing about this one writer's life, except that he practised as a physician in the west of England, and died about 1820 in the Rules of the Fleet Prison at the age of 80. Charles Hall has left one book, *The Effects of Civilisation*, which was published in 1805, but remained practically unknown until John Minter Morgan, who had known him, produced a second edition in 1850.

Hall's book is in many ways remarkable for its date. His standpoint is that of the eighteenth-century opponent of luxury and upholder of the virtues of simple living. He detests the development of the manufacturing system, which he sees as withdrawing needed labour from the cultivation of the land, causing food to become scarce and dear, and creating a mass of impoverished workers who are compelled to labour for the profit of the rich. By 'civilisation' he means a system under which this happens, so that the interests of the rich and the poor come to be more and more sharply opposed. The force which makes this kind of civilisation possible is the accumulation of property in the hands of the few, who can then use it to exploit the propertyless. Hall attacks the view of the economists that there can be truly free contracts between the rich and the poor: he accuses them of ignoring the effects of the manufacturing system on the distribution of wealth, and of concentrating all their attention on its direct effects on industrial production. The propertied class, he says, can exploit the poor because its wealth enables it to buy labour at less than its true value. The difference is profit, which is the curse of 'civilised' societies. The workman labours only one day in eight for himself, and seven for the benefit of the unproductive classes.

What is the remedy? Hall sees the root of the evil in the private appropriation of land. The land should be made public property, and should be given over to small farmers for intensive cultivation. Industrial production should be confined within narrow limits, just enough to meet the requirements

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of a population living frugally on the produce of subsistence farming.

Thus Hall had nothing very much to offer by way of a solution. Others had been before him in advocating public ownership of land and in seeing in its private appropriation the roots of social inequality and pauperisation. What was new in Hall's book was the assertion of a stark opposition of interests between property-owners and labourers, especially in manufacturing industry, which he had doubtless observed chiefly in the highly capitalistic forms of 'domestic' manufacture under commercial domination that prevailed in the west of England woollen industry. New too was his denunciation of profit as arising out of the purchase of labour for less than the value of its product — a clear anticipation of the doctrine of surplus value which appeared two decades later in the writings of the anti-Ricardian economists, such as Thomas Hodgskin, and was developed by Karl Marx. But these views attracted little attention when they were first advanced. Francis Place and the Owenite, George Mudie, as well as Minter Morgan, knew of Hall's writings; and Place and Spence both corresponded with him. But nobody took much notice of this part of his doctrine, which in retrospect appears as by far the most significant. It was left for Max Beer, in his *History of British Socialism*, to show the real importance of his contribution to the development of Socialist ideas.



## CHAPTER IV

### SAINT-SIMON

AFTER the work of Paine and Godwin, and the outbreak of the first modern communistic movement under the leadership of Gracchus Babeuf, the next outstanding developments in the theory of Socialism took place in France under the rule of Napoleon. There was, after the overthrow of the 'Conspiracy of the Equals', for some time no possibility of any practical movement based mainly on an appeal to the working classes, and neither of the two men who are generally acclaimed as the founders of modern Socialism made any attempt to establish such a movement or, indeed, thought in terms of an appeal to a predominantly proletarian or working-class following. These two men, Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and François-Marie-Charles Fourier (1772-1837), share with Robert Owen the general designation of 'Utopian Socialists', which has been extended also, as we have seen, to certain theorists of the eighteenth century. They were, however, essentially theorists of the period which followed the French Revolution, which both regarded — Saint-Simon in particular — as a landmark in historical development requiring a new approach to the entire problem of social organisation. It is quite possible to argue that neither Fourier nor Saint-Simon, any more than Godwin or Paine, can properly be called a 'Socialist', in the sense in which the word is now commonly used: Fourier, because he thought in terms of voluntary association rather than of State action, and was thus an ancestor of Co-operative rather than of modern Socialist ideas, and Saint-Simon because, although he did emphatically demand a collectively planned society, he never thought of Socialism as involving a class-struggle between capitalist employers and workers, but rather regarded both these classes, which he lumped together under the name of *les industriels*, as having a common interest

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against *les oisifs* — the idle rich class represented primarily by the nobility and the *militaires* — the fighting men.

Nevertheless, it is quite impossible to leave either Fourier or Saint-Simon out of the record of Socialist development, because, whether or not they themselves were Socialists, they were both undoubtedly inspirers of many later Socialist ideas.

Let us begin with the elder of the two — Saint-Simon. It is important to be clear at the outset that there is a big difference between Saint-Simon himself and the Saint-Simonians — the 'school' founded by Enfantin, Bazard, and Rodrigues after his death, and also, as we shall see, between certain of the Saint-Simonians — for example, between Bazard and Enfantin and Pierre Leroux. The most 'socialistic' phase of Saint-Simonism was that which immediately followed the death of the master, and seems to have been due largely to the influence of Bazard and Leroux. Under Enfantin's extraordinary influence, Saint-Simonism became for a time a messianic religion rather than a political creed; and this element in it persisted to the end, though later the economic part of the doctrine resumed its primary importance. In what immediately follows, be it understood that I am speaking entirely of Saint-Simon himself, and not at all of what his disciples made of his doctrines after his death.

Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon, of the same family as the famous Duc, and believing himself to be a direct descendant of Charlemagne, began his career as a liberty-loving aristocrat. He fought on the side of the Americans in their Revolution and then, returning to France, left the army as a colonel and took up his life's work. Already at this stage he was deeply impressed by the need for man to increase his power over his environment. While he was still in America he proposed to the Emperor of Mexico a project for linking the two oceans by a canal — a type of project with which his followers were to be much concerned after his death. Back in Europe he set to work on an elaborate course of study and travel, and, while in Spain, proposed the building of a canal from Madrid to the sea. While he was still engaged in the course of study he had set himself to master, the French Revolution broke out. His only part in it was to make a fortune by speculation on the exchanges, in order to find the

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money to carry through the experiences he had planned. He had come to the conclusion that, in order to understand the world aright, he would need to live through the greatest possible diversity of personal experiences, while remaining an observer of the course of public events until he was ready to influence them. He was already convinced not merely that he had a mission but that he was destined to be one of the world's greatest men and to set human affairs on a new course as much as Socrates had done, or any other world-changing philosopher. He believed that the human race stood at the beginning of a great new evolutionary change — the greatest since the advent of Christianity, of which Socrates had been the herald when he proclaimed the unity of God, the oneness of the universe, and its subordination to one universal principle. But he was not yet sure what this mission was, and he devoted himself to finding out by study of men and of things, above all of the sciences and of the course of affairs after the Revolution. His task, as he formulated it, was that of finding a principle capable of unifying all the sciences and thus giving mankind a clear foreknowledge of its future, so that men would be able with understanding to plan their own collective course in accordance with the known order of universal law. His mind was dominated at this stage by this idea of unity, which he thought of then primarily as the unity of knowledge — a needed synthesis and extension of the large advances which had been made since Bacon and Descartes in the growingly specialised branches of the natural sciences and in the understanding of man himself. At this stage he owed a great deal to d'Alembert and to Condorcet, from whom he derived his belief in the use of applied science as the basis of social organisation and his conception of historical development as resting on the advance of human knowledge.

Saint-Simon was already 42 years old, and Napoleon already master of France, when he began to write. His earlier writings (*Lettres d'un habitant de Genève*, 1802; *Introduction aux travaux scientifiques du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 1807-8; *Esquisse d'une nouvelle encyclopédie*, 1810; *Mémoires sur la science de l'homme*, 1813; *Mémoire sur la gravitation universelle*, 1813) are all developments of his ideas about the new era of science. He is appealing to *les savants* of all kinds to unite round a new

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comprehensive outlook on the field of human affairs, to create a 'science of humanity', and to use their understanding for the advancement of human well-being. His notion of 'science' has already broadened out from the 'sciences' as usually understood to embrace the whole field of knowledge. There must be a *science* of morals, dealing with the realm of ends, as well as a useful natural science concerned with means — that is, with man's mastery over his environment. Moreover, gradually the fine arts, as well as the applied arts, came to occupy in his thought a place beside the other two branches of the tree of knowledge. There was needed, he felt, a universal knowledge, expressed in three great forms, the arts, the natural sciences, and the science of morals. These three needed to be bound together and systematised in a New Encyclopaedia, expressing the spirit of the new age as against that of the age of d'Alembert and Diderot; and they also needed institutional embodiment in great Academies of Artists, Natural Scientists, and Moral or Social Scientists. The form to be taken by these Academies varied from time to time in Saint-Simon's writings; but the essential idea persisted unchanged. He appealed to Napoleon, who had already formed an Academy of the Natural Sciences, to create the new structure entire. It was designed, if not altogether to replace the Government, at any rate to become the real directing power of the new society.

Behind these projects lay the universal Philosophy of History which Saint-Simon was gradually working out. He was already acutely critical of the achievement of the great French Revolution, which he regarded as the necessary completion of a great work of destruction of obsolete institutions, but as having failed to achieve anything constructive for want of a unifying principle. Man's history, as he saw it, fell into alternating epochs of construction and of criticism, or destruction. At all stages mankind needed a social structure corresponding to the advances made in *les lumières*; and institutions that were right and salutary at one stage of human development turned all wrong when they had accomplished what was in them, but lingered on after their work was done, resisting necessary changes. Like Turgot and like Condorcet, whose *Esquisse* deeply influenced him, Saint-Simon was a thorough

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believer in the certainty of human progress. He was well assured that each great constructive stage in mankind's development had been well ahead of its predecessors. His attention, like that of many other philosophers of history, was confined to the Western world: he dismissed the East as unworthy of serious study, because there men were still in the 'childhood' of progress. As for the West, he distinguished two great constructive epochs — the world of classical antiquity, represented by Graeco-Roman civilisation, and the mediaeval world of Christendom; and he was in no doubt that the latter, because of its conception of Christian unity, embodied in the Church, had been an immense advance upon the primarily military organisation of the Ancient World. He praised the mediaeval Church highly as having admirably satisfied the needs of its time, especially as a social and educational influence; but he also regarded its breakdown as a necessary consequence of its failure to adapt itself to the needs of a new age of scientific advance. In his view, a third great epoch, based on man's advance in science, was just about to begin; and the centuries from the Reformation (the Schism, he called it, in the Church) had been a necessary period of critical and destructive preparation for the coming of the new society. From Luther to the philosophers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, men had been engaged in the clearing away of obsolete superstitions which could no longer be squared with the lessons of advancing knowledge. But in this epoch of destruction, as in the Dark Ages after the zenith of the Ancient World, mankind had lost its unity and its sense of unity. Man had now to find a new unifying conception and on that to build the new order. For a time Saint-Simon thought he had found this conception in the law of gravity discovered by Newton: that was the theme of his treatise on *La Gravitation universelle*. But presently this phraseology disappeared from his writing, and was replaced by a more purely social conception of the unification of knowledge in accordance with a single overriding Law.

(Universal Law! Law and order! Saint-Simon had a passion for both, and a strong distaste for the disorders of revolution and of war.) He wanted a new era of peace in which would be embodied a world order subjecting itself to a common

law. But he had not yet come to formulate the political aspects of his doctrine with any precision. He was concerned with the philosophy behind it, which must be positive and scientific, as against the destructive metaphysics of the epoch that was ending. For a time he looked to Napoleon to lead the way towards this united order, though even at the height of his admiration for Napoleon he told him that he could not found a dynasty, or base a lasting new order on military conquest. At the next stage of his development, we find him formulating, in *De la réorganisation de la société européenne* (1814) written in collaboration with the historian, Augustin Thierry, a plan for a federal Europe, to be based primarily on an alliance between France and Great Britain as the two countries capable of giving a lead to Europe — France in the field of great ideas, and Great Britain in that of the organisation of industry for the betterment of the human lot.

By this time Saint-Simon had already developed the essentials of his conception of the new social order, which should rest, he held, on the arts of peace as the means of improving men's lot. This is the theme which is developed as the dominant idea of his writings after 1815. Past civilisations, in their civil institutions, have been dominated by the military element. This was to the good as long as the military were, as under feudalism, also the competent controllers of production, mainly embodied in the arts of agriculture. But after the Middle Ages there appeared a divorce between the nobles, who were concerned chiefly with war and with negative exploitation of the producers, and *les industriels*, who developed the productive arts under unregulated private enterprise and without being given a social prestige in accordance with their talents. The critical age just ended had been marked, above all in England, by the rise of *les industriels* and by a growing contest between the social claims of *les oisifs* — the old privileged classes — and the real services rendered to society by the industrial class. The time had now come to put *les industriels* in control of society, and to throw off the domination of *les oisifs* — the nobility and the soldiers. Society should in future be organised by *les industriels* for the promotion of the well-being of '*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*', and the rewards should be distributed to each according to his

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capacity as expressed in his positive services in the cause of human well-being.)

There was, in all this, no element of democracy. Saint-Simon continually insisted that society must be organised for the welfare of the poor; but he had a deep mistrust of 'mob rule', as involving the rule of ignorance over knowledge; and he was appalled by the disorder to which such rule had given rise during the years after 1789. He wanted knowledge to rule; and he insisted that the natural leaders of the industrious poor are the great industrialists, above all the bankers, who provide the credit for industry and thus assume the function of economic planning. He felt no doubt that the great industrialists, given power as the leaders of the new society, would act as the trustees of the poor, by increasing production, diffusing purchasing power, and thus improving the general standard of welfare. There is no hint of any likely antagonism between capitalist and worker; for, though Saint-Simon admits that the capitalist employers actually behave in a spirit of individual egoism, he is well assured that this is because they are acting in a bad society, given over to egoism on account of its critical outlook, and that the great industrialists, given responsibility as well as unified knowledge, will act in a spirit of solidarity with the main body of the industrial class. Saint-Simon has no use for notions of individual rights or liberties: he reveres order, as the necessary condition of scientific social organisation, and he is much less interested in making men happy than in setting them to do good work. Perhaps he thought this would make them happy; but it is creativeness rather than happiness that is his principal goal.

Thus, Saint-Simon set out to unite the industrial classes against *les oisifs*, and especially against the 'two nobilities' in France — the *ancienne noblesse* and the new *noblesse* created by Napoleon — which under the Restoration constituted an united anti-social force. After 1815, accepting the Restoration and favouring monarchy as the symbol of unity and order, he tried to persuade the King to ally himself with *les industriels* against the nobility and the military, urging Louis XVIII to entrust the budget-making function — the control of finance — to a Council of the leading industrialists, who were to become the planners of great projects of public works and of

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productive investment. This was to go with a rapid advance towards international unity, on a foundation of capitalist co-operation in world economic development.

(Saint-Simon, however, was very conscious that economic development was not the sole human need. The arts and the moral sciences also had an essential part to play.) The industrialists were to control finance, and were to have the last word in deciding what should be done ; but they were to be advised by the *savants* and the artists, who were to collaborate in giving society a clear direction in the realm of ends. Saint-Simon, in this connection, laid the greatest stress on education, which under his scheme was to be exclusively controlled by *les savants* and was to rest on a foundation of universal primary schooling designed to indoctrinate the whole people with a true system of social values, corresponding to the progress of *les lumières*. He was convinced that society needed for its right functioning a common basis of values, which it was the business of moral science to formulate into a code of education and of social conduct. In the Middle Ages, this unifying function in the realm of morals had been performed by the Church, which had created a real unity of Christendom and had subordinated the secular process to its general control through its pervasive influence on all the Christian peoples. The Christian *dogmas* were now outmoded ; but society needed fully as much as ever a common spiritual direction, which must be found in the *universitas* of scientific knowledge.

This brings us to the final phase of Saint-Simon's writing, embodied in his last work, *Le Nouveau Christianisme*, of which only the opening part was ever written. He had become more and more aware of the insufficiency of the intellect alone as a motive to social action and of the need to enlist *les sentiments* also on the side of social progress. His New Christianity was to be embodied in a Church controlling education and framing the code of social conduct and belief on the basis of a lively faith in God as the supreme law-giver of the universe. There was to be a new religion, without theology, based on the stage at length reached in the development of the human mind, not merely as intellect, but also as faith in the future of humanity.

So far Saint-Simon himself, who on his deathbed left this conception of a new Christianity based on 'science' as his



legacy to the small group of disciples who had gathered round him at the last. For all his life, till the very end, he had worked practically without recognition, and for a long time in dire poverty. (In the disoriented French society of the 1820s he began at last to find listeners and disciples.) What they made of his doctrine we shall see before long. First, there is a little more to be said of Saint-Simon's own ideas by way of summing up.

According to Saint-Simon's reading of history, political revolution and revolution in the realm of human thought went together, each great political upheaval being followed promptly by a revolution in men's attitude to the problems of morals and science. Thus, Saint-Simon pointed out that the religious and philosophical revolutions attributable to Luther and Descartes had followed upon the political break-up of the mediaeval world. Newton had formulated his scientific philosophy on the morrow of the Civil War in Great Britain, and Locke was, in his philosophical speculations, the interpreter of the English Revolution of 1688. Saint-Simon felt certain that the French Revolution was a turning-point in history on a vastly greater scale and required for its completion a scientific revolution of corresponding dimensions. At the time when he wrote his *Introduction to the Scientific Labours of the Nineteenth Century* (1807-8) he was a strong supporter of Napoleon, and saw in the conquest of the world by Napoleon, as the missionary of the French Revolution, the essential foundation for the development of the new scientific order. He was certain that the English would be beaten by the French, and regarded the defeat of England as the assured end of any challenge to Napoleon's world domination. He did not, however, suppose that Napoleon's world domination would endure, or that there would be any Emperor to succeed him. On the contrary, he thought that when Napoleon had done his work of clearing away the lumber of the old world a new epoch would dawn for humanity, with the 'producers' and the 'men of science' and the 'artists' — the three 'useful' classes — as the organizers, rather than the rulers, of the new scientifically based society. By 'artists' Saint-Simon meant much more than the practitioners of the fine arts. He included, for example, all the *littérateurs* and *savants* in every field except that of natural

science. But in the new society he assigned the leading rôle rather to *les industriels* than to the artists. The nineteenth century he envisaged as opening the great era of applied natural science. He thought that, in such an epoch, the arts could play only a secondary, albeit an important, part. As we have seen, Saint-Simon was greatly influenced by Condorcet's speculations concerning the progress of the human spirit and the final perfectibility of human society. He differed, however, from Condorcet in looking forward not to a society perfected in all its aspects but rather to one in which a decline in the imaginative powers would be compensated by the growth of the scientific spirit. This notion, however, does not seem quite to fit in with his insistence that it is the artists' task to define the ends which the men of science are to pursue, or with his exaltation of the creative spirit in man as the real source of progress. Really, I think, he regarded the applied scientists and inventors as creative artists in their own sphere, and as taking over in the new era much that had been the province of the imaginative artists at an earlier stage of human development.

[ This was the foundation of Saint-Simon's 'Socialism' — in as far as it was Socialism. At the very root of his doctrine was the notion that the essential task and duty of man was labour, and that in the new social order no respect would be paid to any man save in proportion to his service through labour to the community. With this notion he sheared away all the privileges of the old world which had accepted the right of some men to live in idleness, and put forward instead the notion that prestige should be granted only in accordance with services rendered. In this spirit he envisaged the right of property as surviving only in the form of a right to have the control of property in proportion to the ability to use it to good purpose. The technician and the skilled organiser would have command over property in accordance with their several abilities placed at the service of the public, and all producers, from these down to the unskilled labourers, would possess civic rights by virtue of the work they did. As we have seen, Saint-Simon made no appeal to the working class as against their employers. On the contrary, his appeal was to the whole body of producers to accept the conditions of scientifically organised production and to collaborate functionally according to their

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several capacities in expanding social productivity. He continually insisted that the leadership of the industrial class would rest with *les grands industriels* — with those who had shown their capacity as organisers of production ; and among these he assigned the leading rôle to the bankers, whom he regarded as having the most general capacity for the planning of economic affairs. He thought of the bankers primarily in their capacity as industrial financiers making capital advances to the producers and thus determining the level and distribution of capital investment. (Saint-Simon had no notion of any fundamental antagonism between employers and employed ; he continually spoke of them as constituting together a single class with a common interest as against everyone who claimed to live without doing useful work, and also against all rulers and military leaders who upheld the reign of force as against that of peaceful industry.) Only after his death did his disciples proceed to deduce from these principles the conclusion that property ought to be collectively owned in order that the State might be in a position to assign the command of it to those who could use it best.

Thus, Saint-Simon argued that the new social forces which had been unloosed by political revolution and scientific advance called imperatively for planned organisation and control of production in the general interest. He was the first to see clearly the dominant importance of economic organisation in the affairs of modern society and to affirm the key position of economic evolution as a factor in social relations. He was also the first of many thinkers to contemplate following up the elaborate design of the great eighteenth-century encyclopaedists with a 'New Encyclopaedia', which would bring together all the lessons of the new science and would carry all these lessons to a point in terms of their social morals. This notion of a great 'New Encyclopaedia' dominated Saint-Simon's work. With this intellectual reintegration was to go a restoration of the unity of Western society which had been lost since the Reformation. On this basis Saint-Simon laboured at his project of international unity through European federation, and in his later works elaborated the thesis of his 'New Christendom', which was to take the place of the outworn religions of the past. In this matter his ideas had undergone a

considerable change; but there was none the less a consistent basis for his thought. In his earlier phase he had looked forward to an entirely positive, scientific religion, resting on a foundation of sheer *physicisme* in contrast to the *déisme* of the past, a religion not only without theology, but also in effect without God, though of course still dominated by the key idea of the 'One' as manifested in the universal law of nature. Then two things happened to his thought. He came to the view that the many, as distinct from the enlightened few, were not yet ready to dispense with the idea of a personal God, and that for them *déisme* must be allowed to continue as a symbol of the unity of nature. But he also began to appreciate the inadequacy of the new religion of science, as he had first conceived of it in purely intellectual terms as '*la science*' — *de la morale* as well as *de la nature* — and to stress the importance of *la science morale* as the realm of ends, involving *les sentiments* as well as the intellect. This change of view made him ready to accept Deism, not merely as a transitional symbol, but in its own right, and to assign a larger place to the artists side by side with the *savants* — while reserving the highest place of all, in practical affairs, for *les industriels*.

In his earlier view it will be seen that Saint-Simon was very much the precursor of Auguste Comte — the Comte of the Positive Philosophy rather than of the later *Politique positive*. Comte's Positivism was indeed essentially an outgrowth of Saint-Simon's ideas, and Comte's earliest work was written under Saint-Simon's supervision, while Comte was acting as his amanuensis and pupil. Comte hated to be reminded of this. He broke away early from Saint-Simon, especially on the score of his objection to the religious aspect of Saint-Simon's later doctrine. Yet Comte himself in his later phases came back to a view which took on much of the doctrine of Saint-Simon's *Nouveau Christianisme* and also echoed Saint-Simon's conception of *les savants* as the controllers of education and as the advisers of the State.

In economic affairs Saint-Simon, unconscious of any coming struggle between capitalists and workers, stood for community among the productive classes against the parasitic non-producers on a basis of social control of the instruments of production and of their administration by means of the

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requisite scientific and business abilities. He believed in unequal rewards corresponding to real differences in the quality of services, and he advocated the conferring of large powers on a directing and planning authority constituted on a basis of merit. Like Babeuf, he held that society was under an obligation to provide work for all, and that all were under an obligation to labour for society according to their powers — always in the interests of *la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*. Though he had no doctrine of class-war, he vigorously denounced the exploitation to which the labourers were subject under the existing system of property rights, and he anticipated Marx in holding that the property relations sustained by any social order confer upon it its essential character in all its main aspects. He believed again, like Marx, that human society tended in the march of history towards a system of universal association, and he held that this new system of universal association would be the guarantee of peace and progressive development.

It is, however, quite a mistake to suppose that Saint-Simon's view of historical development at all closely resembles that of Marx. Although he stresses the importance of the economic factors, he regards them as essentially not causes but consequences. In his view, economic change is the outcome of scientific discovery, and the roots of human progress are in the advance of knowledge, with the great discoverers as the supreme makers of history. Marx was, no doubt, greatly influenced by Saint-Simon in arriving at his theory of historical determinism; but it was a radically different theory.

Thus Saint-Simon's great contribution to Socialist theory lay in his insistence on the duty of society, through a transformed State controlled by *les producteurs*, to plan and organise the uses of the means of production so as to keep continually abreast of scientific discovery. Therewith his doctrine anticipated modern notions of technocracy in his insistence on the master-function of the industrial experts and organisers as against both the politicians and the rest of the unproductive classes, who would be relegated to a minor place in the society of the future. (For Saint-Simon what mattered to humanity was not politics but the production of wealth, in a sense wide enough to include the products of the arts and of science as

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well as of industry and agriculture. He rejected the greatest happiness doctrine of the Utilitarians on the ground that its effect would be to leave the rulers judges of what would make men happy, and demanded that high production should be recognised as the end of social organisation on the ground that, this done, there would be the greatest freedom for men to find satisfaction in their work, and that the choice of rulers would no longer be based on meaningless or irrelevant political appeals but would be simply a matter of selection according to ascertained technical competence. Given such organisation, he argued, plenty could easily be attained for all. Naturally his conception of economic rights as resting exclusively on service, though it excluded the validity of inheritance, left opportunities for large gains open to the productive leaders. This aspect of his doctrine attracted many mass producers, engineers, and men of science to the support of his ideas, and the Saint-Simonians came to include a high proportion of men who were later to take the lead in French economic and industrial development. But despite Saint-Simon's insistence on the primacy of the claims of *la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre* this very appeal to the men of business ability served to prevent the Saint-Simonians from securing any substantial basis of support among the working classes.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SAINT-SIMONIANS

SAINT-SIMON left his disciples his *Nouveau Christianisme* as his testament. He had at the last a supreme confidence in his mission to lead humanity into the new era of peaceful industry and international association; and in the closing sentences of this book he spoke unequivocally of himself as inspired — of God speaking through his mouth. This was the aspect of his message that was at once taken up by the group of disciples, reinforced by new-comers, who came during the next few years into a celebrity, or notoriety, which the 'Master' had never achieved. Saint-Simonism burst on the world as a religion and found a new leader who was prepared to carry it to the limit of religious fantasy, while preserving side by side with the wildest extravagances the hard core of faith in the civilising mission of scientific industry that constituted its chief appeal to the engineers, scientists, and universal projectors who were influenced by it.

Saint-Simon's own choice as his principal successor had been Olinde Rodrigues, who had been his close friend and financial helper during his last years. But Rodrigues was not a strong man, and the control, with his own consent, slipped at once from his grasp, and before long passed into the hands of the young engineer, Barthélemy-Prosper Enfantin (1796-1864). Under Enfantin's magnetic influence, the little group of Saint-Simoniens soon proceeded to organise themselves into a hierarchic Church. But before that they began with lectures and conferences, in which they endeavoured to expound and systematise the ideas of the 'Master'. Under the editorship of Saint-Amand Bazard (1791-1832), previously a Radical connected with the Carbonari, the group produced a connected statement entitled *La Doctrine saint-simonienne* (1826-8). This work, based on courses of lectures in which they expounded the lessons of the 'Master', embodies a considerable

development of Saint-Simon's economic ideas in the direction of a sort of State Socialism. It declares unequivocally for the abolition of inheritance of property as inconsistent with the principle that each man should be rewarded solely in accordance with his capacities as a servant of society. This is entirely in harmony with Saint-Simon's own view, but he had never fully faced its consequences. If wealth could not be inherited, fortunes would have to lapse at death to Society—that is, in effect, to the State, which would thus become the sole source of capital. But the Saint-Simonians did not mean by this that the political government should take over the control of industry. They wanted a great Central Bank, controlled by '*les grands industriels*', with specialised banks dependent on it, which would hand out capital to those who were best fitted to make productive use of it. Saint-Simon had already urged that the right form of industry in the new society would be the corporation or company, under skilled technical management; and the Saint-Simonians now advocated the organisation of industry into great companies, which would be financed by the banks, and would be the executors of the economic plans laid down in Council by the leaders of industrial and managerial techniques. They insisted, again echoing Saint-Simon, that this planning must provide work for all—Saint-Simon was, I think, the progenitor of the idea of 'full employment'—and must be directed in the interests of the working class (*la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*). They developed in their conferences great projects of public works, including not only the cutting of canals at Suez and at Panama (an old idea of the Master) but also the covering of the whole world with a network of railways as the means of unifying the human race under the leadership of the men of science. (They were in fact the precursors of President Truman's 'Point Four'. Nothing was too grandiose for them to project.)

This first full exposition of Saint-Simonism was mainly the work of Bazard, who was indeed the most important theorist of the movement during the years which followed the death of the master. The distinctively Socialist elements in Saint-Simonism were largely due to Bazard's influence, and later to that of Pierre Leroux. Had Bazard not been driven out of the leadership by Enfantin, the Saint-Simonian movement



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might have developed along quite different — and much more sensible — lines, and might have made a much more direct impact on the working classes.

All this, however, was only one aspect of '*la doctrine*'; and very soon the Saint-Simoniens, under Enfantin's influence, passed into a new and singular phase. In their account of *La Doctrine saint-simonienne* there had been throughout an apocryphal tone. Saint-Simon had been spoken of as if he had been not merely a man, however exalted as a philosopher, but an inspired interpreter of the voice of God, almost a God himself. Saint-Simonism had been presented not only as a philosophy or a science of sciences, but also as a new religion destined to take over the mission the Catholic Church had fulfilled in the Middle Ages, by unifying the world through a new spiritual principle — that of work as the duty and function of every man. On this basis the Saint-Simoniens proceeded to organise themselves into a Church, with a hierarchy, not of Pope and Cardinals, but of 'Father' and 'Apostles', priests and communicants, with a new liturgy, hymns, and ceremonials. The office of supreme head of the Church had indeed at the outset, in default of agreement, to be shared between Enfantin and Bazard, the two outstanding figures; but the real leadership soon rested with Enfantin. The 'Fathers' and 'Apostles' adopted living in common, after the manner of the early Christians. Their utterances became more and more mysteriously apocalyptic. Presently Enfantin discovered that, in accordance with their proclaimed principle of sex equality — which they had added to the doctrines of the Master — the new Church needed a 'Mother' as well as a 'Father', to symbolise the union of intellect and feeling, or of the spirit and the flesh, which had been implicit in Saint-Simon's later teaching. They held that it was part of their mission to pass beyond the Christian hatred of the flesh to an exaltation of it as the necessary complement of the spirit (*l'esprit*). Enfantin, exalted, proclaimed that *La Mère* would in due course reveal herself, to be united symbolically to *Le Père*. But there were two *Pères*, and one of them was already married; and Mme Bazard was an active member of the Saint-Simonian Church, though hardly, it was felt, a suitable candidate for the vacant throne. A schism followed, led by

the Bazaris, and Enfantin was left as sole *Père* — already venerated almost as divine. Under his guidance, the leading male members of the Church retired to his house at Ménilmontant, to live together, without service other than their own and in celibacy till *La Mère* should present herself and tell them what to do next. They withdrew from the world, using their time to compile an extraordinary work — *Le Livre nouveau* — but awaiting the coming of the ‘Mother’ before further formulating their doctrine or deciding how to apply it. Meanwhile, the authorities had fallen foul of them. They had been accused, on the strength of their writings and preachings, of many enormities — of attacking property (inheritance), of advocating free love (they rejected Christian marriage and some of them advocated unions terminable at will), and of being political conspirators bent on overthrowing the Government. Enfantin was sent to prison for a year, while his followers continued to wait for a sign. But no *Mère* appeared; and presently, after there had been many more secessions, funds ran out, and *La Famille* had to disperse from Ménilmontant. Enfantin, on being sent to prison, had renounced his apostolic control; he resumed it on his release. But with the closing of Ménilmontant — and still no *Mère* to join her counsels to his — he was at a loss. It seemed as if the Saint-Simonian religion was at a dead end. But it was not. The next episode was a reversion to the earlier projects of unifying the world by great public works — canals, railways, whatever would bind all humanity together more closely and thus help to develop its spiritual unity. After a vain search for *La Mère* had taken them to Turkey, as the gateway to the mysterious East, whose marriage with the West the union of *Le Père* and *La Mère* was to symbolise, Enfantin led the rump of the faithful to Egypt, with the purpose of uniting the half-worlds of West and East by making a canal through the Suez Isthmus, as Saint-Simon had proposed long before. The Egyptian Government, however, soon blew cold on the canal project, and directed the energies of the Saint-Simonians to constructing a Nile barrage. On this, work was begun, but again before long the Government changed its mind, and their labours were once more suspended. A few remained in Egypt, in charge of various public works; for, as we saw, a good many

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of the Saint-Simonians were engineers from the École Polytechnique. The rest drifted back to France, where Enfantin for some time languished in chafing inactivity, till in 1839 he was made, through the influence of friends, one of the Government's Commissioners for the development of Algeria, then in process of being fully conquered by the French. He spent two years there, with little power, and, returning in 1841, produced a report in which he urged union between French and Arabs to develop the country through a system of collective colonies of agriculture — as the first stage towards a marriage of East and West through the permeation of the East with French technological and cultural influence. Back in France, where he had still a faithful residue of disciples, he resumed his activity in the Suez Canal project, forming a company for its furtherance, only to be elbowed out of the way by de Lesseps, who had been associated with the Saint-Simonians during their sojourn in Egypt, but would not have them as partners when he saw his way clear to get the concession better without their aid. Defeated in this, Enfantin turned to yet another of the early Saint-Simonian schemes. With the aid of financiers who had been influenced by Saint-Simonism in its earlier phases, he managed to become the principal promoter of the railway amalgamation which created the Paris-Lyons-Mediterranean line, and spent his remaining years as one of its leading figures. He did not, however, abandon his doctrine. Saint-Simonian hopes rose high again during the Revolutions of 1848, only to come again to nothing; and Enfantin and his group thereafter vainly wooed the favour of Napoleon III. But the sect was by this time nearly dead, its members dispersed and mostly no longer concerned with it. Some, such as Michel Chevalier, who negotiated the Cobden Treaty of 1860, rose to high office: the brothers Pereire became great industrial bankers — Enfantin, as we have seen, a railway director. Only Enfantin, however, still concerned himself with *la doctrine*. In 1858 he published *La Science de l'homme*, a new exposition of Saint-Simon's ideas, and in 1861 *La Vie éternelle*, a still *exalté* essay expounding the Saint-Simonian religion. In 1864 he died.

Enfantin was undoubtedly a most remarkable person. He had an astonishing capacity for inspiring love and veneration,

and for getting people to listen respectfully to absolute nonsense. He was entirely sincere; he believed in the Saint-Simonian religion, in his own inspiration by God, and in the destined coming of *La Femme*, who with him was to save the world. He believed that the Suez Canal project, and the other grandiose development plans which he and his colleagues drew up, were the essential expression of the new social religion of work, which was to *chasser les oisifs* and to improve the lot of the poor by removing all exploitation and class antagonisms. He was no doubt mad, and he buried the fruitful ideas of Saint-Simon under the mass of rubbish he erected on them. Saint-Simon was forgotten, as the French — and indeed a large part of the Western world — watched the antics of the Saint-Simonians and wrote them off as cranks or denounced them as moral and social subverters. And yet — their vision of the capitalist future was surprisingly far-sighted in many respects. *Inter alia*, they were the first to see (and to approve) what is now called the 'managerial revolution'.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the Saint-Simonians, during the years of *Enfantin's* pre-eminence among them, did nothing except absurdities. On the contrary, side by side with their religious antics, they kept up a lively propaganda over the whole field of contemporary political and economic policy. This was the case especially during the first years after the French Revolution of 1830 — a revolution which they despised as having touched nothing of substance in the faulty structure of the society it had taken over. They were continually assailing the parties which upheld the *bourgeois* monarchy of Louis-Philippe, as well as those who opposed it in the name of legitimacy or on behalf of the claims of the Catholic Church. They attacked the economists who stood for the principle of *laissez-faire* as vehemently as they denounced the party of order. They saw everywhere around them 'impotence' and 'anarchy', as the necessary results of a sheer failure to understand the transformations that were at work in the very foundations of society, or the need for a shift of authority from the politicians and the militarists to *les industriels*, who alone were the masters of the developing economic forces.

From 1830 onwards, the leading position in the journalistic

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campaigns of the Saint-Simonians was occupied by Pierre Leroux, chief editor of the formerly 'liberal' paper, *Le Globe*, and himself a new convert to Saint-Simonism. The Saint-Simonians bought *Le Globe*, set Michel Chevalier and other members of their group to collaborate with Leroux, and made the paper a vehicle for the advocacy of their less esoteric views. Leroux himself had been attracted by Saint-Simon's *Nouveau Christianisme*, as well as by the more mundane aspects of the Master's doctrine; but he did not fall into the excesses and absurdities of Enfantin and his immediate circle. With Chevalier, he wove the essential ideas of Saint-Simonism into a running critique of the incidents of French politics after the accession of Louis-Philippe, in such a way as to present a coherent, if not wholly satisfying programme.

The Saint-Simonians, as *Le Globe* presented their case, appeared as the advocates of a thorough-going system of technocracy. (They displayed a deep contempt for the machinery of parliamentary democracy, and for the entire business of counting heads as a means of choosing a Government.) The truly competent leader, the man who understands and is capable of commanding the processes of production, does not wait, they announced, to be elected by the ignorant multitude: he chooses himself by the apparent fact of his superior capability. Quite how such men were to assume the power that was theirs of right, the Saint-Simonians did not explain: the thing was to happen, when the nation, tired of incompetent politicians and exploiting *oisifs*, turned instinctively to the men who alone knew how to clear up the mess. The Saint-Simonians were as scornful of the cries of 'liberty' as they were of ballot-box democracy. 'Liberty', they exclaimed, was merely anarchy endowed with a meretricious title: what society needed was not liberty, but order. That, of course, was what a good many reactionaries were also saying; but the Saint-Simonians made haste to explain that the 'order' they stood for was by no means that which could be achieved by a whiff of grapeshot or by the institution of a 'police State'. Their 'order' was the peaceable order of scientific industrial and economic organisation — an order which, once set up, would need no military or police power to ensure its control.

They did, however — or at any rate Chevalier did — insist

that the order needed in society could not be secured without centralisation of power. When they were accused of laying plans for centralised bureaucratic control, they welcomed the one half of the charge — for was not centralisation indispensable for sound economic planning and for ensuring that, with inheritance done away with, the State should be able to allocate the use of capital resources to those best able to employ them in the general interest? *Le Globe* laid great stress on the proposal to make an end of the power of *les oisifs* by the abolition of the legal right to inherit property. It attacked as unfounded the notion that ownership was a necessary spur to productive effort. Did not the tenant farmer love the land he tilled a great deal better than the landlord who merely extorted a rent? Would not the captains of industry work a great deal more energetically if their tenure of their positions depended on their actually getting good results from the capital instruments entrusted to them? And would not these captains of industry have, under such conditions, every inducement to offer the workers under them the requisite incentives to give of their best? The Saint-Simonian conceptions of the actual organisation of industrial enterprises under their system were never very clear; but they evidently contemplated teams of technicians employing workers who would share in the profits of the various enterprises, and the nomination and final control of these technicians by some sort of planning authority acting in the name of the Government, but consisting of *industriels* — higher technicians, bankers, industrial administrators, and economic experts — and not of politicians. These last, if they survived at all, were to do what they were told by the industrial leaders.

After the questions of political and economic organisation, the subjects most actively discussed in *Le Globe* were foreign policy, religion, and the family. In matters of foreign policy, the Saint-Simonians were aggressively activist. They had no doubt in their minds that it was the mission of France and of the French to lead the whole world towards the new order, in which political government would yield place to economic administration; and, despite their hostility to the military leaders and their continual cries for a peace of nations, they favoured in 1830 the annexation of Belgium, which could

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then be joined with France in the great crusade. They were scornful of Germany, which they saw as a country given over to anarchy in every field. They admired Great Britain's industrial pre-eminence, but had nothing but scorn for its political institutions and its devotion to *laissez-faire*, which they regarded as the main cause of the bitter sufferings of the British working class. (They looked to France to extend its civilising influence over Northern Africa and, presently, over the whole unregenerate East.) Pusillanimity in world affairs was not the least of the charges which *Le Globe* levelled at the Government of Louis-Philippe.

On the religious issue, Leroux continually affirmed that the new society must be organised on a Christian foundation. But his conception of Christianity was, of course, that of Saint-Simon's *Nouveau Christianisme* rather than that of the Catholic Church. On the question of the family, *Le Globe* was concerned to rebut the charge, often levelled against the Saint-Simoniens, that they wished to do away with it, or at any rate proposed to undermine its foundations by abolishing the inheritance of property. The group round *Enfantin* had, indeed, made many attacks on the institution of marriage, as it then was, and had put about notions of a marriage-contract terminable at will by either party. But this was not a common tenet of the School; nor was it any part of the system as *Le Globe* presented it. Leroux was concerned to deny that the abolition of inheritance would have any effect in disrupting the family. Was the family, then, he asked, an institution confined to those who possessed property to hand on to their children? Did not the family thrive fully as much among the poor as among the propertied classes — or even more?

*Le Globe* was not long-lived. It had run its course in two years; but Leroux, less closely connected with the official Saint-Simonian School as it gradually broke up, continued in other journals and in a number of books to preach his version of the Saint-Simonian gospel. In particular, he set out to carry through Saint-Simon's project of a 'New Encyclopaedia' to serve as the means of unifying the knowledge that was to provide the intellectual foundations of the coming age. With Jean Reynaud he established the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*; and he co-operated with George Sand in the *Revue indépendante*.

It was in connection with the former of these enterprises that he first brought the word 'socialist' into regular use in France ; and in 1833 in his *Revue encyclopédique* — the precursor of his *Encyclopédie nouvelle* — he wrote an article, 'De l'individualisme et du socialisme,' in which the first known attempt to define 'Socialism' appeared in print. It is also to Leroux that the conception of 'functional' Socialism seems to be originally due. The great 'function', he said, is useful work ; the organisation of society must be made to rest on this 'functional' principle. In a properly organised community, all men will be *fonctionnaires* ; there will be no special class of state servants called exclusively by that name. His other chief works are *De l'égalité* (1838), *De l'humanité* (1840), and *D'une religion nationale* (1846). He died in 1871.

Were the Saint-Simonians Socialists? Under Bazard's influence they tended strongly in that direction ; but with his removal, and Enfantin's assumption of leadership, other aspects of *la doctrine* came to occupy the main attention of the School. Nevertheless, the socialistic element remained ; but it was a kind of Socialism that exalted authority and bore a close resemblance to what has come, in our own day, to be called the 'managerial revolution'. The answer, then, cannot be unequivocal. On the 'yes' side, we have : (a) their exaltation of work, and of the claims of the producers ; (b) their denunciation of idleness and of all inherited and unmerited wealth ; (c) their insistence on the need for central economic planning, for an *économie dirigée*, as the French call it ; (d) their advocacy of sex equality ; and (e) their insistence that the governing principle of all social action must be the advancement of the position of *la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*. On the other side are : (a) their scorn of the political capacity of the many — of democracy ; (b) their acceptance of the great industrialists and bankers as the natural leaders of the workers ; and (c) their readiness to work through any Government, monarchical, imperialist, *bourgeois* — whatever it might be — because the forms of political government seemed to them to matter so little in comparison with the organisation of economic affairs. Perhaps one should add their absence of scruple about the imposition of the ideas of the West — above all, of France — on peoples they dismissed



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as uncivilised. Finally, we must take into account their totalitarianism and their insistence on a society indoctrinated with the truth — their own — and using its educational system and every other means at its disposal as weapons for this indoctrination.

Outside the direct activities of the 'School', the intellectual impact of the Saint-Simonians was undoubtedly widespread. They had a considerable influence, though few followers, in Germany, and unquestionably Marx learned much from them. In France itself they had a substantial effect on the development of Socialist thought, especially through the numerous seceders from their ranks who passed into the various Socialist groups. Philippe-Benjamin-Joseph Buchez (1796-1865), yet another of the Saint-Simonians, but one who broke away soon, was President of the Constituent Assembly of 1830, and joined hands with Louis Blanc to advocate the development of Co-operative production aided by State capital. Auguste Comte developed his 'Positive Philosophy', which exercised for a time an enormous influence and had considerable repercussions in England as well as on the Continent. In effect, what Saint-Simon contributed to Socialist thought was neither a distinguishable Socialist movement nor a distinguishable Socialist theory, but the conception of a planned economy organised for 'full employment' and the wide diffusion of purchasing power, an insistence that rewards should correspond to services rendered and that accordingly all inheritance of property was out of place in an industrial society, a recognition of the priority of economic over political forces, and a notion of the historical development of society from a political to an 'industrial' phase. In this last, he at any rate helped to suggest, though he did not hold, a Materialist Conception of History, such as was formulated subsequently by Marx. (Saint-Simon's view of historical development was technological, but it was not materialist. In his view, the human discoverers, and not the 'powers of production', were the basic forces at work in the world.) Saint-Simon and his followers were often called *les industriels*, and it is indeed to him that we owe the entry of the word 'industrial' into modern terminology as a description of the new conditions introduced by what was later called the Industrial Revolution.

## CHAPTER VI

### FOURIER AND FOURIERISM

NO two persons could well be more different in their approach to the social question than Saint-Simon and Fourier, though they were both precursors of Socialism. Saint-Simon loved vast generalisations and was dominated in all his thinking by the conception of unity. His approach was historical, on a world scale : he saw the coming industrial age as a phase in a grand progress of human development based on the expansion and unification of human knowledge. Fourier, on the other hand, set out always from the individual, from his likes and dislikes, his pursuit of happiness, his pleasure in creation, and his propensity to be bored. For Fourier, there was fundamental need that the work by which men had to live should be in itself pleasant and attractive, not merely beneficial in its results. It was necessary, too, to devise means for men, or rather families, to live together in societies which would be so organised as to satisfy the needs of the diverse bents and natures of the individuals concerned. Saint-Simon and his followers were always making vast plans in which the emphasis was laid on high output and efficient production, on large-scale organisation and comprehensive planning, and on the fullest use of scientific and technological knowledge. Fourier was not in the least interested in technology : he disliked large-scale production, mechanisation, and centralisation in all their forms. He believed in small communities as best for meeting the real needs of small men. It was no accident that Saint-Simon found many of his most enthusiastic disciples among the students and graduates of the *École Polytechnique*, whereas the Fourierists included a high proportion of persons who were hostile to the new developments of large-scale industry, and believed in the virtues of the simple life.

Fourier himself expressed a deep contempt for the followers of Saint-Simon in the days of *Enfantin's* pre-eminence.

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He said of them : 'I attended the service of the Saint-Simonians last Sunday. One cannot conceive how these sacerdotal play-actors can command so large a following. Their dogmas are inadmissible : they are monstrosities at which we must shrug our shoulders : to think of preaching in the nineteenth century the abolition of property and inheritance !' (from a letter written in 1831). Fourier thought he knew how to solve the problem of property without either abolishing it or destroying inheritance, which he regarded as natural, and as corresponding to a desire deeply implanted in the nature of men.

François-Marie-Charles Fourier (1772-1837) was born at Besançon, of a middle-class merchant family which lost most of its possessions during the Revolution. He had to earn his living as a clerk and commercial traveller, and to write his books in his leisure time. He worked out his ideas for himself, almost uninfluenced by any previous writer, starting from an analysis of human nature, and above all of the passions as affecting human happiness. (His fundamental tenet was that right social organisation must be based, not on curbing natural human desires, but on finding means for satisfying them in ways that would lead to harmony instead of discord. He was the opponent of all moralists who founded their systems on the notion of an opposition between the reason and the passions, or regarded social organisation as an instrument for compelling men to be good against their wills. (He held human nature to be essentially unchanging from age to age, and thus denied the doctrine of many of his fellow-Utopians — especially Godwin and Owen — that character could be moulded into almost any shape by environment.) Not that he stressed less than they did the importance of environment in the making or marring of human happiness : far from it. But the problem, as he saw it, was to establish a social environment that would fit human nature as it was, and not be designed to change it into something different.

As things were, most men, Fourier considered, were compelled to waste the greater part of their energies in doing and making things which, instead of ministering to their happiness, bored and irked them and either fed imaginary wants or, when the products met real wants, fed them in an exceedingly wasteful manner. The waste of labour involved in

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competition, above all in distribution, which he knew most about, appalled him : he wanted men to have done with all the complicated processes of buying and selling on which they wasted their lives and to devise means of producing and consuming, by the simplest possible methods, only what they really enjoyed. He was not in the least an ascetic : he wanted everybody to have a good time, and in accordance with his theory of human nature, he recognised the pursuit of pleasure as a wholly legitimate end. For himself, he had a very keen pleasure in good, well-cooked food ; and this, as we shall see, had a big influence on the shaping of his doctrine. It was natural to men, he thought, not only to enjoy the pleasures of the table, but also to enjoy doing whatever ministered to these pleasures — the growing and preparation of succulent food and drink. He cared much less how he was clothed or lodged, provided he was kept adequately warm and watertight ; and, accordingly, in his attitude to industrial production, he was governed by the feeling that such things as houses, furniture, and clothes should be made to last — of good craftsmanship, so that men would not need to be continually replacing them and thus condemning themselves to irksome labours when they might have been more pleasantly occupied. He hated shoddy goods, both because they were no fun to make and because they were wasteful of human effort ; and he held that things wore out so fast mainly because, under the competitive system, the makers wanted them to wear out, in order to ensure a continuing demand. If goods were made well, as they should be for the satisfaction of the makers as well as the users, they would last long. Therefore, he did not see the need for any large amount of employment in industrial production : most of men's labour time, he held, could be better spent in producing and preparing pleasure-giving things to eat and drink.

It follows that the agriculture which Fourier regarded as the main occupation for men was thought of primarily as horticulture and the small-scale raising of stock and poultry. Fourier wanted a system of highly intensive land cultivation mainly for specialised products, to be raised by skilled manual operations. He thought little of main crops, or of production for exchange. He wanted his communities to produce nice

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things for their own eating — fruit and vegetables above all. He was very fond of salads. He believed that such intensive cultivation could yield an ample supply of provisions for the producers, including those who could not work on the land.

It was an essential part of Fourier's view that no worker should follow only a single occupation. Everyone, he considered, should work at many jobs, but at none for more than a short time. Within the working day, his settlers were to shift continually from one employment to another, so as never to feel the boredom of monotonous effort. They were to have free choice of occupations, within the wide range of alternatives open to them, attaching themselves voluntarily to such occupational groups — he called them '*séries*' — as they fancied. They were to enjoy their work because they chose it, because they were not held to it over long continuous periods, and because they could, as consumers of its product, clearly visualise its use. This variety of work for every person Fourier regarded as corresponding to the natural variety of human desires.

But who, in such a voluntarist society, was to do the 'dirty work' — a question that has been put often enough since to libertarian Socialists? Fourier had his answer. You had, he said, only to watch children at play to realise that they loved getting dirty and had a natural propensity to form 'gangs'. What, then, could be simpler than to recognise this natural tendency, let the children form their gangs freely, and entrust to them the doing of such dirty work as could not be dispensed with by proper management? Repression of juvenile gangs was all wrong, because they gave expression to natural desires: the right course was to create for them a useful social function.

Fourier's conception of education was of a piece with this. He wanted the children to follow their natural bents, and to learn a variety of trades by attaching themselves freely to their elders in a sort of manifold apprenticeship. In all this, Fourier was an important anticipator of modern ideas of education, especially in its vocational aspects. He held that the best way to learn was to do, and that the way to make children want to learn was to give them the chance of doing. Given free choice, he said, they would pick up easily enough the kinds of knowledge towards which they had a natural attraction. Children, he said, have a natural taste both for making things

and for imitating the doings of their elders ; and these tastes provide the natural foundation for a right education in the arts of life.

All this rested on Fourier's preliminary analysis of human nature, which he never tired of elaborating. He thought he had discovered a working law of the distribution of men's propensities, and he set out to devise a form of social organisation that would conform to this law. The communities he advocated were to be of a size and structure designed to meet this requirement — neither too small to give every member a sufficient range of choice of occupations, nor any bigger than was necessary to meet this need. He fixed on the ideal of about 1600 persons, cultivating about 5000 acres of land. These figures were not meant to be rigid : in his later writings he went up to 1800 persons. Such numbers, he held, would suffice to give a normal distribution of tastes and temperaments and to ensure that the principle of free choice would not result in an unbalanced distribution of labour between different kinds of work. They would also yield a sufficient range of choice for the making of congenial friendships and for the avoidance of jostling between incompatibles too closely associated in everyday contacts.

Fourier's communities were to be called *phalanstères*, from the Greek word *phalanx*. They were to be housed in a great common building, or group of buildings, fully equipped with common services, including *crèches* where young children could be communally cared for. But the inhabitants were not to live in common any more than they chose. Each family was to have its own apartment and to be free to do as it pleased in keeping itself to itself or in making use of the communal restaurants and public rooms. Nor were these apartments (or the incomes of those who occupied them) to be all of equal size. They were to be adaptable to different tastes, requirements, and levels of income. Fourier was no advocate of absolute economic equality ; nor did he object to unearned incomes derived from the possession of capital. On the contrary, he was prepared to pay special rewards for skill, responsibility, and managerial capacity, and also to allow interest on invested capital used for the development of the *phalanstère*. Indeed, he contemplated that every person would become an

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investor in the share-capital on a larger or smaller scale.

Here again he had a theory about the right distribution of the product of industry. In his earlier writings he proposed that, of the total value produced, five-twelfths should be paid out as a reward for ordinary labour, four-twelfths as the return on invested capital, and three-twelfths as remuneration for special talent, including payment for managerial services. Sometimes he varied these proportions, assigning half the total to labour and only two-twelfths to talent, but leaving the four-twelfths to capital unaltered. He did, however, see danger in allowing the unlimited accumulation of unearned income; and he proposed to keep this in check by varying the rate of return on capital according to the amount of the individual's holding. Thus, as any individual increased his investment, he would get less income from each additional share-holding. In effect, this was exactly the same as a progressive tax on unearned incomes; and the graduation which Fourier had in mind was pretty steep.

The *phalanstères* were to be set up and financed, not by the State or by any public agency, but by voluntary action. Fourier constantly appealed to possessors of capital to understand the beauty of his system, and the joys of living under it, and to come forward with the money needed to establish communities on the right lines. He advertised for capital-owners prepared to do this, asking them to meet him at a restaurant where, for years, he lunched in solitude, keeping a vacant place for the expected guest. None came. It was only after his death, and then mainly in the United States and, oddly enough, in Russia, Rumania, and Spain, that disciples came forward with a readiness to risk their money and their lives.

The proposed variations in the rate of return on capital, and the intention that every worker should be also a capital-owner, make Fourier's system a good deal less inegalitarian than it appears at first sight. But for flat equality he had no use: he believed it to be inconsistent with human nature. Men, he thought, have a natural desire to be rewarded according to their works, and it would be both wrong and foolish to attempt to thwart this desire.

Throughout, Fourier rested his proposals on a firm belief that they were in harmony, not only with human nature, but

also with the will of God. It was God's doing that men had desires and passions ; and accordingly these must have been given to men for good. Moreover, God has so arranged matters that the varieties of human bent and aversions actually correspond to what is needed for good living : the social philosopher has only to study these variations in order to compute the size of community in which men can happily share out the necessary tasks with full freedom for every man to follow his own bent. Thus, Fourier inherited the eighteenth-century proclivity for identifying God and nature, or at any rate for attributing to nature the attribute of being animated and directed by the divine will. He carried this view to the length of supposing that there were actually *no* desires natural to men that could not be made to contribute to the good life, if only the right outlets were found and made available. He was indeed the first exponent of the notion of 'sublimation', and held it in its most comprehensive form.

There is much in Fourier's writings that is fantastic — in his latest writings much that is plainly mad. It is unnecessary to dwell on these fantasies, which have no connection with the essence of his teaching. 'Anti-lions' and seas of lemonade have nothing to do with the merits or demerits of the phalansterian system : nor do such absurdities appear at all in most of his works. It is a great mistake merely to laugh Fourier out of court because he ended by going off his head. He was emphatically a serious social thinker who contributed much of permanent value, not only to Socialist and Co-operative ideas, but also to the solution of the entire problem of work and of the incentives and human relations connected with it. Fourier's fundamental theory is one of association founded on a psychological law. To employ his own phraseology, he believed himself to have discovered a social law of 'attraction', which was the complement to Newton's law of attraction in the material world. He held that God had made man for a social order, for life according to a 'Plan of God' which corresponded to God's will. The problem for men was to discover God's plan and to act in conformity with it. There was a correspondence, Fourier affirmed, between the planetary and the social world, and all men's passions, like all the stellar bodies, had their place in the system of human living. This



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realised, it comes to be understood that even the human passions hitherto regarded as evil are in fact good, and can be utilised for the benefit of humanity if they are given the right scope and set free from the perversions which have been induced in them by bad social organisation — bad, because not so balanced and adapted as to give men harmless scope for the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs. It is, accordingly, necessary to change not man's nature but his environment, and the clue to this change is the organisation of society in accordance with the principle of 'association'.

Fourier's system, then, rests on the belief that most forms of necessary labour can be made attractive if they are rightly organised, and that no one need or should be made to work at any particular job except of his own free will. In the *phalanstères* all work was to be shared on a voluntary basis by groups or 'series' of workers, between which there would arise a natural emulation in doing their jobs well. He did not, of course, believe that *any* kind of labour could be made attractive, even for short spells: what he did hold was that the kinds that were naturally unattractive were for the most part unnecessary and involved much more unpleasantness than their products were worth. That was why he wanted to keep down the amount of manufacturing labour by the elimination of unnecessary consumption and by making such things as clothes and furniture very durable. He believed that pleasure in work was a natural endowment of women as well as men, and wished women to have an equal freedom with men in choosing their jobs. Indeed, complete sex equality was to be established under the new order to which he looked forward.

Fourier had no taste for revolution, and was as cautious in his concrete proposals for innovation as he was daring in his speculative outlook. He did not call upon the State or any political body to organise his new system, though he held that when it had been established there would arise a loose federal structure, made up of federated *phalanstères* under a coordinating Governor, whom he called an Omniarch. If the *phalanstères* could not be established immediately, he was prepared to recommend a transitional form of organisation to which he gave the name of 'guaranteeism' — a modified community way of living, which could be set on foot by individual

capitalists who were minded to experiment. The well-known Godin *Familistère* at Guise was inspired by Fourier's ideas and is an outstanding practical example of what he called 'guaranteeism'. It has been much visited, and often described. This half-way house he was prepared to accept, because he considered that it might be impossible for men to escape suddenly from the long period of corrupting influence under which they had been living.

Indeed, as we have seen, Fourier himself hoped that rich men would come and help him to start his *phalanstères*. Sometimes he appealed to kings, never to popular Governments, or to the poor, or to revolution. Like Owen, he was a community maker, who believed that he had only to lay his plans before men with enough insistence and reiteration for their attractions to prove invincible, if only men could be got to listen.

From volume to volume, over a period of nearly thirty years, Fourier reiterated his gospel without fundamental changes. His first book, *Théorie des quatre mouvements*, was published in 1808 and was followed by a series of others in which he repeated and expanded the same ideas with constantly varying terminology, so that a large number of words which have entered into the vocabulary of Socialist thinking can be traced back in one form or another to Fourier's writings. The most important of his later books were *L'Association domestique agricole*, subsequently renamed *L'Unité universelle* (1822); *Le Nouveau Monde industriel et sociétaire* (1829); and *La Fausse Industrie* (1835-6).

The variations of his terminology were endless. In his earlier writings he called his general system, sometimes 'Harmony' or 'Harmonism', sometimes 'Association', sometimes '*État Sociétaire*', and sometimes '*Solidarité*'. Later, he spoke of it as '*Unité Universelle*', or as '*Unitéisme*', and occasionally as '*Collectisme*'. The half-way house towards it was sometimes '*Garantisme*' and sometimes '*Sociantisme*'; and sometimes these words meant two different degrees of approximation to the full content of his system. He also used both '*Mutualisme*' and '*Mutuellisme*', in a somewhat general sense. For his communities he used the names '*phalange*' and '*phalanstère*' — the first with primary reference to the human group, the second to its habitation. '*Série*' primarily

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meant an associated group of workers, engaged on a common task.

Fourier's disciples were called, and called themselves, by a similar diversity of names — *Phalangistes*, *Fourieristes* (or, in America, 'Furyists', by their opponents), *École Sociétaire*, *Humanistes*, *Humaniens*, *Unistes*, *Associativistes*, *Séristes*, *Sérisophistes*, and so on. In Great Britain, Hugh Doherty, the leader of the school, called Fourierism 'the Social System', and spoke of it also as 'Universalism', 'Humanisation', and 'Phalansterianism', and also as 'Solidarity'. In the United States, it was often called 'Associationism', sometimes 'Unityism' or 'Serialisation'; but the word most frequently used was 'Phalanx'. 'Collectivism' was also used as a description, and 'Mutualism' as a general term, not confined to Fourier's half-way proposals. Even this list by no means exhausts the variants. Apart from 'Fourierism', the words 'Association' and 'Harmony', and their derivatives, were perhaps the most often used.

Until near the end of his life Fourier found few disciples; but in the 1820s a small group gathered round him, and a sharp dispute began between his adherents and the Saint-Simonians. His following, as well as theirs, became much larger after the French Revolution of 1830, and the rivalry between the two 'Schools' was keen, each having a profound contempt for the other. Fourier accused the Saint-Simonians of stealing his ideas without acknowledgment, and they retorted with accusations that he was an impracticable dogmatist with no conception of progress or of the mission of science. Before long Fourierism began to exert some influence outside France. It was studied in Germany, as a variant of the new French social speculation, and it spread to England, where its adherents had to meet the rival doctrine of Owenite Socialism, to which it bore, in some respects, a close resemblance. Owenites and Fourierists had many arguments about the respective merits of their several doctrines, but often found themselves uniting against their common opponents. The Fourierists sometimes accused Owen of having stolen their master's ideas, which had appeared in print before his own; but there is no evidence that Owen had ever heard of Fourier when he published his principal writings. I think, however, that Fourierist ideas did

have some influence on the later phases of Owenism, especially Queenwood, though they had none at all on his earlier projects of 'Villages of Co-operation'.

In Great Britain the leading exponent of Fourierism was Hugh Doherty, who translated and edited some of the master's writings, and produced in 1840 a Fourierist periodical, *The Morning Star*. The most important of the English Fourierist publications was the translation of a section of Fourier's main work, issued under the title, *The Passions of the Human Soul* (1851), and including a full summary of his doctrines, written by Hugh Doherty. The principal point at issue between the Fourierists and the Owenites arose out of their essentially different views of human nature. Fourier had insisted on its immutability, and on the need to establish a social environment that would fit in with it. The Owenites, on the contrary, wanted to establish an environment that would profoundly modify human nature. The difference was not absolute; for, as we shall see, Owen was well aware of the importance of native propensities as well as confident that their outcome in behaviour was almost infinitely malleable under environmental influences. Fourier, for his part, though he regarded human nature as unchanging and as involving a statistically certain and verifiable distribution of diverse propensities and desires, was as insistent as Owen on the need for an environment that would not change these propensities but direct them into the right channels. Nevertheless, the difference was important; for whereas Fourier stressed the supreme importance of making labour pleasant by adapting it to men's natural bents, Owen tended to rely on making men work well and happily by instilling into them a moral sense of their work as valuable in the common interest. Fourier, as much as Owen, emphasised the importance of educating children in good social habits and attitudes; but he put his main reliance, not on getting them to believe what it was in the general interest they should believe, but on guiding them to do, spontaneously and with pleasure in the doing, what their own desires, as well as the good of society, commanded. This was the aspect of Fourier's doctrine which attracted most such later libertarians as Kropotkin and William Morris.

In the United States Fourierism gained a much greater

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hold than in Great Britain, or even in France. Its most influential American exponent was Albert Brisbane (1809-1890), who introduced the doctrine after the slump of 1837. His *Social Destiny of Man* was published in 1840. Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune* supported Brisbane's efforts, and a number of colonies, at least twenty-nine, were founded on his principles in the 1840s. None, however, lasted more than a few years. Brisbane also greatly influenced C. H. Dana, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Emerson. The famous Brook Farm Community of 1832, founded by a group of New England intellectuals, among whom was Margaret Fuller, has been described in Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*. It was largely Fourierist in inspiration, though it was not founded in strict conformity with his doctrine, as it rested on a basis of joint-stock ownership without the general participation of the settlers which Fourier had regarded as necessary. Brook Farm, like the more completely Fourierist communities, was not of long duration. It broke down through financial failure, the intellectuals whom it recruited proving to be of no great use at the manual labour on which it relied for support. Brisbane's North American *Phalanx* lasted till 1856, but thereafter the American Fourierist movement faded away. A description of these Fourierist communities can be found in any of the volumes describing American Socialist experiments; most recent of these is Mr. A. J. Bestor's *Backwoods Utopias*.

In France, Fourier's most important disciple was Victor-Prosper Considérant (1808-93). His chief works were: *La Destinée sociale*, 1834; *Manifeste de l'École Sociétaire*, 1841; *Le Socialisme devant le vieux monde*, 1848. Considérant was the editor of the two journals, *Le Phalanstère* and *La Phalange*, in which many of the principal later writings of the school appeared. In his earlier works Considérant advocated entire abstention from politics, holding that the old 'political' societies were doomed to perish and to be replaced by new community associations founded on an entirely voluntary basis. But later he abandoned this attitude, and began to urge the democratic parties to discard the 'political' for the 'social' point of view. In 1848 he was elected to the National Assembly, and took part in the Luxembourg Labour Commission over which Louis Blanc presided. After the defeat of the Revolution in France

he went, on Brisbane's invitation, to the United States, and attempted to found a phalansterian settlement in Texas. This failed in 1854; and thereafter Considérant's views underwent a further modification. Abandoning the old hostility to scientific industrial development, he attempted to work out a version of Fourierism that would be reconcilable with the expansion of scientific knowledge. Born in 1808, he lived on until 1893.

Fourier's doctrine is evidently at its strongest in the attempt to show the need to adapt social institutions to actual human desires. Even if he went astray in supposing that every known passion could, given a right social environment, be found means of expression that would render it beneficial to humanity, there was clearly a great deal of wisdom in his insistence that men could live happily only if they were given large scope for the satisfaction of their natural desires and were not forced to live according to an artificial pattern of conduct devised by moralists in the name of reason. In particular, his application of this principle to the organisation of work was of much greater importance than has been assigned to it even to-day, under the growing influence of the Social Psychologists' new attention to industrial relations and conditions. His belief that work could be, and must be, a source of positive pleasure may be, and probably is, irreconcilable with the conditions of large-scale production and with the desire of engineers to treat men as if they were ill-made machines; but Socialism would have been a richer body of doctrine if it had paid a great deal more attention to this aspect of the 'labour problem'. Moreover, I have still to be convinced that Fourier was on the wrong track when he urged that nobody should be required to work continually at a single task or trade. It is well within the power of most persons, especially if they begin young, to acquire a quite sufficient dexterity at several quite different kinds of job; and I think Fourier was very much in the right in believing that the variety of employment thus made possible would render a great many people happier than they can be within the monotony of a single, not highly skilled, occupation. There are, no doubt, natural specialists who prefer to stick to a single job, or within a narrow range. But I wonder if there are many of them; and I am certain there are not nearly so many as the organisation of modern industry assumes.

## CHAPTER VII

### CABET AND THE ICARIAN COMMUNISTS

A LESSER man than either Saint-Simon or Fourier, and even than Pierre Leroux, calls for special mention at this point in the story of Socialist ideas. If, in the Paris of the later 1830s or the 1840s, someone had spoken of *les communistes*, it is ten to one that he would have been referring to the followers of Étienne Cabet (1788–1856). The Icarians, as they came to be called after Cabet had published in 1840 his *Voyage en Icarie*, were a third 'school' of utopian Socialists, carrying on their propaganda in rivalry with the Saint-Simonians and the Fourierists, and, much more decisively than either of these, proclaiming a gospel of complete socialisation.

Cabet, like a number of other leaders of the utopians — Bazard, Chevalier, and Buchez among them — had served his apprenticeship to the popular cause as an active member of that famous secret league, the *Carbonari* or *Charbonnerie*. The history of the *Carbonari* as organisers of conspiracies and underground resistance movements in Italy and in France, from their origin in Franche-Comté before 1789 and their revival in the Kingdom of Naples about 1806, falls quite outside the story of Socialism. The *Carbonari* had no clear or consistent theory or policy, beyond that of revolutionary opposition, either in their Italian or in their French manifestations. They were united only in their hostility, first to Napoleon and his satellite rulers and subsequently to the legitimist Restoration and to the Holy Alliance that attempted to dominate Europe after 1815. Their importance for Socialism lies only in the fact that they provided a training ground for revolutionaries, some of whom passed over after their collapse in the 1820s into one or another of the Socialist groups, and that their methods of conspiratorial organisation furnished the model for many of the secret societies which sprang up in France before and after the Revolution of 1830.

Cabet was by training a lawyer. He took part in the 1830 Revolution, and was appointed *procureur-général* of Corsica under the Government. From this post he was soon removed on account of his radical attacks on the policy of the 'bourgeois' monarchy. In 1831 he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies and founded a journal, *Le Populaire*, which made a special appeal to the working classes. *Le Populaire* was soon suppressed because of its vehement attacks on the Government; and Cabet spent the next few years in exile in England, where he came under the influence of Owenite ideas during the great Trade Union upheaval of 1833-4. He returned to Paris, not merely a convinced 'Socialist', but a convert to the more extreme views of the British Radical left wing, and a firm believer in the complete socialisation of the means of production and in a thorough-going 'communistic' way of life. He was greatly influenced by the communistic elements in More's *Utopia*, and proceeded to work out his new doctrine into a comprehensive system, which he cast into the form of an utopian romance. This system he and his followers continued to preach through the 1840s; and Cabet, like others, formed the notion of trying out his proposed utopia on the territory of the still sparsely populated American Republic. In 1848 a body of his followers left France with the idea of founding 'Icaria' in Texas, on the model laid down by Cabet in his romance. He himself followed the next year, with a further group of disciples; and Icaria was duly established, not in Texas, but in the old Mormon centre, Nauvoo, in Illinois. But Icaria, Illinois, was never more than a pale shade of the city of Cabet's imagination. He had planned for a population of a million: his actual settlement never exceeded 1500. It had to be set up on the basis, not of the complete community which Cabet had in mind, but of a half-way arrangement which combined individual property-holdings with a large element of common living and collective discipline, and it proved much more durable than most of the other utopian settlements set up during the same period. Cabet himself left it, after disagreements on policy, in the year of his death; but it lingered on for some time longer. Its successor, New Icaria, did not come to a final end until 1895.

Étienne Cabet was not an original thinker. Almost all his



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ideas were borrowed from other utopias, including the 'Communists' of eighteenth-century France, such as Mably, as well as Sir Thomas More. (His importance lies in his attempt to institute, or at least to further the establishment of, a completely communistic society, in which the supreme control of all essential activities was to be in the hands of the State.) In his imaginary Icaria, as distinct from the real Icaria which rested on a compromise, there was to be no private property at all. All the citizens were to be strictly equal, and were to give their labour to the community on equal terms. Uniformity of dress was insisted on, as an assurance against pretensions to superiority. There was to be almost complete sex equality, except that Cabet wished to maintain the institution of the family as the basic unit of his society, with the father as its recognised head. All officials and magistrates were to be popularly elected and subject at any time to recall by popular vote. The instruments of production were to be collectively operated, and there was to be a comprehensive system of public social services. The community was to draw up each year a detailed plan of production, based on estimated needs, and was to delegate to organised groups of citizens their several shares in the execution of the common task, placing at the disposal of these groups the requisite capital equipment and supplies of materials. The products were to be deposited in public storehouses, from which every citizen was to be at liberty to draw out whatever he needed. Cabet did not, like Fourier, contemplate that his community would be essentially agricultural: he favoured industrial development, though he assumed that a high proportion of its citizens would be engaged in cultivating the land with the aid of up-to-date machinery and technical knowledge.

For politics, in the ordinary sense of the word, the Icarians were to have little use. Their assembly of delegates was to do little itself beyond assigning the appropriate tasks to the decentralised functional groups which were to carry on the various branches of production and collective service. There were to be few newspapers, and these were to limit themselves to simple accounts of events, and were not to be organs of opinion — for Cabet's aim was to establish a society in which there would be no party conflicts or dissensions over public

policy. He shared to the full the belief that there was one right way of doing things, and that when this way had been found there would be nothing left to argue about. Accordingly, he set no store at all by freedom of discussion, proposed to establish a strict censorship over news and the ventilation of opinions, and relied on mass-indoctrination to ensure the smooth working of Icarian society.

How was Icarian society to come into existence? Cabet, in his earlier writings before his emigration, did not contemplate the transition in terms of merely voluntary effort. He wanted to prepare the way by persuading the State to impose heavy progressive taxes on capital and on inheritance and to use the proceeds, as well as the savings to be achieved by the abolition of the armed forces, for setting up Icarian communities. At the same time, he hoped to squeeze out capitalist production by state action in fixing and raising minimum wages, so as to make private exploitation of labour no longer profitable. As a step towards his utopia, he advocated state action to ensure improved housing, universal education, and 'full employment' for the workers.

Cabet was thus an advanced social radical; but, after his days with the *Carbonari*, he ceased to be an advocate of revolution in any sense involving violence. Indeed, he reacted to the opposite extreme. He wrote: 'If I held a revolution in my hand, I should keep that hand closed, even if that should mean my death in exile'. The new society, he insisted, must be brought about by argument and conviction, and not by force. This pacifism led him, after his hopes in France had failed, to his attempt to set up his community in America without the aid of the State. But he was not, like Fourier, a voluntarist: he wanted the State's help, if he could get it without violence, and to this end he was a firm advocate of political democracy as a means.

Like so many others among the utopians, Cabet believed in God, and regarded a regenerated Christendom as an essential for the fulfilment of his dreams. His book, *Le Vrai Christianisme* (1846) is an appeal from the practice of the Churches to the example of Jesus Christ and to the 'Communism' of the Christians in the early days of their establishment as the church of the poor. In this part of his doctrine there is something

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of Saint-Simon, but more of Lamennais, whose *Paroles d'un croyant* (1834) unquestionably influenced him. The deepest influences on his social doctrine, however, were those of Thomas More and of Robert Owen — the Owen of the years after 1832, when the leaders of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union were anticipating the immediate advent of the New Moral World, to be achieved, not by violent revolution, but by the refusal of the entire working class to continue labouring under the old conditions, and by the joining together of all the trades to set on foot a new system of Co-operative production and distribution under their collective control. Cabet's Communism went a great deal further than Owenism towards complete community of living: he blended Owenite millennialism with communistic aspirations drawn from the record of primitive Christianity and of the social radicalism of the Middle Ages and the Catholic Renaissance.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SISMONDI

IN the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels described Sismondi as the head of the school of 'petit-bourgeois Socialism', and added that he held this position 'not only in France but in England also'. Sismondi was indeed one of the first writers to make a direct attack on the doctrines of the classical economists, not before Owen's earliest writings, but well before the English 'Anti-Ricardians' launched their onslaughts in the middle 'twenties. Sismondi's *New Principles of Political Economy* first appeared in 1819, during the period of economic dislocation which followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars. His economic outlook, which had at first been that of a follower of Adam Smith, was deeply affected by the widespread unemployment of the years after 1815, as he observed the effects in both France and England.

Jean-Charles-Léonard-Simonde de Sismondi (1773-1842) was a Genevan Swiss of French descent. His family emigrated to England in 1793, but moved the following year to Tuscany, returning to Geneva in 1800. He thus saw, as a young man, something of conditions in both England and Italy, and he also came to know France well. His economic writings are only a small part of his immense output. Besides his well-known *History of the Italian Republics*, which in its longer version runs to sixteen volumes, he wrote a *History of the French* in thirty-one volumes, and a *History of the Literature of Southern Europe* in four volumes. His economic and social works include, besides his *New Principles*, an important book on *The Agriculture of Tuscany* (1802), his earlier economic treatise, *Wealth* (1803), and a collection of *Studies in the Social Sciences* (1836-8) in three volumes. With Madame de Staël, who was a close friend, he was a pioneer of modern literary criticism, based on a largely sociological approach. As historian he was also a pioneer, especially in studying the evolution

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of the *bourgeoisie* in the Republics of Italy after the Middle Ages. Here, however, we are concerned with him only in his relation to the development of socialistic thought, on which, though never a Socialist in any modern sense of the word, he had a very considerable influence.

Sismondi revisited England in 1818-19, after an absence of twenty-four years, and was appalled by what he saw, both in the factory districts and in the country generally. His *New Principles* were the direct outcome of this experience. His earlier work on economic theory, *Wealth (La Richesse)* had been mainly an interpretation of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, with a strong emphasis on *laissez-faire* and a rooted hostility to monopoly. In his *New Principles* he remained an advocate of the freedom of international trade and a vigorous opponent of every form of monopoly, including the system of large landed estates. But he had reached the conclusion that unrestricted capitalist enterprise, far from yielding the results which Adam Smith and his French interpreter, Jean-Baptiste Say, expected of it, was bound to lead to widespread misery and unemployment. He therefore argued in favour of State intervention to ensure to the worker a guaranteed living wage and a minimum of social security.

When Simondi revisited England in 1818, Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy* had recently been published; and it was being contended that this book had successfully put economics on the footing of an exact science, resting on inexorable natural laws with which it was disastrous to interfere. Sismondi attacked this view with all his energies. He denied that the end postulated by the economists — the largest possible aggregate production — necessarily coincided with the end to which economic, and indeed all social, activity ought to be directed — the greatest possible happiness of the people. A smaller aggregate, well distributed, might yield a greater amount of happiness and well-being. It was accordingly the State's business, instead of leaving the distribution of wealth to the play of market forces, to enact laws regulating this distribution in the general interest. This, of course, involved laying down some criterion for deciding what was the best distribution of wealth and income; and Sismondi had no doubt that a wide diffusion of property in the means of

production among those capable of using them personally to good purpose was to be preferred. His studies of agricultural conditions in France, Switzerland, and Italy had given him a firm belief in the virtues of the family farm-holding, with security for the cultivator of the soil that the benefits of improvements would accrue to the family and not to a non-cultivating landlord. He expressed the greatest admiration for the success with which the French peasants, when they had been put into possession of the land and freed from feudal exactions by the Revolution, had improved the standards of cultivation and added to the lasting productive value of their holdings ; and he also spoke in high praise of the achievements of the small peasant farmers in Switzerland and in certain parts of Italy where they had been able to work under reasonably free conditions. He admired, under certain conditions, the *métayer* system of land tenure, under which the produce of the land was shared in fixed proportions between the cultivator and a landlord who carried the main burdens of capital supply ; but he praised such systems rather by way of contrast to feudal systems like that of France before the Revolution than in any absolute sense. What he did favour absolutely was the small cultivator, able to till the land according to his own ideas, and to reap in security the benefits of his industry and sagacity.

Sismondi's advocacy of peasant agriculture was closely bound up with his views on the question of population. Like many of his contemporaries, he was scared by Malthus, and at one point even advocated laws to restrict procreation among those who could not show that they were in a position to support a family. But he regarded unregulated increase of population, not as a law of nature, but as a consequence of bad and unnatural economic conditions. He argued strongly that wherever peasants had been assured of their hold on the land and had been able to enjoy its produce they had, as a matter of historical fact, shown a marked capacity for keeping their families to the size which the land could support at a satisfactory standard of living in relation to the state of agricultural knowledge. The tendency towards an unduly rapid rise in population manifested itself, he argued, only when the natural equilibrium of a free peasant economy was upset by the unregulated growth of industry. He strongly criticised the English

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Poor Law under the Speenhamland system as leading to the unbalanced growth of population — therein agreeing with Malthus — but his remedies lay in the reform of the land system and in the public regulation of industrial development.

Marx called Sismondi a '*petit-bourgeois* Socialist', and accused him of holding reactionary views, precisely because he wanted the State to regulate economic conditions in the interests of the small-scale producer. For the towns, Sismondi wanted a condition corresponding to that which he envisaged for the countryside — that is to say, he wanted the sort of towns and industries that would serve the needs of a population made up mainly of prosperous peasants cultivating family holdings. He thought that, as soon as this natural balance was upset, the tendency towards industrial over-production would be bound to set in, and to lead to recurrent crises as markets became glutted with unwanted industrial products — unwanted by the peasants and unpurchasable by the urban workers because their wages were beaten down in the competitive struggle for employment. He denied altogether what is known among economists as 'Say's Law' — the alleged economic law that every act of production generates the purchasing power needed to take the product off the market. This, he said, was demonstrably untrue in relation to the ever-increasing products of the new factory system : if it were true, how did the recurrent crises of over-production come about ?

Thus Sismondi was the first to formulate clearly — though Owen and others had already formulated in part — the theory of 'under-consumption' which was to occupy so large a place in Socialist economic thought. Marx, though he attacked Sismondi, undoubtedly took much from this part of his doctrine. In Sismondi's view, the amount of purchasing power available for buying the products of factory industry depended on the amount of circulating capital used for the employment of labour, or, in other words, on the size of the 'wages fund'. The beating down of wages to subsistence level, which was admitted by the classical economists as a fact, necessarily kept down the demand for the mass-produced industrial output of the new factories, and at the same time expanded the capital funds used for investment in machines, and thus increased the supply of these factory-made goods.

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The consequence, Sismondi argued — and Marx later echoed what he had said — was that the system could be maintained only by the liquidation in repeated crises of a large part of the capital over-invested in large-scale industry ; and these crises inflicted further misery on the people.

Sismondi's defence of peasant agriculture included an attack on the system of tenant farming, under any conditions which did not assure to the peasant the secure possession of the land and of its improvements for his heirs as well as during his life. He also argued strongly against primogeniture, on the ground that it led to under-investment in improving the land, because the greatest incentive to improved cultivation came from the division of holdings. Believing that the land under more intensive cultivation would be made immensely more productive, he argued that there was plenty of room for division of holdings among the sons, each of whom would be able on a smaller holding to produce enough to yield a satisfactory standard of living. This view, of course, rested on his belief that the natural checks on population growth in the economy he envisaged would prevent division of holdings from outpacing the improvement in agricultural methods.

In matters of politics Sismondi was no Radical. In his *Studies on the Constitutions of Free Peoples* (1836), he argued against universal suffrage and complete democracy, on the ground that neither the working nor the lower middle classes were ready for it. He defended the rights of minorities — especially of the intellectual elements in society and of the educated urban middle classes. These groups, he thought, were both the most enlightened and progressive and also the necessary upholders of the national traditions. His Genevan origin and experience come out very plainly in this part of his doctrine.

This account of Sismondi's attitude will have made it evident that he was never a 'Socialist', except in the sense in which the name can be applied — as it often used to be — to anyone who stresses the primary importance of '*la question sociale*', and takes the side of the workers in their demand that the State shall accept responsibility for the promotion of welfare. He was called a Socialist simply because he was an advocate of social legislation and had a strong sympathy for



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the workers and a belief in the practicability of ensuring them a fair wage and reasonable conditions of social security, and also because he was a strong opponent of industrial capitalism as he saw it developing above all in England. He was not anti-capitalist: he had a high regard for the commercial *bourgeoisie* about whose development he wrote so well in his *History of the Italian Republics*. The capitalism to which he was opposed was the new industrialism based on power-driven machinery and on the factory system, with its irresistible tendency to multiply wants and inferior products, to drive out the independent craftsmen and small masters, and to create an urban proletariat possessing neither skill nor decency, and to remove, with the natural conditions of family living, all the old restraints on the unlimited growth of population. (He also realised, before Marx, the inherent tendency of this type of capitalism to be continually seeking new foreign markets, in order to find an outlet for the surplus products of large-scale industry, and therewith the consequences of this tendency in international rivalries and disputes.) His ideal was a stable population of peasants cultivating the land by intensive methods, serving and served by a sufficient body of urban craftsmen and traders, and governed politically by an educated class of *bourgeois* merchants, administrators and intellectuals who would identify their own interest with that of the poor and seek to maintain an economic order at once technically progressive within its limits and in accord with the national traditions and with the requirements of human happiness.

## CHAPTER IX

### OWEN AND OWENISM — EARLIER PHASES

WE must now turn from the French Utopians and from their Swiss contemporary, Sismondi, to the great British Utopian, Robert Owen — that astonishing person to whom so many of the movements of the nineteenth century can be traced back. Owen has been called the founder of British Socialism, and of British Co-operation. He shares with the elder Sir Robert Peel the credit of having started the movement for factory reform. He holds an assured place in the history of educational experiment. He was the founder of the 'Rationalist' movement, and occupies an important position in the chain of ethical and secularist activities. And with all this he combined the not easily reconcilable rôles of a great, self-made employer and of outstanding leader and inspirer of the Trade Union movement. To be sure, he did not do quite all these things at one and the same time ; but to have crowded them all into one lifetime, however long, is remarkable enough.

Owen was born at Newport, Montgomeryshire, in Central Wales, in 1771. He was one year senior to Fourier, and eleven years Saint-Simon's junior. He lived until 1858, active to the last, adding Spiritualism to his range of interests during his last years. His great period of personal influence began with his acquisition of the famous New Lanark cotton mills in 1800, and can be said to have ended when a group of his disciples founded the Rochdale Pioneers' Co-operative Society in 1844. Thereafter, Co-operation, with which his name is so intimately connected, took a new turn and developed in ways that he had not at all foreseen. His last experiment in community-making, Queenwood, ended finally in 1845. His brief, but sensational, leadership of the Trade Union movement had terminated a decade earlier, in 1834. From his position as a great factory employer he had completely withdrawn in 1829, and largely

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from 1824, when he had bought New Harmony, in Indiana, from the Rappites, and had attempted to establish a full-scale Owenite community there, free from the trammels and conventions of what he called 'the Old, Immoral World'.

Robert Owen made himself the driving force in so many movements largely because of his own limitations. He was never in doubt about what he wanted, or diffident about his own capacity. He combined immense energy with absolutely single-minded devotion to what he believed to be rational and right. He was therefore opinionated, and often a bad colleague ; for he did not know how to compromise and was quite unable at any point to imagine that he might possibly be mistaken. When he failed in a thing, he attributed the fault to the world's unreason, and set off immediately to attempt something else. He had, in a high degree, the characteristic qualities of the self-made man, with the important exception that he was not self-seeking. Far from it. He cared nothing for money, except as a means to the furtherance of the causes in which he believed. He did not care about himself ; for, though he was often autocratic and came to regard himself as a sort of universal Father of Mankind, he remained personally very simple, and accepted homage as a tribute to his ideas rather than to himself. He merely happened to be a great deal wiser and further-seeing than anyone else ; and when other people opposed his projects he was never angry with them, but only sorry they should be so stupid. He was ready at all times, and at any length, to expound his master ideas to anyone who would consent to listen to him. If such listeners were unconvinced, he could but suppose that he had not talked to them at sufficient length. He was, in Leslie Stephen's phrase, 'one of those bores who are the salt of the earth'.

Yet Owen's essential ideas were few : his multifariousness arose out of his unending zeal in applying them. His 'Socialism' was in the main the outcome of two things — of a view of the process of character-formation which he developed, or adopted, very early in his life, and of his experience as a manufacturer, first in Manchester and then at New Lanark. The view was essentially the same as William Godwin had put forward in *Political Justice* ; but it seems likely that Owen got it in the first place, not from reading Godwin — he was

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never a great reader — but at second hand. In the 1790s, in advanced circles, Godwinism was very much in the air ; and Owen, as an active member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society and an intimate of the circle that gathered round John Dalton, the chemist, at the Unitarian New College, must have heard much debate about Godwin's theories and their connection with those of Helvétius and other apostles of the French Enlightenment. His experience of factory conditions and of the bustling life of Manchester, then in the most ardent heat of the new Industrial Revolution, assured him of the essential truth of the thesis that men's 'character' — by which he meant their patterns of behaviour and their scales of values — depends on their environing conditions. He saw around him the first-fruits of the Industrial Revolution in the textile industries, admired the technical possibilities and made himself thoroughly master of them, but was deeply revolted by the social consequences and by the get-rich-quick scramble of men who seemed either wholly unconscious of them or callous to the point of sheer inhumanity. He did not see the need for so much inhumanity : he could see his own way to producing with high efficiency without grinding the faces of the poor. Gradually he became convinced that the root of the evil lay in the false attribution to men of the capacity to form their own characters ; for this enabled the successful to excuse themselves by blaming the poor for their poverty, their evil habits, and their inefficiency, instead of realising that these things were but consequences of bad environment and of a social system built on false premises. Convinced that all men had rights, and that all were capable of goodness and excellence if they were given a fair chance and a right lead, he rebelled against the acquiescence of most of the men he encountered in the growing horrors of the factory system, the slums, the gin-drinking that dulled the sense of misery. He was driven to the view that nothing worth while could be done to amend the lot of the people without two great changes — the eradication of false beliefs about the formation of character, and the abandonment of the unregulated competition which impelled each employer towards inhuman conduct on the plea that his competitors were engaging in it, and that he too must face bankruptcy or do the same.

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Thus Owen was led to gird up his loins for a battle on two fronts, which seemed to him to be but a single battle. His view of character-formation made him denounce the Christian churches — one and all — as preaching in this matter a false and demoralising doctrine ; and his hostility to competition, as he saw it, led him into a frontal attack both on the economists who preached the virtues of *laissez-faire* and on his fellow-employers, who practised them.

Owen's 'Socialism' and his quarrel with all the religions of the 'Old, Immoral World', were, then, alike the outcome of his experience grafted upon a keen sense of men's basic capacity for good and of their right, universally, to a fair chance. He would have said that his attitude was the product of his experience ; but other men went through the same external experiences without at all sharing his conclusions. Owen began with a strong sense of what was due to his fellow-men, or what he saw would not have shocked him. His own character was greatly influenced, but it was not exclusively formed, by his environment.

The underlying notion which inspired Owen's philosophy of Co-operative Socialism is most simply expressed in the following well-known sentences from the first of his *Essays on the Formation of Character*, subsequently entitled *A New View of Society* (1813) : 'Any character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any *community*, even to the world at large, by applying certain means ; which are to a great extent at the command and under the control, or easily made so, of those who possess the government of nations'. He adds a little later in the same essay : 'Children can be trained to acquire any language, sentiments and belief, or any bodily habits and manners, not contrary to human nature, even to make them to a great extent either imbecile or energetic characters'.

The stress in these passages, it will be seen, is on the formation of character, not in the individual so much as in society ; that is to say, it is the predominant character of a society or group of individuals that Owen is mainly thinking of. This, of course, implies an influence on the character of the individual, but Owen was never in the least blind to the deep significance of the differences between individuals. He always

emphasised the necessity for the educator to take full account of the 'bents' of the individual children with whom he had to deal. Indeed, by 'character' he meant essentially, not the whole make-up of the individual, but rather the structure of moral ideas and values and behaviour-tendencies connected with them — matters in which he regarded it as indispensable that there should be a common quality in any society that was to work well.

Taking this view of character, Owen in the first place denounced the factory system as a maker of bad character, both because of its competitive struggle and appeal to human cupidity and because of the bad physical conditions and moral environment in which the victims of the new factory system were compelled to live from a tender age. Secondly, he was led to stress the enormous importance of education as an instrument for transforming the quality of human living. As compared with Fourier, he laid much greater stress on formal education, and in his educational notions he emphasised the moral element very greatly and was highly critical of the projects of Bell and Lancaster for mass-education by rote under the monitorial system. Nevertheless he gave them some support in default of better, despite the fact that they were concerned much more with the implanting of mere factual knowledge than with the training of character.

Owen's conception of the importance of environment led him to work not only for popular education but also for factory reform, and he took part with the elder Sir Robert Peel in the movement which led up to the first effective Factory Act, that of 1819. So far, there was nothing 'socialistic' about Owen's proposals, and no attempt at the socialistic community-making which came later to occupy so much of his attention. He was still trying to persuade his fellow manufacturers, and also Governments and politicians, in so far as they could control industrial conditions, to learn from his own work at New Lanark and to follow the example he had set, both in providing education and in improving factory conditions. He had demonstrated that good conditions — good, that is, by the standards of the time — were not inconsistent with profitable enterprise; and he had gone far beyond any other factory-owner in keeping on his employees at regular wages when

production was interrupted by shortage of materials during the American War. Indeed, in his own mind he had already advanced much further — to the conviction that, even if capital should have its reward, this reward should be limited to a 'fair' return, and the balance of profit ploughed back into the business, not only for the provision of additional instruments of production, but also to be spent on promoting the well-being of the workers employed.

Owen's insistence on applying this principle cost him the dissolution of two successive partnerships with co-owners who did not see eye to eye with him, and nearly lost him the control of New Lanark when one of these groups tried to freeze him out. But he was able, in the event, with the aid of a more advanced group, to buy the objectors out, and to put his developing projects into effect. The new partners who gave him, for the time being, a free hand included Jeremy Bentham and the Quaker chemist and philanthropist, William Allen. With their acquiescence, he was able to expand his educational services for the children and to make a start on ambitious projects of adult education in 'the formation of character'.

Owen thus accepted, for his own employees, the principle of the 'right to work', which had been first enunciated after the French Revolution, and was to become a vital part of the Socialist armoury of ideas. He had further recognised his employees as having, in a real sense, a right of partnership in the enterprise together with the managers and with those who provided the capital. Up to this point, he was endeavouring to humanise and regulate capitalist enterprise, and to limit the claims of the capital-owner, but not to do away with either.

The next step came with the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the great extension of unemployment which followed it. The rise in the poor rates caused an outcry in favour of retrenchment and harsher dealing with the poor; but Owen set out to show on the basis of his own experience that there were means available to society of preventing the unemployed from being a burden upon it. It was at this point that he came forward with his proposal for the setting up of 'Villages of Cooperation', which he at first advocated simply as places where the unemployed, instead of being maintained in indigent idleness by the Poor Law authorities, could be given the opportunity

of earning their own keep, mainly by intensive cultivation of the land to provide their own food ; for in face of widespread industrial unemployment, it would not have been practicable to suggest that the recipients of poor relief should be encouraged to compete with the industrial workers. Later versions of his 'Plan' allowed more scope for industrial production : in its first form it was essentially a project of collective farming. These unemployed colonies were the projected 'Villages of Co-operation' which Cobbett denounced as 'Mr. Owen's parallelograms of paupers', when Owen had come to London to preach his doctrine to the two Committees which had been set up to consider means of relieving the distress, one by Parliament and another under distinguished royal and episcopal patronage.

Although Owen was, at this stage, recommending his scheme merely as a means for dealing with unemployment, it was already taking on a much greater amplitude in his mind. He was coming to think of it as a means of world regeneration, through which the whole world could speedily be emancipated from the competitive profit system and persuaded to live on a footing of mutual co-operation. He hoped that this could be brought about, partly by action of the Poor Law authorities, partly by Governments directly financing projectors, and partly by the voluntary activities of disinterested persons, who were to be asked to subscribe capital for ventures along the lines proposed. In advocating his schemes he was soon widening greatly the range of his propaganda. We have seen that his most profound conviction was that men's character is formed for them by their social environment, and that the churches were largely the agents in the preaching of a false doctrine of human responsibility. We have seen, too, that he had come to regard the entire competitive system as a main cause of human misery and of the predominance of anti-social behaviour among rich and poor alike. In advocating his remedy for unemployment he had for a time kept both of these opinions in the background, and had concentrated on an attempt to persuade the rich and the powerful that his scheme was good. But he was not good at dissembling ; and the favourable reception of his ideas in a number of unexpected quarters seems to have gone to his head. At all events, in 1817, he let the



cat well out of the bag in a series of addresses and communications to the newspapers in which he combined a thoroughgoing denunciation of the competitive system with an onslaught on all the religions, and at the same time made it plain that his 'Plan' was intended, not merely as a means of setting the unemployed to useful work, but as a call for the entire subversion of the existing social and economic order.

These attacks frightened off a good number of supporters — as well they might. Owen's views about capitalism were bad enough ; but a good many old Tories in high places, who hated the upstart manufacturing interest, partly enjoyed them. Many of these upholders of the good old times, however, were just the persons to be deeply antagonised by his attack on the Church — they would not have minded if he had pilloried only Presbyterians and Nonconformists. The 'philanthropic Mr. Owen', as he had come to be often called, suddenly appeared as a wolf in sheep's clothing ; and his plans for the unemployed took on quite a new aspect when they were seen as merely one part of a vast and sinister design against the established order in both Church and State. It is, indeed, rather astonishing that the immediate reaction was not greater than it actually was. The main attack on the 'irreligion' of Owenism developed, not immediately after Owen's City of London Tavern meetings and his pamphlet campaign of 1817, but much later, in the 1830s, when he had become identified with the formidable working-class movement which took shape in the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. In 1817 it is astonishing how much willingness there still was, even in high quarters, to listen to his ideas, so that not only royal Dukes but also economists such as Ricardo, bankers such as Sir Isaac Goldsmid, and even Lord Sidmouth, gave him a sympathetic hearing.

It seems clear that at this stage Owen was already beginning to go a little mad, in the sense that he was becoming a monomaniac about his own projects. He followed up his Addresses of 1817 by a visit to the Continent the following year, mainly for the purpose of studying the educational experiments of Pestalozzi, Fellenberg, and others ; but he took advantage of this visit to address to the Monarchs and Ministers assembled at the Aix-la-Chapelle Conference a series of 'Memorials' in which he recommended his proposals as a basis for world

regeneration. In these 'Memorials' he laid special stress on his belief that an 'age of plenty' for mankind was dawning, and that it was already becoming possible to produce abundance for all with the aid of the new techniques of production in both industry and agriculture. 'New scientific power', he announced, 'will soon render human labour of little avail in the creation of wealth'; and again, 'Wealth can be created in such abundance as to satisfy the desires of all'; and yet again, 'The dominion of wealth, and the evils arising from the desire to acquire and accumulate riches, are on the point of terminating'. Owen was convinced in his own mind that the immense increase in production, which had been made possible by the introduction of power-driven machinery in the cotton industry, could be applied over the whole industrial field, and that the produce of the land could be immensely increased by spade husbandry applying scientific knowledge to the intensive cultivation of the soil. He believed that the new system of largely self-subsistent Villages of Co-operation exchanging only their surpluses one with another, could be introduced by consent; for, as we have seen, it was always one of Owen's foremost characteristics that he believed he had only to talk long enough to his critics to convince them of his rightness, whoever they were. He was willing to see his new settlements founded on the basis, which he had introduced at New Lanark, of a fixed and limited return to owners of capital who were prepared to invest it in them; but he believed that, before long, the abundance of productive resources would render capital valueless and would remove from the minds of men in enjoyment of universal plenty any desire to receive an income from what they owned.

Needless to say, the Aix-la-Chapelle Conference received Owen's projects with some scepticism. He came back to Great Britain and developed his theory considerably further in his *Report to the County of Lanark* (1821). His proposals were still related immediately to the problem of unemployment and to the best means of preventing the unemployed from being a charge on the rest of the community, but in his new Report he also put forward his first statement of the labour theory of value which was soon to be developed further by the anti-Ricardian economists and was in due course to be embodied

as the economic foundation-stone of the theoretical system of Karl Marx.

In the *Report to the County of Lanark* Owen compares labour-power to horse-power. He says that, although individual horses differ greatly in power, that has been no obstacle to the establishment of a standard of horse-power as a unit of measurement. The same, he says, could be done with the power of labour, which is the sole agency capable of imparting value to commodities. Following up an idea which had been used by many writers before him — among them John Locke and, of course, Adam Smith and Ricardo — Owen argues that the natural value of things made by men depends on the amount of labour incorporated in them, and that this labour is measurable in terms of a standard unit of 'labour time'. The more skilled types of labour, he says, must be regarded as conferring on the product in each hour more than a single unit of value — in proportion to their superiority over ordinary unskilled labour. Labour, he contends, should supersede money as the standard for measuring the relative values of different commodities; and the exchanging of one thing for another should be done in terms of their relative values thus ascertained. But it is more convenient to defer the further consideration of this aspect of Owen's doctrine until we come to consider its development by other socialistic writers. We have seen that Owen, at the same time as he was urging the Poor Law authorities of Lanarkshire to establish a Village of Co-operation, was endeavouring to persuade private persons to step in should the public authorities be unwilling to act, or to supplement their action. But presently he grew tired of the smallness of the response and of the delays which attended these attempts. By 1824 he had come to the conclusion that the 'character' of Great Britain had been so corrupted by ecclesiastical error and by competitive industrialism as to render it impracticable to inaugurate the 'New Moral World' in his own country. In addition, he had fallen foul of his Quaker partners, not about money, but on account of his religious views and their fears that he might be endangering the immortal souls of the workers for whose welfare he was so zealous. There had also been a spot of bother because he had introduced in his schools dancing in costume, and William Allen was shocked at the boys being

allowed to dance with the girls without wearing trousers (I imagine they wore kilts). These difficulties were smoothed over. Trousers were provided; and Owen agreed to keep his anti-religious propaganda out of his dealings with his employees. But in any case his heart was no longer in New Lanark — the more so because he had no longer a free hand. He had become a national — indeed, an international — figure, with a mission of world regeneration he could not carry on while he was tied to his factory. From 1824 he ceased to play a regular part in the management, though he did not formally sever his connection with New Lanark for another five years.

Accordingly, casting the dust of the 'Old, Immoral World' from his feet, Owen left Great Britain in 1824 in order to see what could be done in what he described as the 'comparatively uncorrupted atmosphere of the United States'. He left behind him, however, a group of disciples who went on to found the ill-fated Orbiston community in Lanarkshire, only to be laid low almost at once by the death of the tanner, Abram Combe, who had been the principal provider of capital for the venture.

Arrived in America, Owen bought the community village of New Harmony in Indiana from the Rappites, a religious sect who had emigrated there from Germany in 1804 after a beginning in their native land in 1787. In 1805 the Rappites had instituted a system of community living at New Harmony. When Owen reached America they were preparing to move from their existing settlement to a new site, which they proposed to clear and develop, and they were willing to sell. Owen bought the entire settlement, and set to work to establish there the first of his new communities, working in conjunction with the American educational reformer and scientist William Maclure, who designed to set up as part of the new community a centre of educational development and of scientific and cultural research.

The idea of community-making, though in Owen's mind it was to be the means of world regeneration through the creation of a new social order which would come to embrace all men, has nothing in it that is essentially socialistic. I have no space in this book to discuss the numerous 'communistic' and semi-'communistic' societies that were set up in the United States, both before and after Owen's day. Those who

are interested can find accounts of them in a number of books, such as Noyes's *History of American Socialisms*, Hines's *American Communities*, and Nordhoff's *Communitistic Societies in the United States*; as well as in Mr. Bestor's more recent *Backwoods Utopias*, which I have already mentioned. The pre-Owenite settlements had, I think, in all cases a religious basis. The earliest had been set up by the Labadists in Maryland as early as 1680, and this venture had been followed by Ephrata (1732) and by the first Shaker Colony, Mount Lebanon, in 1787 (founded after the death of Mother Anne Lee, the Shakers' apostle, in 1784). The Shakers, as a sect, had actually started in England, emerging out of the Quakers during the middle years of the eighteenth century. The Rappites, as we saw, had migrated from Germany to the United States in 1804, and their colony had been followed in 1817 by that of the Perfectionists of Zoar, who adopted community living two years later. All these were examples of a primitive sort of 'communism' resting on a basis of religious belief. Their promoters had found support principally among peasants who had been suffering from religious persecution in their own countries and were accustomed to living under primitive conditions. The aim of their religious leaders was to lead their people out of the wicked world, not to save the world as a whole, and many of them established their communities in expectation of the early arrival of the Second Coming and of the Day of Judgment. Some, in this expectation, went to the length of insisting on complete celibacy, and one community at least lasted until it was snuffed out by the deaths of its members, who died still supposing the long-deferred Day of Judgment to be near at hand. The essential difference between these communities and those which were projected by Owen, Fourier, and Cabet was that these latter aimed at teaching the whole world a new way of life rather than at the withdrawal of a chosen few from the contamination of human wickedness. The religious communities were largely part of the movement of the persecuted out of Europe, and adopted community living, both out of a sense of being bound together by a narrow bond of religious brotherhood and as the surest means of holding together till the Day of Judgment. Community settlement had, in addition, much to recommend it as a way of breaking

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up virgin lands in a new country in which the settlers had a sense of being strangers and exiles.

Thus, the religious communities stood for no general theory of social organisation as a whole. The motives which inspired their promoters were much like those of the Pilgrim Fathers and of other English and Scottish settlers who, being more sophisticated and having greater resources and higher standards of living, never adopted communistic ideas. The Owenites, on the other hand, were in revolt not against religious persecution, save quite incidentally, but against the evil effects of the new industrialism and the faulty social organisation of the world they were leaving behind. Sometimes, no doubt, the motives were mixed, and there was an element of withdrawal from the world in certain of the non-religious settlements founded in America during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This, however, applies mainly to the colonies set up under Fourierist influence in the 1840s. Certainly, neither Owen nor Maclure had any idea of a withdrawal from the world into a sheltered community of the faithful few. What they had in mind was the establishment of a new model of social organisation which all the world could speedily be induced to accept.

Obviously there was much in common between the ideas of Owen and those of the Fourierists, though Owen repeatedly denied that he had learnt anything from Fourier, and their respective followers were constantly engaged in disputes. The fundamental difference between them, over and above their divergent views, already referred to, on the subject of the influence of environment on character, was that, whereas Owen set out from his experience as a manufacturer, and thought in terms of a world in process of being revolutionised by the development of large-scale industry, Fourier was not at all influenced by the prospects of industrial development, and thought throughout in terms of a pre-industrial society in which land-cultivation still played the predominant part. Land, in Fourier's view, had in the past been wrongly monopolised by the owners of great estates, and now was in process of being no less wrongly divided up among a host of small peasant proprietors. Both Fourier's and Owen's proposed communities were essentially based on intensive agriculture; and this

element had seemed to be predominant in Owen's projects as long as he was advocating them primarily as means of providing work for the unemployed. But as soon as his ideas developed on a wider basis, he naturally began thinking of his communities as ways of organising industrial as well as agricultural production. Indeed, the very germ of his idea had been derived from his own experience at New Lanark — an industrial settlement which had resorted to agriculture only as a side-line for supplying the workers' need for fresh vegetables and the like. The other main differences between the two schools of thought lay in the treatment of capital, in their attitudes to family life, and in their conceptions of human motive. Fourier, as we have seen, advocated differences of individual payment and the allowance of a *proportion* of the total returns on production to those who invested capital. He thus admitted the principle of variable *profit* on capital, whereas Owen held that capital should be remunerated by a fixed or maximum rate of *interest*. This, under Owen's plan, was to continue until the owners of capital, convinced of the virtues of the new order and satisfied with the simple plenty assured to all, voluntarily renounced their unearned incomes, as he believed before long they would. Fourier contemplated that the members of his *Phalanstères*, though the groups, or *séries*, in which they would be organised would produce in common, would live in separate families in separate apartments and at varying standards of living, whereas Owen, at this stage at any rate, favoured as far as possible a fully communal system of living, and was highly critical of the institution of marriage and of family life. Moreover, whereas Fourier believed that all necessary labour could be made a positive source of pleasure if it were shared out in accordance with his system, and argued that, given the right organisation, there would be no need to change human character because men would readily respond to this pleasurable activity, Owen laid the utmost stress on the need for a change in human character, which he hoped would be affected by moral education and by an altered social environment. (Fourier regarded apprenticeship to constructive activity as the most important part of the child's education: Owen was strangely uninterested in vocational education — perhaps because his experience had been mainly in a type of industry

in which only a few needed it. He laid all the stress on education as character-training, as a means of giving the pupils a right foundation of moral and social ideas and behaviour. Finally, Fourier excluded State action and thought of his communities as being established entirely by voluntary associations including owners of capital as well as those who brought only the labour of their hands to the common service ; whereas Owen had appealed in the first instance to the Government and to the local Poor Law authorities to take the initiative in establishing his new system, next mainly to private philanthropists, and hardly at all, save at a much later stage, directly to the working classes.

New Harmony, in which Owen had sunk his fortune as well as placed his hopes, went ill from the first. Settlers, attracted by Owen's confident forecasts, flocked to it ; but they were an unselected group, neither possessing in the right proportions the skills and aptitudes that were needed nor with any bond of common experience and belief to hold them together as the religious communities were united by a common faith. Nor did the sincere idealists among them show the makings of a successful community. They were a mixture of Owenites and of social gossellers of a number of other schools ; and each group had its own views about the right way of conducting the settlement. There was, especially, the big question whether New Harmony was to be conducted as a self-governing democracy, or under Owen's patriarchal tutelage. Owen first insisted on a period of authoritative government under his control, and then gave way and handed over to the settlers the regulation of their own collective affairs. Then there were disputes ; and a number of groups hived off under their own leaders to form autonomous sub-groups. Presently Owen got tired of these bickerings, despaired of making New Harmony the pattern community for the 'New Moral World', and, leaving his sons to clear up the confusions and reorganise the society as best they could, went back to Great Britain, determined to try again. The younger Owens were left, in effect, as ground-landlords of an extensive estate on which a number of social and educational experiments were being carried on with varying success. New Harmony remained in being, and retained some of its special characteristics — com-



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munity buildings and services, and a population including a good number of idealistic persons ; but it ceased to have any significance as an experiment in Owenite Socialism. The story can be read more fully in Frank Podmore's *Life of Robert Owen* and in the fascinating volume of correspondence dealing primarily with education published a year or two ago by Mr. A. E. Bestor (*Education and Reform at New Harmony : Correspondence of William Maclure and Madame Duclos Fretageot, Indianapolis, 1948*).

The next episode in Owen's astonishing career followed upon his return from New Harmony and saw him assume the position of the outstanding leader of the British working classes during the troubled years which followed the Reform Act of 1832. But before we come to these later phases of Owenism it is necessary to say something of what had been happening in the development of Owenite and working-class ideas in Great Britain during his absence in the United States.

## SOCIALIST ECONOMICS IN THE 1820s

WHEN Robert Owen came back to Great Britain in 1829, he found a situation that had changed greatly during the five years he had spent mainly in America. The Catholics were being emancipated at last ; the long period of Tory government was nearing its end ; the Reform of Parliament was in the air. There had been, too, a considerable growth of Trade Unionism ; and a substantial Co-operative movement was just beginning to develop. Within a year of his return, the Whigs were in power, after their long exile ; and outside Parliament a widespread popular agitation for Reform was beginning to gather force. The Industrial Revolution was continuing its swift advance : the cotton spinners who used the mule — a new skilled craft created by the revolution — were busy organising an ambitious General Union covering the whole country ; the builders were up in arms against the spread of the 'general contractor' system, which was displacing the small masters ; the steam-engine makers and other new groups of skilled workers were beginning to organise on a substantial scale.

What was no less important, there had been remarkable developments in the theoretical field. One aspect of these was the spread of Co-operative propaganda and the foundation of a number of Co-operative Stores at which provisions were being sold on a mutual basis. This growth of practical Co-operation owed nothing directly to Owen, who at first took little interest in it ; but many of the Co-operative propagandists had consciously based their projects on Owen's ideas, and regarded the establishment of retail trading societies as merely a preparation for the further objective of founding self-governing Co-operative communities. These developments had been greatly stimulated by the work of Dr. William King, of Brighton, whose journal, *The Co-operator*, issued from 1828

to 1830, had a widespread influence ; and there were other Co-operative journals, including that *Co-operative Magazine* in which the work 'Socialist' seems to have been first used in print to designate the adherents of the new social gospel. In 1829, the year of Owen's return, the British Association for the Promotion of Co-operative Knowledge was established in London, with Henry Hetherington and William Lovett among its most active members.

At this stage, Owenism and Co-operation were by no means synonymous. Dr. King was not an Owenite, but an independent social thinker who by no means shared Owen's views upon religion or the formation of character ; and there were, especially in Scotland, a number of Co-operative Stores which seem to have been set up without any aspiration beyond that of getting better provisions more cheaply by buying them at wholesale prices and sharing them out. But most of the leading propagandists of Co-operation had further views and had been strongly influenced by Owenite ideas, and the little groups of convinced Owenites who were bent on community-making were hard at work attempting to convert both the Co-operative Societies and the Trade Unions to the full Owenite gospel. These groups invoked Owen's help, and before long he found himself at the head of a considerable movement and was led to revise his views about the means to be used in furthering the realisation of his ideas. The Co-operators and Trade Unionists who listened to him were not at all minded to put their trust in the Government, or in the Poor Law authorities, or in philanthropic ventures controlled by rich men. What they had in mind was a new kind of democratic structure that would emancipate them from capitalist and middlemen's oppression and allow them to run their own affairs ; and Owen had to accommodate his propaganda to their mood.

This developing attitude among a considerable section of the working classes was undoubtedly the outcome of a new sense of power, based partly on the growth of Trade Unions and partly on the sense of impending political change, but also quite largely on the new economic doctrines which were being preached to them by a new generation of leaders. (Owen himself had helped, in his *Report to the County of Lanark*, to lay the foundations for the anti-capitalist economics of the 1820s.

His vehement denunciation of the competitive system, and his labour theory of value and the proposals he had based on it for a new standard and medium of exchange, had appealed much more to working-class and Radical readers than to the county gentlemen to whom they were directly addressed. But David Ricardo, the leader of the school of classical economists, had unintentionally contributed fully as much, both by accepting labour as the natural measure of the value of commodities and, still more, by putting forward a theory of the distribution of incomes in which capital and labour appeared as rivals for shares in the cake, on terms which involved that, the more the one got, the less would be left for the other. It is true that Ricardo had been speaking of *proportions* of the total product, and not of absolute amounts, so that he treated as a fall in wages any fall in labour's proportionate share, even if the wage increased in purchasing power. But he had also enunciated a subsistence theory of wages which appeared to mean that, save under exceptional conditions, the entire surplus beyond what was needed for subsistence would be bound to accrue to the possessing classes. Ricardo had not in fact said quite this; for he had held that, if the demand for labour exceeded the supply, the workers could raise their real wages and incorporate the advance into a higher subsistence standard; but this was not very comforting, for both Malthus and Ricardo and their own experiences had led workers to believe that the supply of labour was much more likely to exceed the demand.

Ricardo, of course, had not said that the surplus would accrue to the capitalists. On the contrary, his purpose had been to show that the real beneficiary would be in the main the unproductive landlord, whereas competition among the capitalists would keep down their return to a reasonable level. But to working-class readers of Ricardo, and to those who were on the workers' side, it seemed all too clear that, in the economists' view, whoever might reap the benefit of economic advance, it would not be the workers.

No doubt, when Owen got back from America, these new economic conceptions were still in the main no more than good talking points with working-class audiences. As a practical issue, Parliamentary Reform was no doubt still the foremost practical issue in the minds of the majority of active workers;

but the demand for political democracy was being more and more combined both with denunciation of capitalism as well as of aristocratic privilege, and with notions of a new way of living for which Owen was himself largely responsible.

The development of anti-capitalist economic theories took the shape largely of a critical revaluation of the doctrines of the classical economists — essentially the same starting-point as that which Marx used later for his attack in *The Critique of Political Economy* and in the opening chapters of *Capital*. Marx, indeed, was in this particular respect simply taking over and working into his own wider system a doctrine which his predecessors had developed in the form of a criticism of the Ricardian doctrine. The idea that labour was the source as well as the proper measure of value was, as we have seen, nothing new. An embryonic labour theory of value had been set out by John Locke, and indeed its ancestry can be traced much further back. Adam Smith had regarded labour as the sole source of natural value in the less-developed societies, though he had attributed a part in the creation of values to other factors in the more developed societies in which capital played an important part in production. Ricardo, in disagreement with Adam Smith about the processes of price formation, had reasserted the view that labour was the underlying measure of value in developed as well as in undeveloped societies, except for objects of natural scarcity. He had reconciled this view with a recognition of the place of capital as a factor of production by treating capital as an embodiment of stored labour, so that all commodities produced by labour with the aid of capital goods had exchange values determined by the labour, indirect as well as direct, that had contributed at different stages to their making. The only exception allowed for, in his first statement of this theory, was the relatively unimportant factor of the natural scarcity of some of the materials out of which such goods were made. To be sure, after setting out this as the basis of a general theory of exchange value, Ricardo had brought in as a refinement a recognition of the influence of interest on capital, which he treated as a necessary payment for what later economists called 'waiting' — that is, for the use of capital over time. This, however, had been admitted as hardly more than a secondary qualification

of his general statement that the exchange values of commodities were measured, apart from mere higgings of the market — which he regarded as causing actual prices to deviate from real values — according to the amounts of labour, past and current, incorporated in them.

Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy* appeared in 1817; and within a few years a number of Radical economic writers seized on his theory of value and used it to support the conclusion that labour, being the source of exchange value, should be recognised as the sole factor of production entitled to appropriate the product, and that all appropriation by the owners of other factors of production rested on one form or another of illegitimate monopoly — in its simplest form the monopoly of land, but also in the more developed societies the monopoly of capital ownership. At the same time, these writers, acutely aware of the evils attendant on the Industrial Revolution, attacked the developing capitalist system as a destroyer of the human quality of labour, which, they argued, was being more and more converted under the new economic order into a mere commodity, of which the day-to-day price was affected, like the prices of other commodities, by the higgling of the market, but could never, in view of the deficient demand for labour, rise for long above the labourer's cost of subsistence. This view that the remuneration of labour was bound to oscillate round subsistence level had rested, in the classical economists, mainly on two foundations. If labour was a 'commodity', and if the values of commodities depended on the amounts of labour embodied in them, the 'value of labour' must depend on the amount of labour it took to make and maintain a labourer. Its value was simply the value of the commodities the labourer needed to consume in order to do his work and to reproduce his kind. Thus, the labourer was receiving his due remuneration if his wage sufficed for these purposes; and he could not, the classical economists held, receive more than this because the very laws of economic equilibrium forbade it. This view was reinforced by the second contention, associated mainly with Malthus, that population had a natural tendency to increase up to the very limit of the available means of subsistence. If this was accepted, it followed that any tendency of real wages to rise above

subsistence level on account of demand for labour exceeding supply would be soon counteracted by an increase in the supply of workers. (Ricardo qualified the harshness of this judgment by arguing that in a progressive economy it was possible for the demand for labour to exceed the supply for long enough for the labourers to incorporate the higher real wages resulting from this scarcity into their 'subsistence level' — *i.e.* by requiring a higher real wage as a condition of reproducing their kind in sufficient numbers. But not much attention was paid to this reservation — the less, because the substitution of machinery for labour was regarded as a much more important factor working the opposite way. If, as Ricardo himself admitted, the introduction of new machines might be a potent force in destroying skills and making labour redundant — and there is a notable chapter on this in the later editions of his *Principles* — it seemed as if the Malthusian contention would have to be accepted in all its severity.

The left-wing critics of Ricardian economics did accept it — but not as a natural law from which there was no escape. This, they argued, is what happens under the evil and artificial system of capitalism: it is not what need happen, or what would happen under a more natural economic order. It happens under capitalism, because capitalism turns labour into a commodity, of which the value is measured by the laws of the competitive market, and not by the rule of natural justice. The unjust laws of distribution under capitalism, by keeping down the consumption of the main body of the people to subsistence level, and often driving it even lower when trade is bad, fatally restrict the market. They cause a continuous failure to make full use of the great and growing powers of production which are at mankind's command; and they give rise to recurrent crises of what appears as 'over-production', but is really under-consumption due to the restrictions on the purchasing power of the workers. Give the worker what he is justly entitled to — the full product of his labour — and crises will disappear and production be vastly increased in view of the enlargement of the market. On the Continent, Simonde de Sismondi, from a rather different standpoint, was developing a similar criticism of capitalist economics, with peasant communities mainly in mind. The British anti-Ricardians

were thinking in terms of a more advanced industrial economy, though even they — and indeed Ricardo himself — still centred a large part of their argument on the land and its direct produce.

It has often been pointed out that the anti-Ricardians were misinterpreting Ricardo. He had said that labour was the true *measure* of value, not its sole *creator* or source. But where, they asked, was the difference? How did labour come to be the measure of value, if it was not also the source? The classical economists could establish a difference only because they regarded it as natural and right that the means of production should be privately owned, and took it for granted that the product belonged to the owners of these means of production (other than labour), subject only to the need to pay the labourer his value as a commodity. This was, of course, a true explanation, though it should be remembered that Ricardo in particular had no love for idle landlords and would have liked to see their shares in the product reduced by free trade in corn and perhaps by special taxation. But Ricardo did believe in private property, and did take it for granted that the owner of such property was entitled to be paid for its use, especially if he was an active capitalist, paying toll to the landlord and wages to the labourers, and taking the risks of combining the factors of production under his superintendence. This the anti-Ricardians refused to admit. They insisted on drawing a distinction, which the British classical economists always blurred, between the capitalist and his capital. The capitalist, as a man, was either a worker or a drone; and, even if he worked, his work, they held, was often useless or even worse, because it consisted in accumulating overhead costs by unnecessarily complicating the processes of exchange in order to extract illegitimate profits. The capital, as distinct from the capitalist, was simply an embodiment of stored labour; and there was no good reason for paying him for its use. The anti-Ricardians were unmoved by the argument that the capitalist deserved and needed paying because of his abstinence in saving rather than consuming his income: they retorted that he had only saved out of what he had no right to in the first instance. They admitted, of course, that saving (*i.e.* investment) had to occur, and that the community



could not afford to consume at once all that it produced. But that, they argued, was no reason why the capitalist should be allowed to become the monopolist owner of the 'stored labour' of which, by Ricardo's admission, capital other than land consisted. There was even less reason why he should be allowed to monopolise the land or the minerals under it.

In France the exponents of orthodox economics were already, in the 1820s, following a rather different line from that of the British classical school in their exposition of the theory of distribution. The British school was still using a 'three-factor' analysis — land, capital and labour as the three participants in the product. In France J.-B. Say had introduced a fourth factor, 'enterprise', by which he signified the contribution, in terms of management, initiative, and risk-taking, of the active business men, as distinct from the contribution made by the investor of capital — who might, of course, be the same person. This involved drawing a distinction between interest on capital on the one hand and on the other profit, which latter Say treated as the distinctive reward of 'enterprise'. The British classical school, failing to draw any such distinction, was confused in this matter. Adam Smith had treated the employer's superintendence as part of the 'labour' factor, and his risk-taking as belonging rather to his function as a 'capitalist'. But the distinction had not been made clear, and it was even less clear in Ricardo. During the period when the Industrial Revolution was still mainly in the hands of personal employers or groups of active partners, rather than of joint stock companies, it was natural to think of the typical employer as one who supplied both his personal work and at least a substantial part of the capital of the business. This mingling of functions made it the easier for the anti-Ricardians, in denouncing the capitalist, to treat him primarily as a monopolist who levied toll on the workers by virtue of his ownership of the instruments of production, and to ignore his contribution as manager and organiser, or at any rate to regard it as secondary and as meriting, where it was needed at all, no more than a wage. As for the element of risk-taking, most of them believed that it could and should be practically eliminated by enlarging the purchasing power of the masses, so as to ensure a limitless demand.

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Side by side with this critical reinterpretation of classical economics went a development of the Utilitarian doctrine. The anti-Ricardians insisted that the greatest happiness of the greatest number ought to be pursued, not only through political enfranchisement, but also through a new ordering of the economic affairs of society in the interests of the whole people. Thirdly, there ran through the anti-capitalist economics of the 1820s a thread of attack on the monetary system. The return to the Gold Standard after 1819 was regarded as a reinstatement of the monopolistic power of the rich class which controlled the supply of money. It was urged that the proper function of money was to make possible the fullest use of the available powers of production, and that accordingly credit should be available to all who could make good use of it up to the limit of real productive power. Finally, a number of anti-capitalist economists combined with their attacks on the developing capitalist system a belief in some form of socialistic or communistic organisation of society as the means of putting plenty within the range of the whole people. Often these different strands of thought were combined in the doctrines of the same writers, but different writers put their main stress on different aspects of the problem.

Max Beer, in his *History of British Socialism*, has given a good summary account of the development of anti-capitalist economic doctrines, from Charles Hall's book on *The Effects of Civilisation*, discussed in a previous chapter, up to the work of John Francis Bray in the 1840s. I can give no more here than a very brief summary. Hall, as we saw, had attacked profit as an unjust deduction from the producer's reward and had asserted the right of labour to the whole produce of its efforts. With this assertion of labour's right he had combined a forthright attack on the Industrial Revolution, advocating public ownership of the land and the settlement on small farms of the surplus labour which was competing for employment in industry. He thus belongs to the group of critics who, while conscious of the effects of the Industrial Revolution in its earlier phases, set themselves in opposition to it and still thought mainly in terms of an agrarian solution. Thomas Hodgskin (1783-1869) represents a later phase of the revolt against capitalism, and thinks much more in terms of industry.

In his *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital* (1825), in his *Popular Political Economy* (1827), and later in his *Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted* (1832) he sets out very cogently a labour theory based on a reaction to Ricardian economics, and takes his stand on the side of the developing Trade Union movement. Hodgskin's doctrine is essentially one of class struggle between the workers and the possessing classes. The worker, he asserts, is the sole producer of value; but under the capitalist system he is subjected to the full rigour of an iron law which keeps his wages down to subsistence level. The advantages of rising production accrue to the landlord and the capitalist, who wrongly maintain that labour is maintained out of the capital resources which they supply; whereas in reality labour is maintained out of its own current product. Society needs no capitalists or landlords. All it needs is the co-existing labour of different sorts of producers. Capital, as Ricardo himself had shown, is really a part of the product of labour set aside from current consumption. The labourers should receive the whole product of their labour, their individual shares being settled by the higgling of the market under free conditions without any capitalist monopoly to skim off the surplus over their subsistence needs. Hodgskin was not a Socialist. He was much nearer to being what we should call nowadays an Anarchist. He favoured the existence of private property, provided only that there was completely free competition under which each producer would get his due. Philosophically, he believed in the existence of a 'natural law of property', which men in framing their social organisations should set out to discover. He denied that politics could give any valid answer to economic problems. Economic conditions, he said, would necessarily determine political development. He denied that legislation could be the remedy for the existing abuses. All it could do, he asserted, was to register changes enforced by working-class action against capitalist exploitation. Accordingly, he placed his main faith in the Trade Union movement as a means of organising the working classes to resist capitalist exploitation, though this doctrine was softened down in his later writings.

Hodgkin's ideas found their expression in the lectures which he delivered to the London Mechanics' Institute (1823),

of which he was one of the principal founders. He was a strong advocate of working-class education, and was soon engaged in the struggles which rent the Mechanics' Institutes between those who regarded these bodies as means of educating the workers for the struggle against capitalism and those who considered that the real interests of capital and labour were identical and that the main purpose of working-class education should be the improvement of the technical quality of labour and the indoctrination of the workers in the truths of classical economics. In this struggle Hodgskin and his friends were worsted so far as the control of the Mechanics' Institutes was concerned. The upholders of classical economics commanded the financial support without which the Institutes could not be kept going. Hodgskin and his friends were driven from the control of the London Mechanics' Institute by George Birkbeck and Francis Place, and the Institute survived to become Birkbeck College, now a constituent College of the University of London. But although the control passed to the orthodox Utilitarian Radicals, Hodgskin's friends were strong enough to keep him there as a lecturer, and his *Popular Political Economy* was based on courses of lectures which he had delivered at the Institute. Later he lost his original Radical fervour and spent his later years as a leader writer on *The Economist*, which was founded by James Wilson in 1843 as an organ of *laissez-faire* doctrines. This shift of allegiance was the easier for him because, from the first, he had put no trust in the State as an instrument of reform and had insisted that the workers would have to achieve their own salvation through organisation in the economic field.

A somewhat different tendency was represented by John Gray (1799-c. 1850), whose *Lecture on Human Happiness* was published in 1825. Gray, like Hodgskin, takes his stand on the labour theory of value. Only wage labour in the making of things, he argues, is productive, though other kinds of labour may be useful provided this unproductive labour is kept down to a minimum in relation to productive labour. Gray denies that there is any right to private property or to receive any income from its ownership. Like Owen he stresses the evil effects of competition in restricting production through its effect in reducing the incomes of the producers, and thereby

limiting consumers' demand. Gray, however, belongs mainly to the school of monetary reformers, who had been particularly active since the end of the Napoleonic Wars and were to carry over their propaganda, through Thomas Attwood and the Birmingham Reformers, into the Chartist movement. Gray's *Social System* (1831) is a plea for cheap and adequate credit to finance full production. He wants a National Bank to supply this credit to the producers, and he advocates paper money and the abolition of the Gold Standard as necessary means. This theme was further developed in his *Lectures on Money*, published in 1848. Starting largely as an Owenite advocate of Co-operative development, Gray ended up mainly as a monetary reformer.

The insistence on monetary reform and on the place of banking and credit in the new society took a number of forms during this period. It had begun, as a Radical attitude, with Tom Paine's vaticinations about the disastrous accumulation of the National Debt — see his *Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance* (1796). Cobbett had taken up the tale, as the debt grew and grew during the wars, and had attacked the system of paper money as an inflationary fraud upon the people (*Paper against Gold*, 1810–11). But Cobbett denounced with equal vehemence the deflationary return to the Gold Standard after the end of the wars, demanding an 'equitable adjustment' of the burden of interest on the debt corresponding to the fall in prices. Cobbett, however, remained a believer in gold as against paper, whereas during the years of depression after 1815 most of the monetary reformers, headed by Mathias Attwood, father of the Birmingham Reformer, advocated the liberal issue of bank credit as a means to the stimulation of production. This doctrine found favour, not only among left-wing advocates of full employment, but even more among small manufacturers and traders, who had their supplies of credit abruptly cut off by the banks in periods of depression. The provincial bankers who were the main suppliers of industrial credit, in turn blamed the Bank of England and its ally, the Government, which had made money scarce by restoring gold payments and had thus compelled them to restrict their advances. There was, of course, nothing particularly socialistic about such ideas, which were indeed

characteristic rather of what Marx called 'the economics of the *petite bourgeoisie*'. The Saint-Simonians' ideas of a great group of industrial banks, co-ordinated by a central bank which was to be the planner of the national production, were quite another matter: they did not find an echo until much later among British Socialists. Bronterre O'Brien was, I think, the first to make any application of them to British conditions; and that was only after 1848.

William Thompson (*d.* 1833) was a much more important economist than John Gray. He began chiefly as an interpreter of the utilitarian doctrine of the greatest happiness of the greatest number in terms of social policy, and constructed on this basis a system of what would now be called 'Welfare Economics'; but he soon added Owenism to the conclusions he had drawn from Benthamite premises. His most important work, *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth most conducive to Human Happiness* (1824) is an amalgamation of Utilitarianism and the Owenite doctrine. Like the rest of the anti-capitalist school, he begins with the assertion that labour is the sole creator of value and that the robbery of labour by the capitalist restricts production and is the cause of unemployment and crisis. Labour, he argues, should receive the full product of its effort, less depreciation of the capital employed and, under certain conditions, a limited income to the owners of capital. But the capitalist, not content with this income, lays claim to the entire surplus value produced with the aid of capital and confines labour to a subsistence wage, whereas on the principles both of utility and of social justice labour's claim is irresistible. The labourer not only has the clearest claim to the value, because he produces it, but is also justified on grounds of utility, because widely diffused consumption will yield a greater aggregate of human happiness than lavish consumption by a few, while the many go short. Thompson thus invokes in effect the principle of 'diminishing utility' and foreshadows the utilitarian structure of Jevonian economic theory.

In Thompson's *Distribution of Wealth*, though Owenism has already been accepted in principle, Utilitarianism in its application to economics is still the main theme. The utilitarian principle calls, he says, for a just system of distribution

in the interest of general happiness ; and such distribution will of itself bring about a vast increase of production. Answering those who argued that production would fall off unless unlimited incentives were offered to business enterprise, Thompson retorts that the existing system, by confining the labourer to a subsistence wage, destroys almost all incentive to higher production among the main body of the producers. The labourer, if he is allowed to retain the real value he produces, will have the strongest possible incentive to create as much wealth as he can, and will be in a position to provide for himself the capital instruments needed for production without requiring the outside capitalist's services. Management is, for Thompson, simply a form of labour, entitled to its due reward, but not to any residuary claim on the product of other men's labour. What is needed to induce enough saving and investment in capital goods is not the uncertain prospect of a high return, but security ; and security can be achieved only by removing the limits on popular consumption and thus ensuring adequate markets for all that can be produced.

Thompson, in the course of his argument, contrasts the attitudes of labourers and capitalists to the question of sharing the product. The capitalists, he says, regard labour as creating only that part of the value of the produce which their labour will fetch in a society resting on the monopoly of ownership of land and capital. On this basis, they treat the entire value, over and above the labourer's subsistence wage, as belonging to themselves. From the labourer's point of view, on the other hand, capital is unproductive. Capital instruments can only transmit to the product the value of the wear and tear involved in producing it ; and even this is only the value of the labour stored up in them. Accordingly, from the labourer's standpoint, a charge for depreciation is the only legitimate capital charge. If, nevertheless, Thompson proposes to allow the capital-owner a limited return on his investment, this is only a transitional concession to avoid violence, or at most an acknowledgment that, as a man, the capitalist too has a claim to the means of subsistence — but not at a higher standard than the active producers.

From these basic principles Thompson goes on to conclude that under a rightly ordered economic system every man

should be free to choose his employment and to change it at will, and that the producers should be in perfect freedom to exchange their products one with another on terms that would secure to them the full enjoyment of the fruits of their several labours.

So far the *Inquiry into the Distribution of Wealth*. In his subsequent writings Thompson made a much clearer set of practical proposals and became more fully Owenite. In the *Inquiry*, though Owenism is praised, there is nothing to exclude the continuance of a system of production mainly in the hands of individual producers, somehow set free from the monopolistic ownership of land and capital. But in *Labour Rewarded* (1827), evidently written partly as an answer to Hodgskin's *Labour Defended*, Thompson comes out as a whole-hearted advocate of Co-operation. Like Hodgskin, he puts his faith in Trade Unionism; but, whereas Hodgskin had regarded the Trade Unions essentially as fighting organisations for the wresting of profit from the employer, Thompson calls upon them to play the leading part in instituting the Co-operative system. He urges them to accumulate funds, and to use them for the acquisition of land, buildings and machinery for the employment of their unemployed members, or of those whose wages are being reduced. He wants these Trade Union Co-operative establishments to compete with capitalist industry and to drive it out of business. He is at pains, however, to remind his readers that such action will not by itself suffice to establish a just system, because the Trade Unions will still be paying tribute in rent for hired land and buildings, or interest on capital borrowed to acquire such things and the equipment needed for them. Accordingly it is necessary to go further, and to institute a complete system of community living such as Owen had outlined. Under such a system, Thompson seems to contemplate that the workers would have become co-owners of the whole apparatus needed for co-operative living and production, and that capital in other hands would have withered away, or at all events have been reduced to insignificance. In *Labour Rewarded* he urged that the individual workers should become investors in the establishments set up by the Trade Unions, as he was later to urge them to invest in Owen's fund for the financing of his 'Villages of Co-operation'.



Throughout, Thompson's argument is conducted in terms of direct action by the producers, with such aid as rich Owenites may choose to lend them. He does not invoke the help of government in bringing the new system into being. He belongs with the schools of thought which regard government as the upholder of the old, bad system of private monopoly of the means of production; and he looks mainly to the workers to find means for their own emancipation. He was indeed the principal contributor to the new, working-class version of Owenism which Owen found already in being when he returned from New Harmony; and to him, more than to anyone else, was due the alliance of Trade Unionism and Owenite Co-operation that came to dominate working-class activity in the years immediately after the Reform Act of 1832. He had been foremost in calling on the Trade Unionists to cut out the capitalists by taking up Co-operative production, and in proposing means of using Trade Unionism as a basis for the construction of a new society on Owenite principles. Further, in his *Practical Directions for the Establishment of Communities* (1830), prepared on behalf of the Owenite Co-operative Congress, Thompson propounded detailed plans for the development of the Owenite system. He was also a leading advocate of women's rights, demanding in his *Appeal of One-Half of the Human Race* (1825) full economic and political equality between the sexes.

I can do no more than barely mention here other contributors to the stream of anti-capitalist and Owenite thought. John Minter Morgan (1782-1854) was the first to take up Owen's plans of 1817 and to advocate their adoption, while rejecting Owen's hostility to religion. His book on *The Practicability of Mr. Owen's Plan* (1819) was followed by his better-known *The Revolt of the Bees* (1826) and by *Hampden in the Nineteenth Century* (1834), in which he brought together a large mass of Owenite and anti-capitalist doctrine. George Mudie, originally a printer and journalist from Edinburgh, produced in 1821-2 the first Owenite Co-operative journal, *The Economist*, and set up in 1821 the first Owenite Society which not only conducted Owenite propaganda but established the first attempt at a working-class community modelled on Owen's ideas. Mudie's Economical and Co-operative Society,

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with a group of London printers as its nucleus, set out in 1821 to live in common and to develop a number of industrial enterprises on a Co-operative basis. After the break-up of this experiment, mainly through lack of capital, Mudie took part in the Owenite experiment at Orbiston. T. R. Edmonds (1803-1889), in his *Practical, Moral and Political Economy* (1828), also followed Owen, but not Hodgskin or Thompson, for he made his main appeal to the rich for help in introducing Socialism by founding communities on Owenite principles. As we shall see, John Francis Bray, like Mudie a compositor and an Owenite, further developed Thompson's synthesis of anti-capitalist economics and Owenite community doctrines in *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedies* (1838-9), but his work belongs to a later period, after the great Owenite movement of the early 'thirties had run its course.

I have said nothing in this chapter of the second great revolt against the 'dismal science' of economics — I mean the revolt of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, of Robert Southey, and of other hostile critics of capitalist theory and practice whose standpoint placed them in no less sharp opposition to Socialism than to individualist *laissez-faire*. Southey, in his *Sir Thomas More, or, Colloquies on Society* (1829), wrote with much sympathy about many aspects of Owenite utopianism, and agreed cordially with Owen in rejecting as anti-social the idea that a good society could be based on the egoistic activities of competing individuals in search of riches. Coleridge, with deeper philosophical insight, affirmed the naturalness of human sympathy and solidarity and upheld the idea of a 'State' in the minds of men that was different from the actual State as a governmental structure and embodied the unity of society in its secular relations. Both Coleridge and Southey regarded this higher 'State' as the counterpart of the higher Church as a mystical union of believers, and envisaged the right organisation of society as a balance of secular and religious forces, with the idea of common responsibility for the welfare of the people as the principle of unity between the two. This anti-capitalistic romanticism, however, led them not towards Socialism, but towards a paternalism which had much in common with that of the later Christian Social movement in continental Europe. In Great Britain, it was passed on,

through F. D. Maurice, to the Christian Socialists. Maurice was deeply influenced by Coleridge, and was drawn into the Christian Socialist movement mainly by the potency of this influence. Nevertheless, the ideas of Coleridge and Southey find no place in this chapter because their social criticism was directed fundamentally not at the false economics of the 'Manchester School', but at its bad morals, and because they themselves were impelled by it, not towards Socialism, but towards a romantic yearning after the irrevocable past.

## CHAPTER XI

### OWEN AND THE TRADE UNIONS — THE END OF OWENISM

THE greatest change that had come about in the Great Britain of the 1820s — greatest, I mean, in its effects on working-class sentiment — was the growth of the Trade Unions. Up to 1824 Trade Unionism had been outlawed both under the common law and under the Combination Acts passed in 1799 and 1800 as part of the general movement of repression prompted by the French Revolution and the fears which it had aroused. Then, in 1824, these Acts had been repealed and the common law modified by statute, so as to allow wide freedom to form Trade Unions. This change had been due largely to the combined efforts of Joseph Hume in Parliament and Francis Place outside; and it had been followed by a great coming into the open of Trade Unions which had previously operated in secret, as well as by the establishment of many new ones. Even while Trade Unions were forbidden by law, they had continued to exist, and even on occasion to act quite openly, in the case of the skilled urban craftsmen. The repression had affected chiefly the miners and textile workers, who worked mainly outside the corporate towns and could not hope to make their organisations effective unless they were able to operate over considerable areas. Against such combinations, which were regarded as dangerous because of the numbers involved, the law had been frequently invoked; but even this had not prevented them from continuing to operate secretly. In 1824 a great many such bodies came out into the open and, trade being good, there was a wave of strikes. Parliament, in alarm, repealed Hume's Act, and in 1825 substituted for it a new Act which greatly reduced the scope allowed to the Trade Unions. The entire prohibition of combinations, however, was not reimposed, partly because there was a body of liberal feeling which held it to be unjust

and hoped that the workers, given a limited right to combine, would come to understand how little combination could achieve in face of the inexorable 'laws of political economy'. Prohibition, it was argued, had fostered false hopes of what Trade Unions could do to raise wages. The Unions, deterred by legal penalties attached under the Act of 1825 to all forms of violence and intimidation, would soon learn not to kick against the pricks and would limit themselves to such harmless and even beneficial activities as the provision of friendly benefits for their incapacitated, sick, or unemployed members.

This was not what happened. The trade boom which had been gaining strength in 1824 ended in the speculative orgy of 1825, and in crisis. There were numerous strikes against wage-reductions as the depression set in; and in most of these the Trade Unions took hard knocks. But the movement was not killed, though some of the Unions, particularly in the Yorkshire woollen industry, were again driven underground. Even during the years of depression Trade Unionism resumed its growth, as the local groups tried to form wider combinations, first for resistance to further wage-reductions and then in an attempt to get back some of what had been lost. At the same time, the influence of Hodgskin and Thompson and other friendly theorists began to make itself felt. Thompson especially was urging them to set their aims higher, to meet lock-outs and attempts to reduce wages by creating Co-operative societies of production in which they could employ their own members and threaten the employers with the loss of their business, and — beyond this — to look forward to a new social order in which the control of industry would pass into the workers' hands.

These developments of Trade Union organisation and policy continued right through the years during which public attention was concentrated mainly on the struggle for parliamentary reform. At the same time, as we have seen, Co-operative ideas and projects had been developing fast through the work of George Mudie, Dr. William King of Brighton, and other leaders of working-class opinion, including many of the workmen who were also prominent in the Reform agitation. The welding together of these two movements seemed to offer great prospects to a working class which saw in the

Reform struggle the beginnings of the old order's collapse, and the advent of an era in which the working class would be set free to shape its own future. Owen, in his earlier propaganda, had never considered that the workers themselves should play any active rôle in the establishment of his proposed 'Villages of Co-operation'. He had looked to the State or the Poor Law authorities, or to private philanthropists, to give the workers the chance of demonstrating their capacity for improvement under more favourable conditions of living and in an environment conducive to good conduct; he had hardly begun to think in terms of the workers controlling their own affairs. But he himself had learnt something from his American experience; and during his absence in New Harmony many leaders of working-class opinion had begun to ask why, if Owen's system were good, they should not set about establishing it for themselves without relying either on the State or on the rich. By the latter half of the 1820s the Owenite doctrine, reinterpreted in this way, had begun to attract a substantial working-class following, especially among those sections of the workers who were organised in the newly emancipated Trade Unions. John Doherty, in Lancashire, who began by organising the cotton spinners into the Grand General Union of Spinners (1829), and went on in the following year to an ambitious plan for the creation of a General Union of Trades — which was actually formed the following year under the title of the National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour — was the greatest single figure among these new leaders of the working class. In London the shipwright, John Gast, organised the Metropolitan Trades Union, and William Lovett took an active part in bringing together Trade Unionist and Co-operative groups and imbuing them with Owenite ideas. Owen, on his return, found himself called upon from many quarters to assume the leadership of these developing working-class movements and to guide them into the paths of Co-operative Socialism. The movement spread rapidly during the years of the Reform struggle, and when the Reform Act of 1832 had been passed, and the working classes who had played a large part in the struggle found themselves still voteless and faced by a new political order dominated by their capitalist masters, Trade Unionism and

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Co-operation grew more rapidly than ever. The workers, disappointed in their political hopes, turned to economic action as a means of defence against the State's new masters ; and the idea of a 'General Union' of the entire working class spread fast. Owen, urged on by his disciples, set to work to bring the Trade Unions over to his ideas. He addressed the 'Parliament' of the great Builders' Union, which had just been formed in an attempt to unite all the building crafts under a single leadership, and induced it to lay plans for taking over the entire building industry through a Grand National Guild of Builders, which was to supersede the private contractors.

Meanwhile, at a series of Co-operative Congresses instituted in 1831, large projects were worked out for a development of Co-operative production and trade as a first step towards the full establishment of the Co-operative system. At this stage Owen himself set to work to demonstrate in practice the efficacy of the labour theory of value he had enunciated in his 1821 *Report to the County of Lanark*. The idea of 'labour exchanges', at which craftsmen in different trades could directly exchange their products without need for either capitalist employers or middlemen, was tried out in a few small-scale experiments before Owen took it up practically : indeed, such exchanges had been among the functions of some of the Co-operative Societies set up in the 1820s. But Owen now set to work on a larger scale by establishing a National Equitable Labour Exchange at which the products of different trades organised in Co-operative Producers' Societies could be exchanged at values determined by the 'labour time' involved in their production. Owen's Exchange was in London, but similar Exchanges were started in Birmingham, Liverpool and Glasgow, and for a time a brisk trade was done in the 'labour notes' which were issued by the Exchanges to replace the official currency. There was a rapid growth of Producers' Co-operative Societies, founded largely by workers who were in dispute with their employers about wages and conditions and attempted to eliminate the employers — or at least bring them to terms — by organising their own production and marketing. There were also numerous Co-operative Stores, which traded partly in the products of these Producers' Societies and partly in goods produced under capitalist conditions which

they endeavoured to resell at prices which would cut distributive margins, and, at the same time, afford a surplus that could be used in order to build up funds for application to the further development of the Co-operative system. Some of these Stores even used the device of 'dividend on purchases' — so often described as an invention of the Rochdale Pioneers of 1844 — but most accumulated any surpluses with a view to more ambitious social experiments. Dr. King's *Brighton Co-operator* had ceased publication in 1830; but a number of new journals were speedily founded for the advocacy of Co-operative ideas.

Out of all this propaganda arose in 1833 the most ambitious attempt of all to create a General Labour Union, which would not merely fight the workers' day-to-day battles but become an instrument for the speedy introduction of the new Co-operative social order. At the Co-operative Congress of 1833, which was attended by delegates from a medley of Co-operative Societies, Trade Unions, and Owenite propagandist bodies, Owen himself put forward a plan for a 'Grand National Moral Union of the Productive Classes', through which the new social order was to be introduced at a single blow by a concerted peaceful refusal to continue production under the capitalist system. But out of Owen's projected Grand Moral Union arose something a good deal different from what he had himself conceived. Already Doherty's and Gast's attempts to create a General Union had been followed up by similar efforts elsewhere. A General Union had been launched in Yorkshire, centred on the clothing trades, and missionaries both from Doherty's Lancashire organisation and from the Yorkshiremen had been touring the country in an endeavour to set up county associations open to all trades. Out of these efforts arose, at the beginning of 1834, the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, an ambitious attempt to combine the entire force of labour for a direct onslaught on the capitalist system; and at the same time in the northern factory areas the Society for National Regeneration, launched by Doherty with the support of Owen and John Fielden, began to agitate for the establishment of the eight hours' day by means of a concerted refusal to continue work beyond that limit.

Owen himself was in two minds about some of these



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developments. On the one hand, he believed in the possibility of the immediate establishment of his Co-operative system at a single blow through an united working-class demand, backed by men of good-will in other classes ; but, on the other hand, he acutely disliked the notion of war between the classes. Owen believed that, if only the case for his new social order were stated clearly enough to the employing classes, they themselves, or the better part of them, could be induced to acquiesce and to participate in their own extinction, and in that of the competitive system by which they lived. He shared Saint-Simon's tendency to think of 'the industrious classes' — a favourite phrase of his, corresponding to Saint-Simon's '*les industriels*' — as a single element in society, standing in natural opposition to the non-producers, and open, as the latter for the most part were not, to appeals to behave reasonably in the general interest.

(Thus while Owen, in the spirit of a Messiah, was proclaiming the immediate advent of the 'New Moral World', on a basis of agreement and consent among all good men, many of his followers in the Trade Unions were seeking the same ends through the methods of class warfare.) J. E. Smith, the editor of Owen's journal, *The Crisis*, until he was displaced because of his class-war attitude and his opposition to Owen's religious propaganda, wrote in *The Crisis* and in James Morrison's *Pioneer*, the organ of the Builders' Union, a series of articles embodying an incisive statement of class-war doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Owen, though he had been largely responsible for bringing the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union into existence, was at the outset neither an officer nor even a member of it, and viewed these developments with a divided mind. Meanwhile, the employers and the Government had taken alarm. Strikes in which the workmen were sometimes content with demands for higher wages and improved conditions, but sometimes went as far as to demand the abdication of the employers and the immediate institution of the new Co-operative system of control, were met by lock-outs in which the employers

<sup>1</sup> If, indeed, he was the author of the articles in *The Pioneer* signed 'Lunex' — which is uncertain. At all events, his contributions to *The Crisis* were regarded by Owen as undesirable because of their tendency to stir up enmity against the employers.

refused further employment to any worker who did not sign a 'document' renouncing membership of the 'Trades Union'. In the famous 'Derby Turn-out' of 1833-4, which began even before the Grand National Union had been fully launched, the employers took this line; and the workers, locked out of the factories, attempted to retaliate by establishing Co-operative workshops of their own. In Yorkshire and in some other areas the employers, backed and indeed incited by the Whig Government, resorted extensively to the lock-out and to the boycott of Trades Union members. The Grand National Union and the other Unions which were loosely associated with it had been enrolling members at a great rate — much faster than they could introduce any sort of order into their arrangements. As stoppages multiplied and the employers' resistance stiffened, the Trade Unions found themselves faced with a rapid dissipation of their scanty funds in maintaining members on strike or locked out and in attempting to organise Co-operative production. Before long the Government took a positive hand in the attempt to repress the Trade Unions, both by encouraging the employers who had refused to employ Trade Unionists and by urging the magistrates to be vigilant in suppressing dangerous conspiracies. At that time, it was quite common for Trade Unions to administer to new members oaths of secrecy, which were partly a legacy from the period before 1824, when all forms of working-class combination had been treated as criminal conspiracies, and partly a natural response to the employers' attempts to boycott all workmen who were known to belong to a Trade Union. There is no need to retail here the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs — the six Dorchester labourers who, in 1834, were prosecuted and sentenced to transportation for the offence of administering unlawful oaths in the course of their attempt to establish a Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers as a section of the Grand National Union. This savage sentence undoubtedly played a considerable part in hastening the destruction of the movement. Although Owen, who had hitherto ranked merely as a friendly outsider, joined the Grand National Union and became its President in response to the attacks upon it, and induced its Executive to urge all its affiliated bodies immediately to abolish every form of oath or secret ceremony, the

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employers were encouraged by the Dorchester sentences to intensify their boycott. Many of the workers who had joined the Union took fright; and by the latter months of 1834 the ambitious plans of the Grand National Union were in ruins and the Union itself had been to all intents and purposes destroyed. Only fragments, mostly local societies of workers in particular skilled trades, held together, and these were for the most part groups which had existed before the general 'Trades Union' had been established, and before there had been any idea of using Trade Unionism as the instrument for bringing about a sudden and complete overturn of the capitalist system.

Thus ended the brief period of Owenite ascendancy in the affairs of the British working classes. It was in many ways an extraordinary episode. How fully the Trade Unions were ever converted to Owenism it is impossible to say. Owen did not create the movement towards half-revolutionary 'General Unionism' which culminated and collapsed in the rapid rise and fall of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union: he only brought together for a short time — and never at all completely — a number of movements which had come into being independently of his efforts. The Grand National Trades Union took over, or attempted to take over, the 'General Unions' started by Doherty in Lancashire and the Midland textile districts and in Yorkshire by the secret Leeds Clothiers' Union; the national Unions which the Builders, the Potters, and a number of other groups had been trying to set up; and a host of local societies, old and new, which had been unconnected with any of these bodies. The Yorkshiremen, the Builders, and a number of other large Unions, after helping to form the Grand National Union, refused to merge their identity in it, and were only connected with it in a loose and indefinite way. It was indeed not at all clear who did belong to it, and who did not; and amid the struggles in which it was engaged from its very birth, there was never a chance of sorting matters out, or of putting its organisation on a regular footing.

Nor were its immediate aims any more definite than its structure. Owen went about prophesying the downfall of the old immoral order of society and the inauguration of the new

within a few months, apparently expecting the employing classes to acquiesce in their own overthrow in face of the workers' refusal to go on working for them. At the same time, he repudiated all appeals to violence or hatred or class-war. Some of the Trade Union leaders — for example, Doherty, of the Cotton Spinners, and James Morrison, of the Builders' Union — were thoroughgoing Owenites, who doubtless shared his hopes, even if they were not so sure as he was about the employers' response. But for the majority of the Union leaders, it was probably much more a matter of creating a vast General Union capable of raising wages and improving conditions by united action than of achieving the millennium by one decisive act. The idea of the 'general strike', or 'Grand National Holiday', had indeed already been put forward by William Benbow at least by 1831, and had been fully expounded in his pamphlet under the latter name, published at the beginning of 1832. Benbow's appeal, which had been primarily for a political strike, may have influenced Trade Union opinion: it undoubtedly appealed to the disappointed leaders of the National Union of the Working Classes, which had stood on the left wing of the movement for Radical Reform. Henry Hetherington, who had been one of the principal leaders of this group, acclaimed in his *Poor Man's Guardian* the Congress of the Grand National Trades Union as much more truly representative of the people than the Reformed Parliament, and called on the Trade Unions to take the lead in a resumed crusade for Universal Suffrage as well as for a new economic order based on Co-operation. But the whole affair was much more an amorphous mass-movement of economic and political discontent than a consciously directed campaign for a definite object.

(Owen, when he saw that the Trade Unions were faced with inevitable defeat, quickly shifted his ground.) After a vain attempt to get the sentences on the Tolpuddle labourers reversed, he suddenly announced the winding up of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union and fell back upon his attempts to stimulate Co-operative activity and to promote his projects of 'Villages of Co-operation' by less ambitious and challenging means. In place of the Grand National Union he announced the establishment of a British and Foreign Consoli-

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dated Association of Industry, Humanity and Knowledge, which was in fact little more than a continuation of the series of Co-operative Congresses that had started in 1831. This name was soon replaced by that of National Union of the Industrious Classes; and the central Owenite organisation thereafter underwent many further changes of name. 'Villages of Co-operation' gradually gave place to 'Home Colonies'; and as the religious element in Owenism increased with the decline of its industrial influence, the central organisation came to be known as the Society of Rational Religionists, or, more shortly, the 'Rational Society'. Its adherents continued to be often called 'the Socialists' and, as we have seen, in 1841 officially adopted the name.

Owenism, after 1834, ceased altogether to be a mass-movement, and Owen himself ceased to have any connection with the Trade Unions. But his influence by no means died out. There continued to be Owenite Societies, branches of the Rational Society, in a great many places, as well as Co-operative Societies more or less under Owenite influence. The Owenites, moreover, resumed their efforts to organise a model Co-operative community, and went on busily collecting subscriptions, small and large, for this purpose. Owen himself organised his wealthier supporters in a Home Colonisation Society, while the Rational Society gathered in the pence from working-class contributors. In 1839 these efforts resulted in the establishment of Harmony Hall, or Queenwood, at East Tytherly, in Hampshire, which, as we have seen, finally broke up in 1846 after sharp quarrels between the working-class Socialists of the Rational Society and Owen's wealthier supporters. The issues were mixed. The working-class group demanded that Queenwood should be conducted as a complete democracy, and that all the settlers should take their shares in the labour required for its maintenance. The backers who had advanced a large part of the capital insisted on some control over the administration, and the Trustees whom they had appointed in agreement with Owen fell foul of the Rational Society. Of the settlers, some were working-class people, sent by the Society's branches; but others were middle-class supporters who were prepared to pay for their accommodation, but not to undertake manual labour. Outside labour had to be hired to supplement the

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activities of the working members, and this caused further trouble. Finally, the Trustees closed Queenwood down altogether, evicting the Governor whom the Rational Society had put in to reorganise it on a democratic basis.

So ended in disaster Owen's second attempt to found a Co-operative community. (But the Owenites, after 1834, did many other things besides raise money for this venture. In particular, they sent 'missionaries' all over the country to preach the 'Rational Religion', which was in effect a secularist religion of humanity, without any sort of theological dogma. It merged gradually into the later Secularist movements led by George Jacob Holyoake and by Charles Bradlaugh. The 'Socialists' were also very active in the educational field, founding both schools for children and 'Halls of Science' and 'Social Institutions' at which much lecturing and teaching was done. They continued to promote local Co-operative Societies where they could, including that Rochdale Pioneers' Society which was the starting point of the modern Co-operative movement. Nor did their ideas cease to influence the Trade Union movement. When the next attempt was made, in 1845, to form a 'General Union' — the National Association of United Trades — the old projects of Co-operative production were again taken up. Moreover, there began at about the same time in Leeds and a number of other places a 'Redemptionist' movement which owed a good deal to Owenism. It was also influenced by the doctrines of John Francis Bray, who had been advocating the same solution both in his book, *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedies* (1839), and in many lectures to working-class bodies in and around Leeds. The 'Redemption of Labour' movement was an attempt to link together the friendly society and the Co-operative ideas. Each member of a Redemption Society was called upon to subscribe a penny a week which was to be applied to building up a capital fund. The sums thus raised were to be used for starting Co-operative farms, factories, and complete village settlements under the Society's control, and the subscribers were to receive benefits out of the returns on their investments. The Leeds Society actually started a colony in South Wales, which lasted for a few years; and there were other ventures on a smaller scale. But the movement gradually died away in the 1850s.

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Owenism, in its latest phases, was clearly much less 'socialistic', in any ordinary sense of the term, than it had been when its working-class influence was at its height. Indeed, the best known of its later exponents, Holyoake, who lived on beyond the end of the century, expressed strong hostility to the Socialism which developed in Great Britain in the 1880s. Owenite 'Socialism' was never conceived mainly in terms of State action or of politics. It was essentially a form of Co-operation, aiming at a way of community living that was to come about by the voluntary action of the converted, and not through legislation. In this it was closely akin to the Socialism of Fourier, and altogether unlike that of the Saint-Simonians. These two conflicting tendencies have persisted, the one leading towards either Anarchist-Communism or Syndicalism or towards the modern forms of Co-operation as 'a state within the state', and the other towards either Marxian Communism or the various doctrines of modern 'Democratic Socialism'.

## CHAPTER XII

### JOHN FRANCIS BRAY

IT is a remarkable fact that the book which best synthesises Owenism and the British anti-capitalist economic doctrines described in a previous chapter was written in the 1830s by a half American — John Francis Bray (1809–1895). Bray was born in Washington, D.C., of an English father — an actor who had emigrated to the United States — and an American mother, and was brought to England by his father in 1822. The family settled in Leeds, and Bray became a working compositor. He seems to have begun his active connection with the working-class movement in 1835, and to have been already in possession of his essential ideas. His first known writing appeared in the very Radical *Leeds Times* during that and the following year. In 1837 he was chosen as treasurer of the newly formed Leeds Working Men's Association, which was on the same lines as Lovett's London Working Men's Association. He lectured for this body, and in 1839 published his one book — apart from some later writing in America. This was *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedies, or The Age of Might and the Age of Right*, issued at Leeds, then the centre of Northern Chartism and the publishing town of O'Connor's *Northern Star*. Bray remained in England until 1842. Then, as Chartism entered into its decline, he returned to the United States, where he worked both as a printer and journalist and as a farmer, and continued the propaganda of his ideas. He left certain unpublished writings, which have been rediscovered only in recent years; but his reputation and his importance for the history of Socialist thought depend entirely on his book of 1839.

Marx read Bray with appreciation, and quoted him extensively against Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Marx was indeed critical as well as appreciative of Bray's ideas; but it is beyond question that he learnt a great deal from them.



especially in his formulation of the theory of value and surplus value.

Bray's book, I have said, was a synthesis of Owenism and anti-Ricardian economics. But it was also a very acute criticism of the activities of the Socialists and of the working-class movement of the 1830s. Strongly sympathetic to Trade Unionism, Bray was very well aware of its limitations. Trade Unions, he argued, in fighting for higher wages and better conditions within the capitalist system, were beating their heads against a brick wall, because they could not alter the underlying conditions of capitalist production. It was the same with the struggle for factory legislation: as long as there were two economic classes, one in possession of the instruments of production and the other depending on the possessing classes for the means to work, there could be no fundamental change in the worker's position. The labourer had the right to enjoy the full value of his product: the natural law of exchange was that product should exchange for product in accordance with the amounts of labour embodied in them. But the monopoly of ownership by a class was inconsistent with this equality of exchange. The greater part of the labourer's product was filched from him by the possessing classes: he was compelled, after working long enough to provide for his own subsistence, to go on working for an employer, giving his unpaid labour time for the rest of the customary working hours. This was Owenism, *plus* Hodgskin, a good deal better expressed. Marx agreed with most of it, but also pointed out its utopian character. It was chimerical, he said, to claim for the labourer his full individual product, because under modern conditions of production most labourers had no such product. They were contributors to an essentially social, or collective, process of production, and accordingly the demand for the 'whole product of labour' had to be made by them collectively, not individually, if it was to have any real meaning in the contemporary world. Apart from this, Marx highly praised Bray's analysis — the more so because his book had been written by a working man and not by a middle-class sympathiser with the wrongs of labour.

Bray indeed criticised Trade Unionism for the sectionalism of its objectives, and maintained that it was not enough for the

workers to act on their own behalf alone. They must act for the whole society, and work for a complete transformation of the entire social system. He was even more critical of the Chartists than of the Trade Unions, because he was convinced—and here again his influence on Marx is clear—that political structures were a reflection of the economic forces in society. It would be futile, he held, to change the Government unless the fundamental economic institutions, to the needs of which the laws gave expression, were also changed; and it was primarily to this latter change that the workers ought to devote their energies.

Bray was an Owenite. He argued that the workers could remedy their wrongs only under a system of common ownership of the means of production and common labour upon them under conditions of free and equal association in Co-operative communities. He attacked private ownership root and branch, tracing its sinister development to the private appropriation of land, which was by nature the common possession of all. No man had any right or reasonable claim to appropriate to himself a single inch of land; and out of the violation of this principle of nature had arisen all the other evils of private ownership applied to the other instruments of production. Reform must therefore begin with the restoration of the land to the common use of the people. But, Bray recognised, it was not practicable entirely to undo at a blow the evil consequences of many centuries of private ownership and class-oppression. How then was a beginning to be made in combating the evils of capitalism, in industry as well as on the land? Looking to the Owenite community as the goal, Bray wanted to find a half-way house towards it, and believed he had found this in his proposal to enrol the whole people in a series of joint-stock concerns under their common ownership. Previous plans of Co-operation had failed mainly for want of capital: so the workers, and such other persons as were ready to help them, must form themselves into companies, raise by small regular contributions the capital needed to undertake production, and thus provide for the social organisation of industry, while also demanding the return of land to common possession. But, once set going, Bray's joint-stock enterprises were not to rely on the false

money which was the monopoly of the capitalist bankers. They were to make their own money, by issuing labour-notes corresponding to their possession of productive resources in their own labour, and by means of these notes they were to exchange their products one with another on fair and equal terms — that is, equal exchanges of labour-time. There was to be a national bank serving the joint-stock enterprises with this circulating medium, and regulating its quantity in correspondence with the supply of labour-power. There were to be wholesale markets and retail exchange bazaars to undertake the distribution of products at prices corresponding to their labour costs. Transport and other services would be placed under special boards, consisting of persons elected by the local committees. All this is evidently reminiscent both of Owen and, on the monetary side, of John Gray.

Bray's idea of a vast system of joint-stock concerns, established on a basis of complete equality among the members and not of capitalist shareholding, and his proposals for bringing such a system into being, obviously played their part in the inspiration of the Redemptionist movement, to which I have already referred. The Redemptionists of the 1840s had their main centre in Leeds, where Bray had worked and published his book ; and F. R. Lees, their most prominent theorist, was evidently inspired by Bray's ideas. In Bray's conception, this network of joint-stock concerns, which was presently to take over the whole government of the country, was only a halfway house towards a system of fuller community such as Owen had envisaged ; but he regarded it as impracticable to forecast the future in any detail beyond this intermediate stage.

Bray's plan was of course a great deal more utopian than he conceived it to be. But it had its influence, not only on the Redemptionists, but also on the consumers' Co-operative movement, which did go on to create, in the Rochdale type of society, a working-class equivalent to the capitalist joint-stock company on the basis of 'one member, one vote' — though not to the exclusion of interest on capital subscribed by the individual members. It may even have had something to do with the development, in the 1860s. of what were known as the 'Working-class Ltds.' — the companies owned by working-class shareholders which started up in considerable numbers

in the textile trades. But these bodies were not true to the principle of equal membership, as the 'Rochdale' Co-operatives were: voting was proportionate to share-holding — a concession to the spirit of capitalism which Bray would have repudiated utterly.

The importance of Bray's writings in the history of Socialist thought lies, not in his positive proposals, but in his underlying theory and in the excellence of his expression of it. He did not say a great deal that had not been said already, by Owen, or by Hodgskin, or by Thompson, or by Gray, or by some other writer of the previous twenty years. But what he said he said remarkably well; and he put together the gist of the English Socialist contribution as no one had done before. He echoed Owen in stressing the formative influence of social institutions on character, and the evil influence of the reign of competition on the minds and the moods of men. He stressed, like Hodgskin and a host of others, men's natural equality in needs, as well as in their basic qualities. He shared the belief of the earlier writers that the available resources of production, rightly used and not squandered on luxury and on the protection of inequality, were ample enough to yield a good standard of life for all men without excessive labour. And he regarded equality of rights as a law of nature from which mankind had broken away at the penalty of misery for the many and unease for the few, who lived evil lives in the defence of their unjust privileges. Bray is like Hodgskin in his hostility to government, which he regarded as an instrument for the protection of property against the rightful claims of the producers. He insisted that the division of society into contending classes, itself resulting mainly from the private appropriation of land, must be utterly rooted out before men could set about their proper business — the common pursuit of happiness. In this he repeated Thompson's fusion of Owenism and Utilitarianism into a single doctrine.

Bray shared with the rest of the utopians a firm belief in the inevitability of human progress. His view of history was not very clearly expressed, but he had the idea of a process of historical growth corresponding to the development of man's productive power — of a continuous advance, despite the appearance of set-backs in the destruction of whole past

civilisations. He saw the French Revolution as the beginning of a new wave of development on which men were being carried irresistibly along : he saw this movement as not national but world-wide in its impact — as ‘not confined to country, colour, or creed’, but destined to embrace all peoples. On this theme he waxed eloquent : at length, in the phrases of his sub-title, the ‘Age of Might’ was about to give place to the ‘Age of Right’. He was not, then, in Marx’s sense, a ‘scientific Socialist’, though he emphasised the bearing of economic forces on historical development. He was a continuator of the eighteenth-century faith in the ‘March of Mind’.

But, though he was nowhere near being a Marxist, he taught Marx much. Here are one or two of the passages Marx quoted from him :

Let us go at once to the source whence governments themselves have arisen. . . . Every form of government, and every social and governmental wrong, owes its rise to the existing social system — to the institution of property as it at present exists ; and . . . therefore, if we would end our wrongs and our miseries at once and for ever, the present arrangement of society must be totally subverted, and supplanted by those more in accordance with the principles of justice and the rationality of men.

Every man is a link, and an indispensable link, in the chain of effects — the beginning of which is but an idea, and the end, perhaps, the production of a piece of cloth. Thus, though we may entertain different feelings towards the several parties, it does not follow that one should be better paid for his labour than another. The inventor will ever receive, in addition to his just pecuniary reward, that which genius only can obtain from us — the tribute of our admiration.

Men have only two things which they can exchange with each other, namely, labour, and the produce of labour ; therefore, let them exchange as they will, they merely give, as it were, labour for labour. If a just system of exchanges were acted upon, the value of all articles would be determined by the entire cost of production, and equal values would always exchange for equal values. [This passage had an evident influence on Marx’s thought.]

Inequality of exchanges, as being the cause of inequality of possessions, is the secret enemy that devours us.

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The principle of equal exchanges must, from its very nature, ensure universal labour.

Our new system of society by shares, which is only a concession made to existing society, in order to arrive at communism, established in such a way as to admit of individual property in productions in connection with a common property in productive powers — making every individual dependent on his own exertions, and at the same time allowing him an equal participation in every advantage afforded by nature and art — is fitted to take society as it is, and to prepare the way for other and better changes.

Bray, largely because of Marx's references to him, has been well treated by later Socialist commentators — to the detriment of the earlier writers on whom he drew so largely. But he deserves attention, not only for what he said, but also as an authentic workman's voice — an eloquent voice — amid a clamour of intellectuals. For one thing, he demonstrated that a theory of class-struggle is not inconsistent with a fundamentally ethical outlook: for another, he knew how to write.

In 1842 Bray, after a short visit to Paris, returned to the United States; and there he remained for the rest of his long life. He had already written a second book, *A Voyage from Utopia to several Unknown Regions of the World*, in which he satirised the social institutions of Great Britain, France and America; but this book remained unpublished, and its existence was unknown until the manuscript was discovered, in the 1930s, together with much other material. An edition of it, announced shortly before the war, has still not appeared. In America, Bray contributed many letters and articles to Labour and Socialist periodicals, and published in 1855 the opening parts of another work, *The Coming Age*. This was never finished; but in 1879 his only other finished book appeared. This was *God and Man a Unity and All Mankind a Unity: a basis for a new dispensation, social and religious*. In both these works Bray argued for a non-theological religion based on the conception of an 'immortality' that must be sought in this world alone, through the endeavour to establish right social institutions. His ideas, as shown both in *God and Man a Unity* and in his periodical writings, had undergone certain modifications: he continued to advocate Co-

operative association as the remedy for social evils and to attack the exploitation of labour under the existing conditions. But he had come, in America, to regard the schemes of Owen and Fourier for the establishment of communities as utopian ; and he now argued for a system of Co-operative association that would replace capitalism without any complete communal living. He accepted unequal earnings corresponding to differences of skill and industry, and was prepared to give a modified recognition to the claims of private ownership. He continued, however, to denounce interest on capital as involving the exploitation of labour, and looked to the State to establish a banking system through which credit would be issued to the associated producers without any interest charge. This plan, which closely resembled Proudhon's projects of 'gratuitous credit', would, he thought, supersede private interest-bearing capital and capitalist profit. He appealed to farmers and industrial workers to join forces for the conquest of political power, and demanded that the costs of government should be drastically reduced and legislative bodies be compelled to submit all projected laws to the direct decision of the people by referendum. Bray in his later writings also strongly attacked the Gold Standard and argued for a system of paper money based on productive power and for the conduct of foreign trade as a direct barter of goods for goods.

In all this later writing there is nothing of substance added to Bray's original contribution. As Vice-President of the American Labor Reform League and as an active member of the Knights of Labor he played a secondary part in the American Labour movement of the 1870s and 1880s ; but he never became a major figure. His place in the history of Socialist thought depends on the book which he published in England in 1839 — and that, as we have seen, was important less for the originality of its ideas than for the clarity with which he expressed them.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

IN Great Britain, after the defeat of the Trade Unions in 1834, the centre of interest shifted back from industrial to political agitation. The People's Charter, drafted by a group of London workmen in consultation with a few Radical Members of Parliament, and the Birmingham Petition, drawn up by Thomas Attwood and his group of Radical monetary reformers, competed for a while for first place. But the London group was able to rally behind it most of the working-class Radicals in the provinces, and in Wales and Scotland ; and the Birmingham Reformers, without giving up their special demands, were induced to merge their movement in the campaign for the Charter, which thus became the general rallying-cry of the Radical Reformers. The People's Charter was published in May 1838, after more than a year's preparation. It emanated from the London Working Men's Association, a group consisting mainly of men who had been active both in the earlier Reform struggle, through the National Union of the Working Classes, and in various forms of Owenite and Co-operative activity. Among its leaders were William Lovett, Henry Hetherington, James Watson, Robert Hartwell, and Henry Vincent ; and both Francis Place and Joseph Hume were in close touch with these working-class protagonists. Lovett had been active both in the Co-operative movement and in the campaign for the release of the Tolpuddle Martyrs ; Hetherington was another ardent Owenite, and the leading figure, as proprietor of *The Poor Man's Guardian*, in the struggle for the freedom of the press. He had taken a prominent part in the National Union of the Working Classes and in supporting the Trade Unions. So had Watson, another working-class journalist, who had also worked with Richard Carlile in the cause of free-thought and anti-religious and republican propaganda. Hartwell and Vincent were compositors — younger men, who



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were only beginning to come to the front. The entire group belonged to the upper level of skilled workers, poor but not wretched, and untouched in their personal experience by the factory system. They were self-educated men of high intelligence, given to reasoning and not easily moved by rhetoric — though Vincent had a strong oratorical capacity for moving others, and came into his element when he left London and became the movement's leading propagandist in South Wales and the South-West.

These men had been deeply disappointed both by the failure to enfranchise the workers in 1832 and by the Trade Union and Co-operative defeat of 1834. Convinced that industrial action alone stood no chance of success in face of a Parliament now dominated by a combination of the old and new possessing classes, they turned back to the idea of rallying the entire working class, in the first instance, behind the demand for Manhood Suffrage and other purely political changes. Such a programme, they felt, would serve to unite all the main forces of discontent and, if it succeeded, would provide firm foundations for the pressing of economic demands. Therefore, the People's Charter, as they drafted it, was limited to a purely political claim. Its 'Six Points' were all constitutional, though the motive behind them was economic as well, and the popular response to them was bound to be actuated chiefly by economic distress. The 'Six Points' were Manhood Suffrage, the Ballot, No Property Qualification for Members of Parliament, Payment of Members, Equal Constituencies, and Annual Parliaments. The Birmingham Petition, put forward the same year, had only five points — Household Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, Triennial Parliaments, Wages of Attendance for Parliamentary Representatives, and Abolition of Property Qualifications for Representatives. It omitted Equal Constituencies (which was not, however, a real point of difference), and it was milder in that it demanded Triennial instead of Annual Parliaments, and Household instead of Manhood Suffrage. The National Petition, drawn up in 1838 in an attempt to combine the efforts of the Birmingham reformers and of the various Chartist groups, did dwell on economic grievances and included a brief reference to monetary reform, but confined its positive demand to Universal, Secret Suffrage.

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It falls outside the scope of this book, which is concerned with ideas and with Socialism rather than with the general history of working-class movements, to tell the story of Chartism. We are here concerned with it only so far as it is connected with the development of Socialist thought. In this context it is important to observe that the men who actually drew up the Charter were mainly Socialists, in the then current use of the term. They were Owenites, who hoped and expected that Parliamentary Reform would clear the road for the achievement of their Co-operative aims. Owenism had also a strong, but not a predominant, following in Birmingham, and a considerable following in Manchester, some of the Yorkshire towns, Glasgow, and a few other districts ; but it was nowhere, after 1834, a mass-movement, or a rallying-point for class feeling. It was, as a movement, hostile to the class-struggle and put little faith in political action. The Owenites who went over to Chartism were, to a great extent, abandoning, not their Co-operative Socialist ideas, but their allegiance to the surviving Owenite movement with its increasing concentration on millennial community-making and on the 'Rational Religion' which was coming more and more to occupy Owen's thoughts.

Even in London the group round Lovett and Hetherington was only one of several. James Bronterre O'Brien, the Irishman who had edited Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* and translated Buonarroti's account of the Conspiracy of Babeuf, was soon at the head of a rival group in London, running a paper called *The Operative* and also working with Feargus O'Connor. George Julian Harney was closely associated with him, and helped to found the London Democratic Association in opposition to the London Working Men's Association. These two both harked back to the French Revolution, and more particularly to Robespierre and to Babeuf. They were revolutionaries rather than Radical Reformers, and had a markedly internationalist outlook. Their Socialism was essentially not Owenite but proletarian, or at any rate based on the idea of a working-class uprising against the rich. They were rather scornful of the respectability of the Lovett group as well as of the tendency of the Attwoodites to favour alliance between the middle and working classes. They were 'Socialists' after the fashion, not of Owen or Fourier, but rather of

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Blanqui and the left wing of the Parisian movements of the 1830s.

Both the Lovettites and the O'Brienites had their counterparts in the industrial districts. But in the north the main preoccupation of the workers was neither with Parliamentary Reform nor with the idea of proletarian revolution, but with the immediate struggle against economic oppression. In Lancashire and Yorkshire the two outstanding issues were resistance to the new Poor Law of 1834, which was meant to outlaw relief payments to the able-bodied, and the demand for Factory Reform. The leaders in these crusades were Radical employers such as John Fielden, Radical-Tory Evangelicals such as Richard Oastler, Radical Dissenting preachers such as Joseph Rayner Stephens. None of these was in any sense of the word a Socialist. Fielden was a big-hearted, self-made mill-owner, who hated oppression and centralisation, and espoused with equal zeal the cause of the factory children and of their parents. Oastler was an ardent upholder of 'Throne, Church, and Home', a great hater of Whig capitalists and of all sorts of money-grubbers, a devoted adherent of the children's cause, and a denouncer of industrialism as destructive of family life and responsibility. Stephens was a fiery orator, who maintained the people's right to seize the means of decent living if the law and the rich denied it them. None of them had a constructive social theory, unless we count as one Oastler's harking back to the 'good old times' — which was reminiscent of Cobbett.

To these leaders, and to others like them, was added from 1837 the torrential eloquence of the Irishman, Feargus O'Connor, and the widespread influence of his journal, *The Northern Star*. Round him gathered, too, what was left of the broken Yorkshire Trades Union, with its traditions of secrecy and of bitter struggle with the employers who sought to destroy it by refusing to employ its members. Fierce conflicts attended the introduction of the New Poor Law into the North, when it was seriously set about in 1837; and there were also great differences over the campaign for Factory Reform, between those who accepted Lord Shaftesbury's leadership and were prepared to work in peaceable fashion with such progressive employers and politicians as would help them, and those who

held that nothing worth while could be achieved save by the workers' own efforts. The second of these groups rallied to a man round O'Connor and *The Northern Star*, and became Chartists without forsaking their allegiance to Oastler and Stephens on the even more pressing issue of resistance to the new Boards of Guardians, which were abolishing their right to unemployment relief from the rates and were condemning them to incarceration and segregation of the sexes in the new workhouses, nicknamed 'Bastilles'.

O'Connor, who had begun his political career as an Irish M.P. under O'Connell's leadership, was not a Socialist, but an advocate of peasant proprietorship. Like Owen and Fourier and many others, he had a great belief in the productivity of the soil under intensive cultivation; but his ideal was the individual, owner-occupied, peasant holding. He disliked industrialism and wanted to find means of resettling the unemployed on the land, claiming that one effect would be to raise industrial wages by reducing the competition for employment. He advanced this case in his book, *The Management of Small Farms*, as well as in countless speeches and articles. He was opposed to Owenism because of its proposals for collective cultivation; but he was soon to come into direct competition with the Owenites in collecting money for the promotion of agricultural settlements. O'Connor, as well as Owen, wished to found, and did actually found, land colonies — Charterville, O'Connorville, and others. But the Chartist land colonies were simply aggregations of individual farm holdings on land collectively bought in order to be resold by instalments to the individual settlers.

The Chartist Land Scheme, however, did not begin until the middle 'forties. During the earlier stages of Chartism O'Connor was concentrating, like the other Chartist leaders, on the purely political demand for the People's Charter, but was reinforcing this demand with energetic exposition of economic and social grievances, in language that caught the attention of the main bodies of workers in the factory and mining districts much more than the Charter by itself could have done. O'Connor indeed ran away with the Charter, to the disgust of Lovett and his friends, who were scornful of his demagoguery and even a little frightened of the potentially revolu-

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tionary monster he was calling up. He scared the men of Birmingham, who followed Attwood, even more — scared all those who were hoping for a peaceful change, in working for which a large section of the middle classes could be persuaded, out of dislike for the continued ascendancy of the old governing classes, to act with the workers. These advocates of 'class-collaboration' saw O'Connor as the most formidable obstacle in their way; for the fears which he conjured up drove more and more of the middle classes into acceptance of things as they were.

For the time being, however, these deep-seated differences were partly submerged in the united demand for the Charter, which postponed the following up of divergent ideas both about economic and social objectives and about the means by which the Charter itself was to be won. It had been agreed, in the first instance, to concentrate on collecting signatures to a monster petition for presentation to Parliament. What was to be done further, if Parliament rejected the petition, was left over for discussion at a future time.

Thus, in 1838, there rallied round the People's Charter the opponents of the new Poor Law, the advocates of factory reform, and all the discontented in the towns and industrial districts, as well as the convinced Radicals, Republicans, and 'Socialists' of various brands, except a section of the Owenites and Fourierists, who maintained their distrust of political action, and went their own ways. (The movement gained added force on account of prolonged industrial depression, which began in the later 'thirties and continued into the 'Hungry 'Forties'.) A movement of this sort, resting on economic distress but lacking any definite economic programme, was not likely to possess any clear theoretical foundations, nor did it find any coherent theoretical leader. It divided itself, as soon as Parliament had shown that it had no intention of accepting the Charter, into rival factions of 'physical force' and 'moral force' Chartists, with still larger groups in between, which swung to and fro between the advocates of the rival methods. At one extreme, a considerable body of supporters of the Charter thought of the demand for it as essentially the extension of the successful campaign for political reform which had led up to the Act of 1832. These groups looked forward

to the achievement of manhood suffrage through an essentially political and probably protracted agitation of much the same type as that of the years between 1830 and 1832. At the other extreme, a considerable group of Radical Republicans and ex-Trades Unionists denied the possibility of the 'reformed' middle-class Parliament further reforming itself in such a way as to involve an abdication by the middle class of the power which they had gained in 1832, and looked forward to open revolt, or at the least to some sort of 'Grand National Holiday' or General Strike, as the only possible way of enforcing the enfranchisement of the working classes or securing the economic changes they demanded. Between these two groups hovered the main body of active supporters of the Charter, conscious of their weakness in face of the armed force commanded by their opponents, but doubtful whether purely constitutional agitation could be effective in securing reform. Always, I think, among both leaders and followers over the country as a whole, 'moral force' Chartists considerably outnumbered the out-and-out advocates of 'physical force'; and those who appeared to advocate 'physical force' were in reality divided between those who actually meant it to the extent, if necessary, of armed revolt, and those who hoped to be able to bluff Parliament into further concessions by a show of force which would never be really exercised — at any rate to a greater extent than it had been at Bristol and at Nottingham during the earlier Reform struggle.

In such an atmosphere, differences about the new society which would be ushered in when the People's Charter had become the law of the land were naturally played down, for the object of the Chartist leaders was to get the supporters of rival social theories to sink their differences and unite behind the common demand for the Charter. The Owenite Trades Unionists and Co-operators, the strongest of the 'utopian' groups, were urged to join forces with the opponents of the new Poor Law, with the factory reformers, and with the Radical Republicans, and to postpone any attempt to put their own theories into practice until the Charter had been won. In effect, the mass following of the Chartists came from the opponents of the new Poor Law, from the factory reformers in the industrial areas, and from political Radicals in the towns, and the diversity

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of this support involved that there were many voices among the Chartist orators emphasising quite different grievances and schemes of social reorganisation, even though they were all calling upon the people to rally round the Charter.

After the rejection of the first National Petition and the break-up of the first Chartist National Convention in 1839 all these groups were never reunited. The advocates of collaboration between the middle and working classes either dropped away or threw their energies into Joseph Sturge's Complete Suffrage Union, which had close links with the more advanced members of the Anti-Corn Law League. Many devoted themselves entirely to the League, in the belief that agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws offered much better prospects of early success than agitation for a wider franchise — for which they believed it would prepare the way. Lovett and his friends, bitterly hostile to O'Connor's ascendancy and accusing him of having first incited and then betrayed the Newport rebels, tried to act with the Sturgeites, but were not prepared to abandon the name of the People's Charter — a concession on which many of the middle-class Reformers insisted because of the disrepute into which it had fallen after the successive fiascos of the 'Sacred Month' and the Newport Rising. When the attempt at joint action with the Complete Suffragists had broken down on this issue, Lovett himself withdrew into purely educational activity, conducted through his National Association for Promoting the Political and Social Improvement of the People, though he also continued to take an interest in the maintenance of contacts with foreign Radical and working-class movements. The group that had formed the London Working Men's Association dissolved; and in Birmingham the retirement of Thomas Attwood left the Birmingham Political Union leaderless and without a policy. The Scottish Chartists were divided: the larger groups became the arena of a battle waged between a left wing which threw in its lot with O'Connor and a strong 'moral force' section which tended to become isolated from the English Chartists.

As the Chartist leaders, who had mostly been imprisoned for fairly short periods late in 1839 and early in 1840, emerged one by one from gaol, it became clear that the chieftainship of the main body of those who held together was falling into

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O'Connor's hands. The National Charter Association, formed in 1840 while he was still a prisoner, speedily accepted his leadership after his release the following year, and was gradually induced to stake its fortunes on his projects of land settlement. The Chartist Land Scheme was not actually launched until 1843, after the rejection of the second great National Petition of 1842 and the defeat of the widespread strikes of that year. But it was already foreshadowed in 1841, when O'Connor, bitterly hostile to the Whigs and to the Anti-Corn Law League, urged the Chartists to cast such electoral influence as they had on the Tory side. This caused a rupture between O'Connor and O'Brien, who had been working closely together. O'Brien urged the Chartists to keep clear equally of Whigs and Tories, and to concentrate on independent propaganda till they became strong enough to make short work of both. But O'Brien also rallied to the Sturgeites, and thus broke with the main body of Chartists. He had thrown over his revolutionary ideas, and in the programme he put forward as candidate for Newcastle upon Tyne in 1841, repudiated confiscation of property and demanded a revision of the property laws by parliamentary action, with compensation to anyone who might need in the national interest to be dispossessed. O'Brien at this stage was not advocating any general system of public ownership, even of essential industries, as he did later. His main economic proposals were for drastic taxation of the rich and for the establishment of a National Bank under public ownership for the financing of productive enterprise.

From 1840 to 1842 the National Charter Association put its main energies into organising the second National Petition, which was in fact signed by many more persons than the first. Indeed, despite all the divisions in the ranks, the Chartist movement under O'Connor's leadership undoubtedly commanded in 1842 a wider body of support than ever before, at any rate among the working classes. In this it was greatly helped by the severe depression of trade, which reached its lowest point in 1842, when mass-strikes spread over most of the industrial districts in despairing resistance to the worsening of industrial conditions. The Chartist leaders certainly did not provoke these strikes, which indeed took them by surprise. O'Connor, at first, even denounced them as deliberately pro-



voked by the employers in the interests of the Anti-Corn Law League, till, finding that his followers were deeply involved in the strike movement, he joined in the attempt to turn what was essentially industrial action, based on hunger, into a general strike for the People's Charter.

Whatever their objects, the strikes of 1842 were doomed to defeat, unless they turned into a revolution ; and the Chartists had no belief, after the experiences of 1839, in their power to wage a successful revolutionary war. Hunger drove the strikers back to work, where they could get it ; and in face of this second reverse the Chartist movement began seriously to lose ground. It was at this stage that O'Connor, reversing his previous policy, urged his followers to attend the National Conference called by the Complete Suffrage Union for December 1842 and to try to come to terms with the Sturgeites. The attempt foundered when the Conference voted for the name as well as the substance of the Charter, and the Sturgeites withdrew. O'Connor then turned to his projects of land reform, and swung what remained of his following into the Land Scheme, which absorbed most of their money and energy during the next few years. This led to further quarrels and secessions, especially as the National Land Company which O'Connor had organised got further and further into financial chaos. By 1848 charges of corruption as well as of incompetence were being flung freely to and fro among the Chartists ; and presently a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry, while clearing O'Connor of the charge of corruption, declared the whole scheme unlawful as well as economically unsound, and ordered it to be wound up. In the meantime, in 1847, O'Connor had been elected to Parliament for Nottingham ; and he continued to command a large working-class following, and, on the collapse of the Land Scheme, returned to the demand for the Charter, which had fallen a good deal into the background since 1842. The year 1848, with its succession of Revolutions over a large part of Europe, had reanimated the waning hopes of the Chartist groups ; and the National Charter Association set about organising a third National Petition and again considering 'ulterior measures' should Parliament presume to reject it. There was, however, this time no prospect of a widespread strike movement which the Chartists could hope to

make use of for their own purposes ; and the National Charter Association was really without any policy. The great demonstration which it organised on Kennington Common in April to present the Petition was easily held in check by the Government, the aged Duke of Wellington being called in to organise the defence against the threat of mass-disturbance. A few small left-wing groups, without any coherent leadership, laid plots for a revolutionary uprising, but, realising their own weakness, made no move. The National Assembly of delegates which had been called together to consider further action, dispersed with nothing done : Chartism's weakness was the more startlingly exposed because of the undue fears that had been aroused. Never again after 1848 was it to wear even the appearance of a national movement commanding mass support.

It was, however, in the aftermath of this irretrievable defeat that the Chartist movement — or what was left of it — took on a more socialistic character. After 1848 there were left two main groups still active — the reorganised National Charter Association, in which the leading influence was passing from O'Connor to his former lieutenant, Ernest Jones, and to George Julian Harney, and the new movement founded by Bronterre O'Brien under the name of the National Reform League. These both drew their support almost entirely from the working classes : the middle-class Radicals had drawn right away and were reorganising their forces round a Parliamentary and Financial Reform Association led by Sir Joshua Walmsley and Joseph Hume, whose 'Little Charter', with its demand for Household instead of Manhood Suffrage, took away some working-class support. Jones and Harney, at the other extreme, came into close association with Karl Marx and the group of foreign exiles who had been associated with him in issuing the *Communist Manifesto* early in 1848. Through these contacts, the Jones-Harney wing of the movement developed a strongly internationalist attitude — which indeed had been present in Harney's thought from the beginning. The Chartist left, released from O'Connor's domination, came to consider itself much more as the British wing of an international revolutionary movement and to take much more notice of continental Socialist and Communist ideas. The Society of Fraternal Democrats, which had been started in 1846 to bring together the English

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leaders and the various groups of foreign exiles in London, was naturally stimulated by the European events of 1848, and by Marx's influence. It seemed as if the establishment of some sort of Workers' International were imminent; but as the continental revolutions went down one after another to defeat, the movement gradually melted away, leaving only a faithful few to continue the struggle. Presently Harney, who had been for a time Marx's 'white-headed boy', fell into disgrace with him, chiefly because, instead of giving full support to Marx's views, he insisted on hobnobbing with every sort of continental revolutionary, including many with whom Marx was in bitter dispute. Ernest Jones then became the outstanding leader of the Chartist left wing. For ten years after 1848 he made one effort after another to keep the dwindling movement alive, especially by attempts to rally the support of the Trade Unions, which for the most part disregarded his overtures. Finally towards the end of the 'fifties even Jones despaired of the conversion of the British working class to the intransigent gospel of Marxism, and, much to Marx's disgust, went over to the attempt to promote a new united movement of the working and middle classes—a movement which was to achieve partial success in the Reform Act of 1867. Harney, meanwhile, had shaken the dust of England from his feet in the middle 'fifties and had settled in the Channel Islands, where he had common cause with the French exiles, headed by Victor Hugo, who had settled there.

The Socialism of Ernest Jones, as it developed after 1848, was in its essentials that of Marx. Its central dogma was that of the class-struggle as the necessary form of social development; and with this went an insistence on the doctrine of surplus value and on the historical tendency towards the concentration of capital. Jones attached great importance to Trade Unionism as an instrument for organising the workers for the class-struggle and for developing their consciousness of class-unity; and he always thought of the Unions as needing strong political leadership to widen their outlook and to convert them into auxiliaries of an essentially political warfare against capitalism. But Jones continued to think largely in terms of agrarian rather than of industrial Socialism—at any rate for some time after 1848. The experience of the Chartist

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Land Scheme had taught him the inadequacy of voluntary action as a means to settling workers on the land ; and this led him in the 'fifties to ardent advocacy of land nationalisation. He wanted a reformed State based on universal suffrage to buy the land, or acquire it by confiscation, and to settle the surplus urban workers upon it in Home Colonies, which he still envisaged as made up of individual cultivators. Under Marx's influence and through his contacts with such Trade Unionists as would listen to him, he became, in the 'fifties, more industrially minded ; and his settlement in Manchester did much to change his point of view during the last ten years of his life. This, however, instead of drawing him closer to Marxism, led to the gradual abandonment of his revolutionary attitude. In the 'forties and 'fifties he had always been proud to proclaim himself as belonging to the 'physical force' school of Chartism. He welcomed the *Communist Manifesto* as giving a clear theoretical formulation of revolutionary ideas which he had already accepted by instinct. But he was never really at home with the deterministic philosophy of Marxism, even while he believed himself to be an out-and-out exponent of it. Poet and idealistic romance-writer, immensely devoted and regardless of self, he fought on through all set-backs with a faithfulness that won him in the end universal respect. Marx continued to respect him even after he had broken away from his influence and gone over, in the light of his experience, to the view that the workers would need to win the suffrage with middle-class aid, by reform and not by the revolution on which he had set his hopes.

It was Harney, and not Ernest Jones, who published, in 1850, the first English translation of the *Communist Manifesto*. It appeared in his *Red Republican*, which he had been conducting side by side with his less flamboyant *Democratic Review*. Harney had then just broken with O'Connor, and renounced his connection with *The Northern Star*. The *Red Republican* was meant definitely to become the organ of the international revolutionary movement which had broken into flame in 1848. In 1850 Harney and the Fraternal Democrats had joined hands with Marx's group and with the followers of Blanqui in forming in London the Universal League of Revolutionary Communists, which had proclaimed the 'dictatorship of the pro-

letariat' and the 'permanent revolution'—by which latter was meant the continuance of revolutionary effort right up to the realisation of full Communism, as 'the final form of organisation of human society'. Thus Harney was well in at the birth of Communism as an international revolutionary movement; but it was not long before he was plunged into a fierce struggle for the leadership of left-wing Chartism with Ernest Jones, whom Marx supported against him. Harney, though a revolutionary, was never really a follower of Marx. He was no theorist, and was quite unable to follow the internal quarrels between Marxists, Blanquists, followers of Louis Blanc, and all the other continental revolutionary and Socialist groups. He wanted to be friends with them all, and to get them all to join hands in a single movement animated by the spirit of republican fraternity. He thought Marx egotistic and intolerant: Marx thought him a flamboyant ass. Jones, with much greater capacity for hard work and organisation, soon pushed him aside.

The remaining Chartist leader who survived to count for something after 1848 was Bronterre O'Brien, who might have counted for a great deal more if he had been able to keep off the drink. O'Brien, after 1848, set to work to gather together the less revolutionary elements of Chartism under the banner of a National Reform League with a programme designed to bring in the followers of Robert Owen and of other 'utopian' Socialist Schools, as well as those political Reformers who aimed at constitutional agitation rather than at a revolutionary uprising. O'Brien, as we have seen, had belonged earlier to the 'physical force' section of Chartism and had been the means of introducing the knowledge of Babeuf's doctrines in England by his annotated translation of Buonarroti's book. He had become for a time the close associate of O'Connor, but had broken with him over the question of collaboration with Sturge's Complete Suffrage Union. He had attacked O'Connor's Land Scheme as doomed to failure and as destined to put the unfortunate settlers into bondage to the usurers. In 1848 he had strongly opposed the insurrectionary plans favoured by many of the delegates to the Chartist Convention, from which he had resigned in protest. He made his next appearance in 1849, when he published in *Reynolds' Political*

*Instructor* — the direct ancestor of the *Reynolds* of to-day — the opening section of his book on *The Rise, Progress and Phases of Human Slavery*, which he never finished. This work is important because of the parallel drawn in it (before the *Communist Manifesto* had been published in English) between ancient chattel-slavery and modern wage-slavery. 'What are called the "Working Classes" are the slave populations of civilised countries.' This modern form of slavery could be ended only by a social convulsion which might take the form either of violent revolution or of peaceful reformation — he hoped the latter. 'The amazing revolution which has lately taken place in the arts and sciences, as applicable to the purposes of human economy, ought naturally to give birth to another revolution of a kindred quality in the political and social mechanism of society.' Here, surely, is an echo of Saint-Simon.

G. W. M. Reynolds and the Owenite propagandist, Lloyd Jones, who was also associated with the Co-operative activities set on foot by the Christian Socialists, joined forces with O'Brien in 1850 to form the National Reform League, which put forward a seven (or sometimes eight) point programme as a means of reconciling the rival Chartist groups. At one stage this programme was endorsed both by the National Charter Association and by the Fraternal Democrats; and *Reynolds' Newspaper* became the mouthpiece of the movement. But connections with the National Charter Association were soon severed after a quarrel between O'Brien and Jones; and after 1855 O'Brien dropped out of political activity and spent his last years writing political poetry and a *Dissertation on Robespierre*. The National Reform League came to nothing, though *Reynolds' Newspaper* survived to carry on some of its founder's ideas.

The *Propositions of the National Reform League* were the nearest thing Chartism produced to a concrete political programme. They owed much to the French Socialism of the 1840s, and were a remarkable adumbration of the Socialist programmes of the revival period of the 1880s. They began with a demand for poor-law reform, and for the provision of work or maintenance at fair conditions, to be financed by means of a centralised system of equal rating. Next they demanded State purchase of land and the settlement on it of unemployed

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workers, either in Co-operative communities of the Owenite kind or in O'Connorite Land Colonies, freedom being left to the individual to choose between the two. Thirdly, they required the scaling down of the National Debt in proportion to the fall in prices since the Napoleonic Wars — Cobbett's 'equitable adjustment' — and the extinction of the remainder of the Debt by means of a tax on property. Fourthly, they advocated the gradual nationalisation of the land, including minerals and mines, and also of fisheries, and the use of the resources thus secured to meet the costs of government, to 'execute all needful public works', and to establish a system of public education. Fifthly, there was to be a new monetary system, 'based on real consumable wealth and not upon the variable and uncertain amount of scarce metals' — Attwood's old remedy — and sixthly a system of public credit for the encouragement both of Co-operative societies of producers and of small-scale enterprise. Seventhly, the League demanded the establishment everywhere of Labour Exchanges, at which the products of the various trades could be exchanged at values 'either upon a corn or a labour standard', so gradually to displace 'the present reckless system of competitive trading and shopkeeping'. Eighthly, at a subsequent stage railways, canals, bridges, docks, waterworks, and other utility services were to be transferred to public ownership. In addition, some versions of the programme expanded the educational demands into a proposal for free, national compulsory schooling, and contained provisions for a drastic revision of the penal code and of the prison system, and for curtailment of expenditure on the armed forces.

At the end of this far-reaching programme came an additional clause embracing Robert Owen's views on 'Rational Religion', and an announcement of the National Reform League's readiness to co-operate with the Owenite Rational Society in forming a 'National Rational League' to carry on propaganda on behalf of a combined programme.

O'Brien's propositions were obviously something of an *omnium gatherum*. But they mark a significant stage in the transition from utopian Socialism to the formulation of an evolutionary Socialist programme to be worked for by conquest, rather than overthrow, of the existing State. For the time

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being, nothing came of them. The National Reform League soon melted away when O'Brien retired from active propaganda, and such working-class Chartists as were left continued for the most part to support Ernest Jones and the declining National Charter Association in preference to O'Brien. When the N.C.A. flickered out towards the end of the 'fifties, and Jones himself turned away to the building of a new Reform movement on constitutional lines, British Socialism to all intents and purposes disappeared. There was a faint revival under the influence of Marx's International Working Men's Association in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies; but it was transient. Nothing much happened till Hyndman established the Democratic Federation in 1881, and O'Brien's ideas came back only when the Independent Labour movement got into action after 1889.

Why was there so little Socialism in the Chartist movement? Or rather, why did the Socialists in it have so little influence and find what they had slipping away from them even in the 'Hungry Forties'? It was partly because Great Britain was already in enjoyment of constitutional, though not of democratically chosen, government: so that there could be no revolutionary alliance between those who wanted constitutional government and those who wanted democracy, or the 'rights of man', as well. It was also partly because Great Britain was already an advanced capitalist country, in which the capitalists, though they still left government largely to aristocrats, were in a position to insist on affairs being managed to suit their interests, and because capitalism was a rapidly expanding system which had by no means reached the limit of its powers. No doubt, the industrial capitalists grossly exploited the bulk of the factory and mining workers; but the system also provided expanding opportunities for a minority of skilled workers, supervisors, and small masters and, on the whole, tended to yield a rising standard of life. Moreover, the bulk of the British industrial proletariat was not in London, but scattered over a wide area in the North and Midlands. London could not be a revolutionary centre at all like Paris; and the British capitalist class, consisting largely of new, 'self-made' men, was also diffused and constituted much less a narrow financial oligarchy than the Parisian bankers and merchant-capitalists.



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This made capitalism much stronger, and much less exposed to a revolutionary *coup*: it made the Government less vulnerable to *émeutes*, which occurred mainly in areas remote from the capital.

Yet Great Britain, through Owen, through the anti-capitalist economists, and through such men as Spence and Benbow and 'Senex' of James Morison's *Pioneer*, did make a quite substantial contribution to the development of Socialist thought. The significant thing is that these ideas were losing their appeal in the 1840s, whereas on the Continent Socialism during that decade was a rapidly growing force. European Socialism suffered a very great set-back after 1848, as a consequence of the defeat of the mainly *bourgeois* revolutions of that year. In Great Britain, on the other hand, Socialism declined *before* 1848, not because it shared in a *bourgeois* defeat, but because it was robbed of its appeal by a *bourgeois* advance.

The Chartist movement, then, produced no Socialist theory of its own — only echoes of Owen, of Louis Blanc, and of Karl Marx to which the workers, for the most part, failed to listen. Attempts have been made to build up Ernest Jones into a major Socialist thinker, but he was nothing of the sort. O'Brien has greater intellectual claims; but he too did little beyond echoing other men's ideas. No one even pretends that Harney was much of a thinker. O'Connor for a time caught the attention of a large section of the working classes; but he told them little that could help them and nothing that can be called Socialist even in the widest sense.

## BLANQUI AND BLANQUISM

THE foregoing accounts of Owenism and Chartism have involved carrying the history of British Socialist ideas a long way forward beyond the point reached in the account of developments among continental Socialists ; and it has been impossible to avoid referring in them to a number of later developments — such as Marxism and the French Socialist conceptions of the 1840s. We must now turn back to pick up where we left it the story of French Socialism and to outline the beginnings of Socialism in Germany and among the German exiles. In this chapter we shall be dealing with one aspect of the French Socialist movement of the 1830s and 1840s ; but it will again be necessary to run ahead of the general narrative in order to give as clear as possible a picture of the type of Socialism represented by that extraordinary revolutionary figure, Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881).

Auguste Blanqui was the son of an old revolutionary who had sided with the Girondins and had subsequently made his peace with Napoleon and become a sub-prefect. The Restoration of 1815 had ended his official career and left him dependent on his wife, who inherited a small estate. Mme Blanqui was a woman of violent temper ; and Auguste, largely in order to get him away from her, was sent to Paris as a student and there joined the Carbonari at the age of 16. He took part in the Revolution of 1830, and was wounded. He was then serving as a journalist on Pierre Leroux's *Globe*.

We have seen how troublous were the years which immediately followed the accession of Louis-Philippe. The revolts of the Lyons weavers in 1831 and 1834 ; the Republican uprisings in Paris in 1832 and 1834 ; and many further troubles during the remainder of the decade showed how deep and widespread were Republican and working-class unrest under the '*bourgeois* monarchy'. There arose in Paris after 1830 a

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host of Republican societies which demanded that the tradition of the Great Revolution in its early years should be recovered and made the basis for a further advance. At first, the most influential of these bodies was La Société des Amis du Peuple led by Godefroy Cavaignac, brother of the General Cavaignac, later known as 'the butcher of the days of June'. Blanqui joined this society, and was engaged in revolutionary plottings even before the Paris rising of 1832. He was sentenced in that year to a year's imprisonment for his writings: at the first of his two trials, asked his profession, he answered that he was a 'proletarian' — an evident echo of Babeuf. In 1834 he was again prosecuted, but was acquitted, and soon plunged again into conspiracy. The Amis du Peuple had broken up; but in 1835 he and Armand Barbès organised a new, underground Republican society, called La Société des Familles from its secret structure based on small groups. The Familles at once set to work to prepare for an insurrection, establishing their own small factories for powder and cartridges in the heart of Paris. These were soon discovered by the police, and Blanqui and his fellow-leaders were again arrested and gaoled. They were released the following year (1837) under a general amnesty, and promptly resumed their plotting. The Familles were replaced by a new body, La Société des Saisons, organised in a hierarchy of groups under leaders called after the days of the week, the month, and the seasons of the year. The membership was a mixture of students and workmen, the latter predominating. By this time Blanqui's agitation was breaking away from the older Republican traditions, and was becoming more definitely working-class. It set to work to reborn the soldiers.

In 1839 Blanqui decided that the hour of insurrection had arrived. Police agents played their part in provoking the *émeute*. In May of that year about six hundred men under his leadership rose in revolt. They found arms by capturing the shops of some gunsmiths, and set out to seize the police headquarters. Beaten off, they took possession of a local Town Hall; but it was already evident that their position was hopeless. They had expected to be joined by large bodies of workers as soon as they raised the standard of revolt; but nothing happened. The Government soon collected enough

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forces to defeat the rebels: Armand Barbès, at that time Blanqui's closest associate, was wounded and taken prisoner with a number of others. The rest fled, and most of the leaders were soon under arrest. Blanqui evaded capture for a few months, but was then taken. He and Barbès were sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Blanqui, with a number of others, was sent to the island fortress prison of Mont-Saint-Michel. There he remained until 1844, when, his health having broken down, he was removed to a prison hospital in Tours. The doctors having announced his death as imminent, he was pardoned, but refused to accept the Government's clemency. In any case, he was not well enough to leave the hospital, where he remained till 1847. His wife had died in 1841, while he was at Mont-Saint-Michel. In 1847 he left Tours at last, and was recuperating at Blois, as a free man, when the Revolution of 1848 broke out.

— Blanqui at once went to Paris, and endeavoured to resume his position as a Republican leader. He soon built up a following; but he and Barbès had quarrelled over their respective parts in the rising of 1839, and were now enemies leading rival revolutionary factions — Blanqui the Central Republican Society, and Barbès the Club of the Revolution. Both Barbès and Blanqui at this stage opposed the hot-heads who demanded an immediate further rising to overthrow the Provisional Government of the Republic — not because they liked the Government, which they regarded as disastrously moderate and dominated by *bourgeois*, but because they both knew that a rising would be bound to fail. Even if Paris could be conquered, the provinces, said Blanqui, would overthrow the revolutionaries. This attitude cost him some supporters; and he lost more when a newspaper published a document, alleged to have been found among the archives of the monarchy, in which he was made to figure as a police spy. The original of this alleged writing of his was never produced: the whole thing was almost certainly a forgery. But Barbès took sides against him, and many believed the story. Still, he continued to have a substantial following; and the Central Republican Society was widely regarded among the moderates as the most dangerous of all the revolutionary clubs. Barbès's Club of the Revolution was much more moderate, and in much closer

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touch with the more advanced members of the Government and of the Constituent Assembly.)

Blanqui's principal object at this time was to prevent the Provisional Government from holding an immediate national election, which he knew would result in a reactionary majority throughout the provinces, and would involve a transfer of power from the Paris workers to the *bourgeoisie*. Instead, he wanted the Provisional Government to remain in power, and proposed that it should be subjected to continual pressure from the Republican left wing to carry the Revolution further. Blanqui never believed in general elections as a means of determining the democratic will. He argued that a people long subjected to the control of reactionary forces could not be expected to vote for real freedom, and that political democracy could mean nothing until it had been led up to by a long process of education in the ideas of true liberty. He called himself a 'Communist', but contended that Communism could be brought into existence only by stages, as the people became ready for it under the influence of this education in true Republican ideas. Accordingly, he regarded a period of dictatorship as indispensable for the carrying through of this educational process, which he envisaged as requiring a ruthless attack on the Church, as the fount of false social doctrine.

(In 1848 Blanqui was prepared to uphold the Provisional Government, while subjecting it to continual pressure from the left-wing societies and working-class groups. But this did not mean that he had given up the idea of further revolution — merely that he wished to bide his time.) His idea continued to be that of a seizure of power by a *coup d'état*, organised by a minority of disciplined revolutionaries, trained in arms and prepared to use them. In his successive societies, he refused to accept all comers: he aimed at creating, not a mass party, but a relatively small revolutionary *élite* of picked men. These, he believed, if the right moment were chosen, when discontent was rife, would be able to assume the effective leadership of the workers, to guide the Trade Unions and other working-class bodies along the right revolutionary course, and gradually, by way of dictatorship, to lay the foundations of the new society.

Blanqui was prepared to wait; but other leaders were not. In May occurred the *émeute*, unprepared, planless, and perhaps

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deliberately provoked, which made an end of the revolutionary clubs and put the *bourgeois* leaders of the Republic out of their fears of the working classes. It began with a demonstration in favour of French intervention on behalf of Poland against Germany and Prussia. Against the wishes of both Blanqui and Barbès a number of the clubs organised a procession to present a petition on this matter to the Assembly. Blanqui, unable to prevent this — for his own society rejected his advice — decided to take part in the affair: Barbès and his followers refused. The demonstration got out of hand and invaded the session of the Assembly, despite the attempts of police and soldiers to keep it in check. Barbès and Blanqui both delivered speeches supporting the popular demands, but recommending the demonstrators to disperse. They were swept aside. Upon this Blanqui withdrew; but Barbès suddenly changed front. Convinced by the demeanour of the crowd that it was ready for revolution, he led a part of it to the Hôtel de Ville, where he and other leaders proclaimed the dissolution of the Provisional Government and the formation of a new one consisting of Socialists and workers' delegates. They were arrested in the very act of making this proclamation, without armed resistance. The arrest of Blanqui and of many others followed; the clubs were dissolved by decree, and the way was prepared for the 'days of June' and for the subsequent destruction of the new-born Republic at the hands of Louis Napoléon.

For his part, such as it was, in this abortive *coup*, Blanqui, after some months awaiting trial, was sentenced to ten years' detention. He was in prison till 1859, but was this time allowed books and paper, and spent his time in study and writing. Then, released, he set to work yet again to organise secret revolutionary societies. He was arrested again in 1861, and sent to prison for four years. In 1864 he escaped to Belgium, and from that refuge resumed his plots. As discontents multiplied during the latter years of the empire of Napoleon III, his influence increased, and his new secret societies gained a considerable following. He built up a secret revolutionary army on a larger scale than ever before, and did this in the main without the police discovering his proceedings. From time to time he visited Paris undetected and reanimated

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his followers. He was getting ready for a *coup* when the Franco-Prussian War broke out. He then left Brussels for Paris, and attempted a rising, which was abortive, but was called off in time to leave the main body of his followers intact. They took part in the further, more popular uprising which followed Napoleon's surrender at Sedan.

In face of the national defeat Blanqui now appeared in the new guise of a patriotic Frenchman. His new journal, *La Patrie en danger*, demanded a national rally to the defence of the country against the Germans, who speedily revealed themselves as the allies of reaction in France. But he was soon back in his revolutionary rôle. In October 1870 he joined forces with Flourens and a section of the Paris National Guard to overthrow the Government, and to put a new one, dominated by the workers, in its place. A new Government was proclaimed; but the old one rallied its forces, and the revolt collapsed. Flourens came to terms with the Government forces, on condition that there should be new elections and no prosecutions of those who had attempted its overthrow. The terms were not observed; a fresh attempt at a rising failed.

At this point Blanqui's health again broke down, and he left Paris to recuperate in the country. In his absence he was condemned to death by a court-martial for his part in the recent risings. He was arrested in the provinces, and lay in prison throughout the Paris Commune. The Communards vainly offered to exchange him with the Government of Thiers for the Archbishop of Paris and other prisoners they held; Thiers refused. In 1872 Blanqui was sentenced by a civil court to life imprisonment, and he remained a prisoner until in 1879 the Republicans of Bordeaux elected him to the Chamber of Deputies. His election was disallowed; but he was released and allowed to stand again. On this second occasion his denunciations of the right-wing Republicans alienated enough support to ensure his defeat. He returned to Paris and resumed his propaganda, founding a journal entitled *Ni Dieu ni maître*; but in December 1880, worn out with addressing meetings, he collapsed. He died a few days later, on New Year's Day, 1881. He belonged already to a past age; and of his seventy-six years he had spent a full thirty-three in

prison. His party had been reorganised in London after 1871 as La Commune Révolutionnaire, under Émile Eudes ; and the London group maintained connections with underground groups in France until the amnesty of 1880 allowed the movement to come out again into the open. It became the Central Revolutionary Committee, and later the Revolutionary Socialist Party, led by Édouard Vaillant, who had been one of the leading figures in the Paris Commune. This Blanquist party lasted until 1905, when it joined the amalgamation of French Socialism in the Parti Socialiste Unifié.

Blanqui was always essentially an insurrectionary leader and the exponent of a theory of revolutionary dictatorship, the general notion of which he derived largely from Babeuf and Buonarroti but made a good deal more explicit than they had done. His fundamental belief was in the efficacy of a small highly disciplined armed party organised for revolution and destined to establish a dictatorship which would control the education of the people with a view to the introduction of the new social system of Communism. He had no belief in a mass party — the point on which his view of proletarian dictatorship differed essentially from Marx's. At the same time he was highly scornful of Utopian Socialists and of any attempt to plan in advance the details of the new social order. 'Communism', he said, referring to Cabet's projects, 'is not an egg hatched in a corner of the human race, by a bird with two legs, no wings and no feathers'. He was also highly scornful of parliamentarians and of their notions of parliamentary democracy. He did not believe that any constructive work for the new society could be done in advance of the establishment of a revolutionary dictatorship, or that Communist society could be successfully established by force, until the workers were ready for it : nor had he any use for Proudhon's mutualist notions, or very much for Trade Unions, unless they could be brought under revolutionary leadership. He was almost a pure insurrectionist, and was the leading exponent of the doctrine of the *minorité consciente*, which was later to play an important part in French Syndicalist theory. He held that it was futile to attempt to predict, save in the broadest terms, what would happen after the revolution ; for this must depend on the will of the people as it would develop under the



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influence of a political structure which had outlawed priests and deprived capitalism of its power. Immediately after the dictatorship, he wished orders to be issued to all employers that they must continue production and dismiss nobody, awaiting such further commands as the revolutionary Government might give them.

In so far as he had any vision of the future organisation of society he looked forward to the reorganisation of industry on a basis of self-governing Co-operative associations and to a similar but slower process in agriculture. These associations, he thought, would in time entirely replace the State, which would disappear when the need for dictatorship was over. Fully as much as Marx he envisaged the entire problem of social change in terms of class power. He stated the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat much more clearly than Marx ever did — indeed, in many respects much more than Lenin did ; but, as we have seen, he differed from both in his hostility to the idea of a mass party and in his belief in a secret revolutionary army as the agent of change. Though he wrote an unfinished treatise on political economy, which was published in the collection of his writings brought together after his death under the title of *La Critique sociale*, there is not much in it of theoretical interest to the student of Socialism. Blanqui's economic doctrines were cast into the form of a critique of the orthodox economics of J.-B. Say and of Bastiat, much as the English Socialists, and later Marx, developed their doctrines as a critique of Ricardo. Blanqui's central idea is that of a continuous deficiency of purchasing power under capitalism, due to the exaction of interest by the capital-owner. This, he holds, involves the pricing of goods at more than the workers can afford to pay for them, with the consequence that the resources of production cannot be fully employed and the capitalists profit by the existence of a surplus of workers seeking jobs. (This was the view which Marx set out to combat by demonstrating that under capitalism goods did tend to sell on the average at not more than their values, and that capitalists made their profits by exploiting the workers as producers rather than by overcharging them as consumers. Capital, according to Blanqui, is 'labour stolen and suppressed' — *i.e.* abstracted from the producers' incomes. 'Without this retention of money

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the exchange of products would proceed on terms of parity without intermission, without those alternations of dead and live seasons, idleness and recovery, which bring into the social atmosphere the periodic convulsions of nature.' He also argued, like Marx, that the great capitalists were in process of crushing out the small, and attributed this to the fact that they had grasped the 'principle of association' more fully than either the small-scale employers or the workers. Association, he contended, is impotent without the support of political power. That is why the utopians and the mutualists, who attempt to begin construction of the new society before the revolution, are doomed to fail.

Blanqui also took issue with those who contended that the progress of society is from a primitive Communism through a series of struggles and changes to Communism in a fully developed form. Primitive societies, he urges, far from being communistic, are intensely individualistic. It is nonsense to speak of primitive societies as communistic simply because there is no individual ownership of land. 'It is like calling the existing nations communistic because they do not divide the sea into private estates.' Property in land arises only when land becomes scarce in relation to the number of people to be supported on it. In Blanqui's view the progress of society is from beginning to end a continuous development from individualism to Communism as the final goal. 'All social progress consists of communist innovations. Communism is simply the final form of association.'

Opposition to the notion of a mass party and insistence on that of minority dictatorship led in the 1860s to sharp antagonism between the followers of Blanqui and of Marx. The Blanquists refused to have anything to do with the International Working Men's Association, which they regarded as guilty of compromising with the Second Empire because the Trade Unions which composed its Paris Section accepted the conditions of qualified toleration conceded by Napoleon III in the hope of conciliating the workers. The French Section of the International was composed mainly, not of Blanquists, but of followers of Proudhon: the Marxists constituted only a small fraction. Yet, when the Paris Commune was proclaimed in 1871, with the Blanquists playing an important,

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though not the leading part, Marx and the International rallied to its defence and, in *The Civil War in France*, Marx treated it as the first practical achievement of the working class in the exercise of mass political power. This did not prevent the quarrel between Blanquists and Marxists from being resumed after the Commune had gone down to defeat, though its achievement ranked with both schools as a great landmark in the history of social revolution. By then Blanqui's own work was at an end. It is embodied much more in his life than in his writings, which are for the most part no more than jottings or fragments. As a writer, he lives mainly in a few epigrams ; and this chapter can fitly end with an example. 'Communism (*i.e.* that of Cabet) and Proudhonism stand by a river bank quarrelling whether the field on the other side is maize or wheat. Let us cross and see.'

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BLANQUI and Barbès both emerged from long years in prison only when the French Revolution of 1848 released them. During their incarceration, after the unsuccessful uprising of 1839, the Parisian workers had learnt to follow other leaders, of whom the most prominent was Louis Blanc (1811-82). Born in Spain, son of a French *émigré* and of a Spanish mother, Blanc came back to France at the Restoration, and in due course became a lawyer and a journalist. He edited first *Le Bon Sens* and then *La Revue du progrès* and, in 1839, published the book which established his name and provided the rallying cry for the main body of the Paris workers. It was called *Organisation du travail*. This first book already contained most of his essential ideas: it was followed by others in which he restated them without significant additions, though there were changes in his positive proposals. These later writings include *Le Socialisme: droit au travail* (1849), *Catéchisme des socialistes* (1849), and *Plus de Girondins* (1851). More important than these are his historical works dealing with French history from 1789 — *Histoire de dix ans* (1841-4), *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1847-62), and *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* (1870). The two last were written in England during his exile after the defeat of the 1848 Revolution. He also wrote extensively about contemporary British affairs, *Dix Ans de l'histoire de l'Angleterre* (collected 1879-81), *Letters on England* (1866). Blanc was greatly influenced in his later views by his long sojourn in England. Returning to France in 1870, he opposed the Paris Commune and ended his days as a mild social reforming deputy, acting usually with the Radicaux-Socialistes. He was indeed from first to last essentially a moderate and a strong disbeliever in the virtues of forcible revolution.

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Louis Blanc, in many of his main ideas, can fairly be regarded as a forerunner of modern democratic Socialism. Influenced by the Saint-Simonians, he assigned to the State the key position in economic planning and the development of welfare services. In his earliest writings he ardently advocated railway nationalisation as the starting-point for a general policy of public economic development. But, unlike many of the Saint-Simonians, he had a deep belief in representative democracy resting on universal suffrage. He looked to universal suffrage to transform the State into an instrument of progress and welfare, and, though he was unsparing in his attacks on capitalism and competition and in his exposures of the sufferings of the workers under the existing system, he was at the same time a determined opponent of the doctrine of class-war. Continually, he asserted against this doctrine that of the true 'solidarity' of the entire community, and appealed to men of good-will in all classes. Although he wanted to supersede capitalism, he hoped to achieve the change without revolution, and even largely by consent. He was under no delusion that the majority could be relied on to arrive at a right decision; but he believed in argument, rather than in force, as the means of social advance.

Blanc had a theory of history sharply opposed to that of Marx. He held that ideas made history and, as firmly as Condorcet, looked forward to the gradual enlightenment of men's minds to bring about the social changes he desired. His aim was the 'social republic', in which there would be no contending classes, but a general recognition of the solidarity of all — internationally as well as nationally. He believed in a world ruled ultimately by God in the common interest of mankind.

But Blanc, though he looked to a democratised State to institute the conditions required for the general well-being, was not a 'State Socialist'. He took from the Fourierists a profound faith in 'association' and in the virtues of community-living. He wanted the State, not to conduct industry, but to help the establishment of self-governing agencies through which the workers would conduct it themselves, electing their own leaders and sharing out the rewards on terms complying with a general set of rules designed to ensure

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fair distribution and proper provision for the maintenance of capital assets and for new investment. He wanted the social services, to which he assigned a large place, to be carried on mainly, not by the State, but by these workers' associations, which were to set aside a proportion of their revenues for maintaining them. The State, after passing the laws needed to set the new system going, was in the main to stand aside, leaving the new economic structures to carry matters on for themselves. (There was to be, as the Saint-Simonians had demanded, a publicly owned Bank to act as the chief distributor of credit; and there was to be a national planning of production.) But Blanc thought that, when capitalist exploitation and competition had been done away with, and the restrictions on the workers' purchasing power that went with them removed, the operation of industry at a high level of production would proceed uninterrupted by economic crises, and the 'associations' could be left without danger to manage their own affairs. Only exploitation and competition stood in the way of the effective recognition of the 'right to work' — that is, of full employment for all the available labour. He also believed, as Lassalle did later, that state-aided workers' associations would be able, by attracting the best workers, to drive the capitalists out of business by sheer competitive efficiency.

Louis Blanc's leading economic ideas are those of 'association' and of 'the right to work'. In *Organisation du travail* he looks to the State to ensure that the opportunity to work under reasonable conditions of payment and employment shall be available for every citizen; but even at this stage though he wishes the State to institute the new system he does not wish it to take over the running of industry. He opposes the Saint-Simonians on this ground, accusing them of wishing to make the State the master of industry and, under the name of Socialism, to control everything by means of a hierarchy of industrial administrators chosen from above. At the same time, he criticises the Fourierists on the ground that they wish to retain a form of capitalism by assuring a continuing share in the product of industry to the providers of capital. His own idea was that the State should supply capital for starting Ateliers Nationaux (national workshops), for which it should

appoint the initial directors to hold office for a single year. After that the workers were to choose their own directors. The State was to give charters or statutes to the workshops, which were to be grouped by it into industrial corporations; but each workshop was to be self-governing within this general co-ordinating framework. The capital subscribed for the development of the workshops was to be interest-bearing at a fixed rate. There was to be no profit. Pay was to be unequal at first, but Blanc thought that this inequality would gradually disappear as men's morale improved. His final aim was a society in which full economic as well as social equality would prevail. Under the new system inheritance would also die out gradually.

Blanc thought that the right to work with a guaranteed minimum wage, good conditions of employment, and industrial self-government would lead all the best workmen to flock to the national workshops, so that the capitalists, finding their best labour drawn away, would be compelled to transfer their businesses to the new system. Agriculture, he thought, could be gradually reorganised on similar lines. For the countryside he favoured a system of rural *ateliers*, beginning with one for each *département* of the country. These were to be both collective farms, operated with the latest scientific techniques, and centres of rural industry. Through them the knowledge of agricultural improvements was to be spread among the peasants, until the new system entirely drove out the old. Indeed, Blanc thought that in the villages it would be practicable to proceed more rapidly towards full equality than in the towns, as the belief in unequal rewards was more deeply rooted among urban than among rural populations. Later, he was to propose, for the urban areas, not merely Co-operative factories, but also collective establishments in which the workers would be housed together, enjoy common services, and thus learn the advantages of social equality. All this side of his doctrine obviously owes a great deal to Fourier; but Blanc, unlike Fourier, always insisted on the need for his *ateliers* to practise the most up-to-date scientific techniques.

Louis Blanc, as we have seen, was prepared, during a period of transition, to accept the need to pay interest on capital. But he would have nothing to do with any profit accruing to the owner of capital. The surpluses achieved in

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the *ateliers* were to accrue to the associated workers, but not until proper deductions had been made both for capital development and for payments into an equalisation fund. This was to be used to subsidise unremunerative enterprises, both in the same industry and in others; for he recognised that it might be to the general advantage to carry on some industries and services at a loss, as well as necessary to meet casual losses incurred by particular establishments.

Under his system, Blanc argued, competition would gradually disappear, as the private capitalists, unable to get labour or to compete with the national *ateliers*, gave up the struggle and handed over their establishments to be turned into Co-operative concerns under the co-ordinating control of the corporations uniting the *ateliers* of each industry. Production, he believed, would increase greatly, as the workers came to be animated by the new spirit of self-governing service and ceased to be afflicted by the fear that higher output would lead to unemployment through over-production. With an assured market limited only by productive power the obstacles to the full acceptance of scientific advances would disappear; and as plenty took the place of scarcity, it would become practicable to give effect to the formula 'From each according to his capacities: to each according to his needs'. This was Blanc's characteristic formulation of the Socialist economic gospel: it differentiates him equally from the Fourierists and from the Saint-Simonians.

Blanc became, in the France of the 1840s, the foremost advocate of State planning for full employment. His most effective cries were *droit au travail*, *organisation du travail*, and that the State should become 'the banker of the poor'. In advocating these doctrines Blanc, as we saw, did not preach the class struggle, but he did continually threaten the wealthy classes with the wrath of the proletariat unless its wrongs were met. He set out, not like Marx or Blanqui, to overthrow the State, which he regarded as the indispensable organ of power, but to transform it into the agent of the working class, and he hoped to achieve this transformation by consent and reason and not by class force. His appeal was essentially ethical. He wrote much about the sufferings of the poor in both England and France, and shared with Marx a belief in the impending



downfall of the capitalist system as a result of increasingly severe crises and unemployment. The new society which he advocated was to his mind the natural sequel to the Revolutions of 1789 and 1830, the bringing of the economic system into harmony with the ideas of democracy which the French Revolution had set on their way.

In 1848 Louis Blanc seemed for a moment to have found his opportunity. With the working-class leader Albert, he entered the Provisional Government as the accredited representative of the Socialist wing of the Republicans, and began immediately to press for the acceptance of his social ideas. But the Government was entirely unsympathetic to his projects, and tolerated his presence only in the hope that his influence would help to keep the workers quiet. Lamartine and most of his colleagues were terrified of the working classes who had helped them to power and regarded Louis Blanc as the least dangerous of the influential leaders of working-class opinion. Most of the members of the Provisional Government were firm believers in *laissez-faire*, and looked on Blanc as a mere visionary. But something had to be done, in face of widespread unemployment and distress, to prevent the more revolutionary leaders, such as Blanqui, from bringing off a successful *coup*.

The Government found its way out, for the time being, in the establishment of the Luxembourg Commission, which was appointed, with Blanc and Albert as President and Vice-President, to make a thorough study of *les questions ouvrières* and to report on what ought to be done. The Commission was given no power to act, and no money. It was a means of sidetracking Blanc, whom it removed from active participation in the Government, and of inducing the more moderate working-class groups to hold their hands and reject the incitements to further revolution, in the hope that their grievances would be met when the Commission had duly made its report.

The Luxembourg Commission was made up of representatives of employers as well as workers, together with a number of economists and students of social questions. It set up committees to report on a variety of questions, including both Louis Blanc's own projects and many other schemes of Co-operation and co-partnership. But Blanc himself soon found that his principal task from day to day was to prevent strikes

and act as a conciliator between employers and workers. He did this with considerable success, unconscious that in doing it he was helping the Government to prevent the workers from making trouble, and still hoping that it would agree, when the Commission had reported, to put his ideas into practice. He would not, however, have been able to keep strikes within bounds had not the Government, quite apart from the Commission, acted on its own to relieve the immediate distress. It did this by stealing the name of his best-known project, Ateliers Nationaux, for a relief plan which had nothing in common with what he had proposed. The Government's 'National Workshops', organised by his opponents, Marie and Émile Thomas, were mere relief agencies, at which unemployed workers were taken on and set to work promiscuously, irrespective of their several skills, or merely paid for doing nothing in order to keep them off the streets. They were soon made use of, in addition, to provide the Government with an auxiliary force to be used in preserving order. As soon as the danger of further revolutionary attempts was seen to be over, after General Cavaignac's ruthless suppression of the more revolutionary section of the working class, they were closed down.

Blanc, meanwhile, left without any resources by the Government, had tried to convince himself that, if the State would not help in setting up real National Workshops, the workers could make a start for themselves, without its intervention. He began to advocate the institution of voluntary associations of producers — producers' Co-operative Societies — and to use the machinery of the Luxembourg Commission for helping them to draw up their statutes and set to work in a small way. This brought him close to Buchez, who had for a long time been advocating such experiments; and he was successful in getting public contracts for a number of the new associations, some of which survived the general defeat of the working-class movement and were able to consolidate their position. When the workers' movement had been beaten back in May, and the immediate danger of revolution seemed to be over, the Constituent Assembly even voted a small sum to be spent on encouraging Co-operative associations, and authorised Government departments to make use of them in manufacturing army and other public supplies. But by this time Blanc, accused

## LOUIS BLANC AND THE ORGANISATION OF LABOUR

of complicity in the May troubles, had fled to England.

After the experiences of 1848 and the further experiences gained in England in exile, Louis Blanc, without changing his earlier convictions about the proper action of the State, came to rely more and more on voluntary Co-operation as the means of advancing towards the new social order. Thus, whereas he had begun as the foremost advocate of State action, in opposition to the Fourierist and other voluntarist schools, he may appear to have turned a complete intellectual somersault. This, however, he did not do. He continued to lay the utmost stress on the need for full political democracy, resting on universal suffrage, and to hold that a democratised State *ought* to take the steps needed successfully to found the system of 'associated production'. He continued to believe that a public bank ought to serve as the central provider of capital and credit for his 'national workshops' and Co-operative associations. But he ceased to expect that the State would in fact do this till the way had been prepared by demonstrations of the efficiency of such institutions through voluntary action, or till the education of the working classes in the new social doctrines had advanced a good deal further. In England, he saw with sympathy first the efforts of the Christian Socialists to set up producers' Co-operatives and then the rapid spread of the Rochdale system of consumers' Co-operation, as well as the advance of Trade Unionism and of collective bargaining; and, hostile as he was to force and revolution, and convinced that ideas governed world development, he saw these voluntary strivings as offering the best hope of making an effective start. He did not, for that reason, give up his belief in representative democracy, or cease to think that the people's representatives should in due course take over the general direction of economic policy, while leaving the day-to-day conduct of industry in the hands of self-governing workers' associations, free to choose their own managers and administrators. He remained to the end a reformist, democratic Socialist, advocating an ethical Socialism which he believed would come in time to be the doctrine of all decent men, and disapproving keenly of those who smirched his ideal by preaching hatred and class-war. He was thus at the opposite pole from both Blanquists and Marxists, and much nearer to the non-Marxist Socialism of

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the modern British Labour Party than to any kind of 'proletarianism'. In his own day, he had friends among both Fourierists and Saint-Simonians, but was divided from the former by his belief in large-scale industry and technical development, and from the latter by his insistence on both political democracy and democratic control in industry. He was neither a strong man nor a good organiser: he was a scholar, with a discriminating sense in writing history, and a constant determination to be fair, as well as loyal to his democratic ideals. In France, his long exile destroyed his influence; and when he went back in 1870 his day was over. He made, however, a real contribution to the building up of Socialist thought; for he stands at the beginning of a phase of it which is idealistic, but not merely utopian; reformist and anti-revolutionary, but deeply democratic, according to that conception of democracy which rests not on the doctrine of class-warfare, but on that of an overriding social solidarity to which all men owe allegiance. It comes as no surprise that Karl Marx, to whom this latter notion was anathema, had a great contempt for him.

Blanc's other chief claim to a place in the history of Socialist thought is his invention, or at least popularisation, of the slogan 'From each according to his capacities: to each according to his needs'. He stood for a Socialism resting on public ownership, combined with 'workers' control' in industry, and for a democratic parliamentary system as the guardian of industrial democracy and of the sharing out of the social product in accordance with men's needs, rather than with their differing capacities for service.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BUCHEZ — PECQUEUR

THE emphasis given to the principle of 'association' as the means to the emancipation of labour in the writings of Louis Blanc was undoubtedly influenced by the work of Philippe-Joseph-Benjamin Buchez (1796-1865), who is often regarded as the 'father' of the French Co-operative movement. Buchez, who was a doctor of medicine, had a varied career, and passed, intellectually through a number of phases. With Bazard he was one of the leading founders of the French Carbonari. Arrested and tried in 1825 for conspiring against the Government, he was lucky enough to be acquitted for lack of evidence. He then, again with Bazard, joined the Saint-Simonians; and the influence of Saint-Simon is very clear in most of his writings. He contributed to the Saint-Simonian journal, *Le Producteur*, in which the economic ideas of the school were first worked out. He could not, however, follow the Saint-Simonians into the religious adventures into which they were guided under Enfantin's leadership. He was a Catholic, and reverted to religious orthodoxy in revulsion from Enfantin's ideas. On leaving the Saint-Simonians in 1829, he set out to found a neo-Catholic school of 'Socialists' and attempted to carry on Saint-Simon's ideas both in the realm of industry and in that of European federation. In 1831 he started a periodical, *L'Européen*, for the diffusion of his views; and two years later he published an elaborate treatise, *Introduction à la science de l'histoire*, in which he put forward a theory of history which owed much to Saint-Simon. Buchez divided all history into four great epochs, each marked by a great religious revolution; and each epoch he further divided into three periods, in which the predominance belonged in turn to 'desire', 'intellectual achievement', and 'application'. Through all these epochs ran, he believed, a continuous thread of progress. The fourth epoch had been initiated by the advent of

Christianity, and was destined to be completed by the full application of the Christian principles of equality, fraternity, and charity to the organisation of society. The Catholic Church should have fulfilled this mission, but was failing to do so; and accordingly it had become necessary to pursue the application of Christ's teaching by other means. Buchez saw the French Revolution as the starting-point of this process, but desired to imbue the further work of the Revolution with the spirit of Christianity.

As the principal agent of this progress, after his break with the Saint-Simonians, he looked more and more to association among the workers. In 1831 he founded an association of cabinetmakers which served as a model for many later producers' Co-operative societies; and *L'Européen* became more and more the organ of Co-operative development. By this time Buchez had largely turned away from the revolutionism of his youth, and had come to believe that association offered the means of creating the new society, without revolution, within the womb of the existing society.

In addition to his work in *L'Européen*, Buchez published between 1833 and 1838 an immense *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française*, prepared in collaboration with Roux-Lavergne, and largely used by Carlyle in his work on the Revolution. This was followed by his *Essai d'un traité complet de philosophie au point de vue du catholicisme et du progrès* (1839-40). In this he argues that morality in man is not an innate idea belonging to the realm of nature, but a gift of divine revelation, commanding an entire certainty because it proceeds directly from God into the mind of man. He thus seeks to reconcile his Catholicism with his progressivism, and to find a Christian formulation for his democratic beliefs.

In 1840 Buchez's followers founded *L'Atelier*, which lasted until 1850, and became the principal journal devoted to the promotion of producers' associations. Buchez himself came to be actively connected with the liberal journal, *Le National*, and also worked with Louis Blanc, with whom he had much in common. His association with the 'Nationals' carried him to the presidency of the Constituent Assembly set up after the Revolution of 1848; but he showed no capacity for public affairs, and soon lost his position as the new dispensation shifted

to the right. Thereafter, he retired into private life. He went on writing, his last important work being his *Traité politique de science sociale*, published in 1866, soon after his death.

Buchez belongs more to the history of the Co-operative movement than to that of Socialism. But in his day the connection between the two was very close, as we have seen in the case of both Fourier and Robert Owen. Like them, but unlike the Saint-Simoniens and Louis Blanc, he put his main faith in voluntary action quite apart from the State, though he was also a strong advocate of political reform, and was not opposed to State action of the kind contemplated by Louis Blanc. His 'voluntarism' was largely affected by his religious outlook; for he believed that association would succeed in freeing the workers only if it were based firmly on Christian principles of brotherhood. This was the element in his doctrine which attracted J. M. Ludlow, who carried over what he had learnt from Buchez to F. D. Maurice, and helped to found English Christian Socialism mainly on the teachings of Buchez and his school. Whereas Kingsley was influenced more largely by Lamennais, and E. V. Neale at least as much by Owen, Ludlow was almost pure Buchez, and the Associations founded by the Christian Socialist 'Promoters' in England were largely imitated from Buchez's earlier experiments in France. Buchez was not a great man, or a great leader of men; but his contribution to the flood of ideas that swept over France after the return of the Bourbons can by no means be ignored.

Like Buchez, Constantin Pecqueur (1801-1887) was much influenced by the Saint-Simoniens; and he too rested his social philosophy on a Christian foundation. But, whereas Buchez saw the solution in 'association', Pecqueur was among the first to formulate a collectivist programme. Thoroughly versed in the classical economic doctrines, to which he was wholly opposed, Pecqueur was also well aware that the Industrial Revolution meant the rapid development of large-scale enterprises, involving the use of expensive capital implements, and that the workers were not in a position to acquire these by voluntary methods of self-help. He therefore looked to the State to undertake the entire business of production, owning and managing industry, so that the workers in it would become state employees. He thus differed from Louis Blanc, as well

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as from Buchez ; for Blanc, as we have seen, wanted the State, after taking the initiative in instituting the Ateliers Nationaux, to hand them over to the workers to be autonomously managed, subject to the co-ordinating functions of the national corporations which he proposed to set up for each industry. Pecqueur and his collaborator, François Vidal, were however summoned by Louis Blanc in 1848 to participate in the work of the Luxembourg Commission, and took a leading part in preparing its reports.

Pecqueur's first important book, *Social Economy* (1839) bore the sub-title, *Concerning the interests of commerce, industry and agriculture, and of civilisation in general, under the influence of the applications of steam*. It is important particularly on account of its emphasis on the determining influence of economic conditions on class-structure and on all social institutions and relations. In this and in his second book, *Concerning Material Ameliorations*, he outlined a theory which in many respects anticipated Marx's doctrine of historical development. He gave an account of contemporary *bourgeois* society, and of its evolution, in terms of the processes of technological advance ; he laid stress on the factor of capital accumulation and concentration of capitalist ownership and control as lying behind the growth of the modern proletariat ; and he showed how these developments had given rise to a new class-structure, with its accompaniment in class-consciousness and in the phenomena of a class-struggle between the *bourgeoisie* and the proletariat. But, instead of resting his economic theory, as Marx did, on a critique of the orthodox Political Economy which retained most of its leading concepts, Pecqueur attempted to break right away from it and to formulate an entirely independent theory. In doing so, he took a totally different line from Marx. His Christian approach and his idealism forbade him to formulate a doctrine of class-war as the means of establishing a new order : he appealed, like so many of the other early Socialists, to ethics, resting his advocacy of collective ownership and control on consideration of justice and of Christian principle. This has led to an underestimate of his influence on Marx, and to attempts to draw a sharp distinction between his 'technological' theory of social evolution and Marx's 'materialist' conception. The differences between



Marx and Pecqueur are fundamental ; but this is hardly the main point of divergence. Marx also put great emphasis on technological factors : Pecqueur differed from him in refusing to accept the view that human relations were determined by them in such a way as to exclude the influence of men's wills. In effect he believed that, while the technological forces necessarily moulded social relations, the ways in which they did this depended on men's handling of these forces : so that it was possible for the State to give different twists to social structure within the general limits imposed by technical factors. Pecqueur was thus not a determinist, but a Christian believer in free will ; and this has obscured in the eyes of Marxists the fundamental importance of his analysis of the influence of material conditions on class-structure, and of his historical account of the development of capitalism.

The Saint-Simonian influence was strong in Pecqueur — especially the influence of Bazard's interpretation of Saint-Simon's view of historical development. His theory of history was, like Bazard's, primarily technological ; and, like Saint-Simon, he stressed the creative rôle of scientists and discoverers as against the idea of progress as determined by purely material forces. But he did not accept the Saint-Simonian mistrust of the common man ; nor was he prepared to allow the technicians to become the uncontrolled masters of the new society.

Pecqueur broke away from the Saint-Simonian school mainly because of his belief in democracy. He rejected their idea of an industrial society administered and directed by engineers, and insisted that the technologists must be made to operate the instruments of production under democratic control. In his *New Theory of Social and Political Economy* (1842) he developed his democratic collectivist theory in relation to his ethical conceptions of social justice, representing collectivism as an economic deduction, under modern industrial conditions, from the Christian moral law. He also formulated a labour theory of value, based, like Owen's, on the notion of 'labour-time', but applicable only to the economic exchanges of a Socialist society : he did not attempt, as the English anti-Ricardians and Marx both did, to formulate any theory of the determination of the value of labour-power under the conditions of capitalist exploitation. This lacuna also helped towards the

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under-estimation of his importance by later Socialists.

In addition to his economic writings, Pecqueur wrote extensively about the problems of peace and international relations. He had a deep dislike of violence, and was a keen advocate of European federation as a means of preventing war. Here again the influence of Saint-Simon is evident. His book *On Peace* (1842) is very much in the Saint-Simonian tradition.

After 1848 Pecqueur's influence rapidly waned. He was out of tune with what was happening in France, and his Christian-ethical approach cut him off from the groups which followed Marx's or Proudhon's teachings. After his *Salvation of the People* (1849) he published little of importance, though he lived on for nearly another forty years. He was indeed a pioneer of much of the doctrine of modern non-Marxian collectivism; but when this doctrine was re-formulated later in the century, his earlier contributions to it had been largely forgotten.

## CHAPTER XVII

### FLORA TRISTAN

UNTIL near the end of the nineteenth century, no woman occupied a leading place in the development of Socialist thought. The Saint-Simonians never discovered '*La Mère*'; and though many of the Socialist sects gave the equality of the sexes a place of honour in their aspirations, the actual contribution of their women adherents was great neither in the working of their movements nor in the development of their ideas. During the period covered by this volume there were a few outstanding figures — in France, George Sand; in the United States, Frances Wright and, to a limited extent, Margaret Fuller—but none of these contributed anything of substance to the development of specifically Socialist doctrines. In Great Britain there was no one of comparable intellectual standing until the second half of the century. There were, of course, a number of 'advanced women' and pioneers of women's rights, such as Richard Carlile's female lecturer, 'Isis'. But only one woman — a very strange figure in her own right — clearly claims even a minor place in this history. This is Flora Tristan.

Flora Célestine Thérèse Tristan (1803-44) was the daughter of a Peruvian-Spanish father and of a French mother. At law, she was illegitimate; for though her parents had been married in Spain by a French *émigré* priest, the necessary civil formalities had not been complied with. Her father came of a rich Peruvian family; his brother became President of Peru and he himself was a colonel in the Spanish army until he retired to live in Paris. There he died suddenly, leaving his widow and child almost unprovided for. The relatives in Peru apparently knew nothing of his marriage. Flora received hardly any formal education, though she developed a small talent as an artist. She was, by the way, the grandmother of the painter, Gauguin. To support herself, she went to work as colourist

for a painter and engraver, who fell in love with her, as most young men who came her way were apt to do. At her mother's instance she married him, and had three children, two of whom survived childhood. She and her husband, André Chazal, led a cat-and-dog life: he gambled and she enjoyed spending money and had a passionate and violent temper. After a few years she fled from him, taking the children. He pursued her, demanding first her return and later their custody. She wanted a divorce: but under the Restoration in France no divorce was allowed, and even legal separation was very difficult. Mme Chazal sent her children to live with her mother, and for some years, from 1825 to 1830, wandered about the world, apparently in some sort of service with a rich English family — a service which hurt her pride, but enabled her to gather a great many interesting impressions about the conditions of life in a variety of countries.

Returning to Paris in 1830, Mme Chazal soon became involved in a series of acrimonious and complicated disputes with her husband about their future relations. He again demanded her return, and then the custody of the children. She agreed to hand over her son to his care, but not her daughter. She then made up her mind to go to Peru and to seek recognition from her family. Leaving her daughter in the hands of the keeper of a *pension* where she was staying, she took ship at Bordeaux — the only woman among an exclusively male complement of crew and passengers. The captain fell in love with her and, not knowing her to be married (though he knew of her child), tried again and again to persuade her to marry him, even following her after her arrival in Peru till she finally dismissed him. Her uncle, who had for some years been making her and her mother a small allowance, received her in his great house, but refused to provide for her further. She returned to France, where, after further adventures, she published her autobiography *Pérégrinations d'une paria* (1838), giving an exceedingly frank account of her adventures, except those of her period of service with the English family, of which she told nothing. The book infuriated her husband, who was so angered by its account of him that he made an attempt on her life, for which he was sentenced to forced labour. She almost at once published her only novel,

*Méphis* (1838), in which there was much more autobiographical material. She then went to London, where she wrote her most interesting *Promenades dans Londres* (1840), published in both Paris and London. It contains a most moving and lively picture of the sufferings of the British workers and of the Chartist movement in its early days.

Flora Tristan had by this time become convinced that she had a mission to work for the emancipation at one and the same time of her sex and of the working class. She had, however, hardly any contacts with the French workers. Through the poems of the carpenter, Agricole Perdriguier, who also inspired George Sand's novel *Le Compagnon du Tour de France*, she got to know something of the old *compagnonnages*, or clubs, of the French craftsmen. Attempts had been made previously to join the *compagnonnages* together into a general combination; but these had broken down in face of their exclusiveness and of the sharp rivalries between them. In 1830 had been founded La Société de l'Union des Travailleurs du Tour de France — that is, of those trade clubs which maintained in the various towns hostels at which they welcomed their brothers from other towns tramping in search of employment. This society had gained a considerable following, and various projects for the reform of *compagnonnage* into a more effective kind of union were in the air. Flora Tristan, after reading the poems and pamphlets of the *compagnons*, conceived the project of a far more ambitious union — nothing less than a single body uniting the entire working class, not merely in one country, but in all. In 1843 she published her ideas in a small book, *Union ouvrière* — the first published project of a world-wide Workers' International.

Flora Tristan's idea was simple in itself, though not to carry out. She proposed that every worker in France, and in every other country that could be induced to take up the idea, should subscribe a small annual sum to a fund, which was to be used to build up a capital sufficient to emancipate the working class from its subject position. This fund was to be used not for projects of Co-operative production so much as for the establishment of 'Workers' Palaces' in every town. These palaces were to be at once schools, hospitals for the sick, places of refuge for the aged and disabled, and centres of

working-class culture. They were to rally the workers, and to give them the security and independence that would enable them to improve their economic conditions. At the end of the book, she herself summarised her proposal as follows :

1. To constitute <sup>1</sup> the working class by means of a compact, solid and indissoluble Union.
2. To cause the working class to be represented before the nation by a Defender chosen by the Workers' Union and paid by it, in order that it may be well established that this class has its *right of existence*, and that other classes accept this right.
3. To protest, in the name of this right, against encroachments and privileges.
4. To secure recognition of the legitimacy of *property in men's hands (de la propriété des bras)*. In France, 25 million workers have no property but their hands.
5. To secure recognition of the legitimacy of the *right to work* for all, men and women alike.
6. To examine the possibilities of the *organisation of labour* within the existing social state.
7. To erect in every department *Palaces of the Workers' Union*, where the children of the working class will receive both intellectual and technical instruction, and to which will be admitted men and women workers who have been injured at work, and those who are sick or old.
8. To recognise the urgent necessity of giving to the women of the people an education, moral, intellectual and technical, in order that they may become the moralising influence on the men of the people.
9. To recognise, in principle, the *equality of right* between men and women as being the sole means of establishing *Human Unity*.

Flora Tristan herself said that she had taken her idea of a universal contribution by the workers from Daniel O'Connell's Irish Catholic Association, whence also came the notion of a paid 'Defender' of the workers. The English Chartists too had taken up these ideas ; and she had met with them during her stay in London in 1839. As we have seen, something rather like this was advocated by J. F. Bray ; and in the 1840s similar ideas were adopted in England by the 'Redemptionists', who founded Redemption Societies at Leeds and in a number

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* to give it a firm and recognised status in society.

## FLORA TRISTAN

of other towns and appealed to every worker to subscribe a penny a week to a fund which was to be used for the redemption of labour from capitalist bondage. The Leeds Society actually founded in 1848 a Co-operative Colony in which they established workshops as well as tilled the land ; and a number of other experiments were made. But the movement finally turned into a sort of friendly society for the provision of mutual benefits. Whether Flora Tristan had heard of Bray or of the early propoganda of the Redemptionists I do not know. The resemblance is striking, but her plan was, of course, even more ambitious than theirs.

In order to spread the knowledge of her ideas, Flora Tristan next set out on a journey through France from town to town, getting everywhere into touch with the workmen's clubs and associations, in the hope of enlisting their help. Still busy on this mission, she contracted typhoid fever, and died at Bordeaux at the age of 41. Her projects died with her.

She was a very strange apostle of working-class unity. Of great beauty and appeal to men, she was imperious and, with all her sympathies for the workers, very conscious of her family connections. She felt bitter humiliation in being forced to work with her hands and to become a serwant, and also deep indignation at the laws which denied her legitimacy. In her personal relations she revolted against any acceptance of inferiority or subordination — including subordination to her husband. Her marital relations turned her violently against the institution of marriage. She became an ardent advocate of women's rights, but was not interested in the right to vote, which she regarded as unimportant in comparison with the equal right with men to labour and to education. Uneducated and untrained herself, because of her mother's plunge into poverty, she came to lay the greatest stress on the education of the workers, always careful to insist that it must be both intellectual and technical. With all this, she was a most remarkably good observer of men and things, a great keeper of diaries, and a very graphic narrator of her own experiences. L'Union Ouvrière came to nothing : her plan was chimerical, and her acquaintance with business nil. But she has a right to a place in this record because, so far as I have been able to discover, she was the first person to put forward a definite plan for an

√ all-inclusive proletarian International. She said again and again that whereas the great French Revolution had emancipated the 'Third Estate' — and made a tyrant of it — the mission of the new revolution was to set free the 'Fourth Estate', *les ouvriers*; and she saw, however dimly, that this meant comprehensive organisation internationally as well as within each nation.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### LAMENNAIS

THE historian of Socialist theories is necessarily often uncertain at what points the frontiers of his subject can best be drawn. There are writers who, though they are in no ordinary sense Socialists, and may indeed have declared themselves hostile to Socialism, nevertheless are so tangled up in the same web as their Socialist contemporaries that to omit reference to them becomes, if not impossible, at any rate misleading. Such, as we have seen, was Tom Paine ; and such, nearer our own time, were the 'Distributivists', especially G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. These latter have something in common with the torrential social force to whose ideas I have, after much hesitation, decided to devote this chapter.

Hugues-Félicité-Robert de Lamennais (1782-1854) was certainly not a Socialist.<sup>1</sup> That he made vigorous attacks on all the contemporary Socialist schools would not be enough, by itself, to establish this ; for the Socialists were, in his day — and not then alone — continually attacking one another. Lamennais was not a Socialist, not because he attacked Owenites, Fourierists, Icarians, Saint-Simonians — indeed, all the contemporary Socialist and Communist groups — but because he never formulated any clear social theory, and indeed consciously refused to do so. In some respects he resembles Proudhon, who also had a scorn of projectors of ideal societies ; but, unlike Proudhon, he came to be deeply convinced that political enfranchisement — universal suffrage — was an indispensable first step towards economic and social emancipation. He came to believe firmly that the people, given the vote, would be able to exact from their representatives the laws they needed for the relief of their distresses, and accordingly his

<sup>1</sup> Until 1837 he wrote his name 'La Mennais'. The change to 'Lamennais' was a deliberate repudiation of aristocratic connections.

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most constant demand was for complete political democracy. He did not, however, any more than Proudhon, look to the State to play thereafter a constructive rôle in the making of the new society. He believed that the people could and should do that for themselves, when the restrictive laws that hampered their free action had been swept away. But, whereas Proudhon expected this to be done mainly by individual action under conditions of free contact and 'gratuitous credit', Lamennais was insistent on the need for 'association', both for the collective execution of common tasks and, still more, for collective bargaining, which he believed could be used to force up wages to a satisfactory level and to defeat the monopolistic power of capital.

Lamennais was thus among the strongest advocates of Trade Unionism, as well as of Co-operation ; and he was also a supporter of the political demands of the extreme left, except when they took a revolutionary form calculated to alienate the sympathies of the main body of the people. His writings are a remarkable mixture of extreme denunciation of the existing order and calls for a complete change in the basis of society with moderate warnings that social change can never without disaster run ahead of the main body of popular opinion. His social philosophy, despite his frequent violence of language, was essentially gradualist. He thought men had to be convinced before they could be expected to act, or to accept even the beneficent actions of others ; and, believing in individual liberty as the final goal for men, he was quick to suspect every project that involved the exercise of authority as concealing behind it the desire for power, to be exercised over the people and not by them.

Lamennais came to his extreme Christian radicalism by a strange route ; for he had begun his career as an ultramontane supporter of the claims of the Catholic Church. His earliest writings were theological : originally destined by his ship-owning father for a mercantile career, he became a priest. His first book, published anonymously in 1808, was a demand for a great religious revival directed against the supremacy of the State over the Church. It was suppressed by Napoleon : he followed it up in 1814 by another, written jointly with his brother, in which they attacked the claim of the State to

appoint bishops without the sanction of the Pope. In that year he welcomed the first Bourbon Restoration, and on Napoleon's return from Elba he fled to London, returning to settle in Paris after Waterloo. There he published in sections between 1817 and 1824 the first book which brought him into general prominence — *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*. This was a tremendous attack on the tradition of liberal thought and on the right of private judgment as exalted by Protestantism and by the Cartesian philosophy. In this book Lamennais denounced toleration, and demanded universal submission to the authority of the Church. His work received the Pope's approval, and he was offered a place in the Sacred College — which he refused. He became an ally of Chateaubriand, a contributor to *Le Conservateur*, and a leading figure in the romantic reaction of the years after 1815. But almost at once his hostility to absolute monarchy and to the absolute authority of the secular State led him to break with the *Conservateurs*. He retired from political activity and gathered round him a body of religious disciples, among them Lacordaire and Montalembert, with the main object of starting a movement in the Church to throw over the connection with the State. Soon, however, he had a breakdown in health, and emerged from his convalescence with his ideas greatly modified. He now declared against monarchy, and for complete democracy, which he conceived on theocratic lines. He started a new journal, *L'Avenir* (1830), which appeared with the motto 'God and Liberty', and, by a complete *volte-face*, demanded absolute liberty of religion. With Montalembert, he founded the Agence Général pour la Défense de la Liberté Religieuse, which gained a large following all over France. Both his journal and his Agency were soon in trouble with the leaders of the Church in France; and Lamennais, Lacordaire, and Montalembert set off for Rome to appeal personally to the Pope, who refused to receive them and, in a letter to the Polish bishops, counselled obedience to the secular power. This letter was followed by the Encyclical *Mirari Vos* (1832), which explicitly condemned Lamennais's doctrine. For the moment he submitted: *L'Avenir* and the Agency were given up. But in 1834 Lamennais issued from his place of retirement the famous *Paroles d'un croyant* (Sayings of a Believer), in which he came out, in ecstatic prose often

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near in spirit to poetry, in complete support of the radical creed. The *Paroles* are an impassioned declaration against the oppression of the people, against kings and governments dominated by the nobility and the rich, and equally against all who refuse to rest their radicalism on the foundation of faith in the divine will. *Paroles d'un croyant* is an extraordinary book, throbbing with pity for the sufferings of the poor and with anger against the evil-doing of the powerful, and fervently calling upon the workers to join forces in order to throw off the yoke of the servitude that bears them down, and denies to them the elemental rights of men. It is clamant for the rights implicit in the equality of all men before God ; and it is also deeply internationalist in spirit. Lamennais takes his stand on the universal brotherhood of men, as the basis for the equal sovereignty of the whole people — the only legitimate form of sovereignty under God.

But, in stressing men's rights, Lamennais puts equal emphasis on their duties. Rights, he says, are for the individual, and are by themselves incomplete : duties join men together in mutual bonds of love and co-operation. The power of association rests on the natural recognition by men of their mutual obligations ; and it is the means open to them of securing their rights. If the poor will associate in the spirit of duty one to another, nothing will be able to stand against them ; for the power of their oppressors rests only on their isolation, which is the fruit of egoism — of the satanic power which defies the will of God. Unite, cries Lamennais, to demand universal suffrage ; unite to force wages up to a tolerable living standard ; unite for mutual help against all the forces of oppression.

So far *Paroles d'un croyant* — an eloquent call by an essentially romantic writer to action in the name of God. It was followed in 1837 by *Le Livre du peuple*, which repeats the same incitements, but descends to less poetical language and to rather more explicit advice. Universal suffrage is the first objective, to be followed immediately by the repeal of all laws prohibiting or restricting combinations, or countenancing privileges or monopolies in any form. Over and above this, Lamennais calls for the 'diffusion of capital' and for the placing at the disposal of all of credit which will give universal

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access to the instruments of labour. These measures, he declares, will re-establish 'the natural course of riches', which have been perverted by concentration in the hands of the few. 'They will, in course of time, make an end of poverty, as well as of oppression. 'Labour enfranchised, master of itself, will be the master of the world, for labour is the very action of humanity, accomplishing the work which the Creator has given it to do.' Under these conditions, private interests will merge gradually into a single interest, that of all; for all men will come under the influence of the uniting spirit of love.

*De l'esclavage moderne* and *Politique à l'usage du peuple*, both published in 1839, develop Lamennais's attitude further, especially by giving it a fuller historical background. In the first of these works he compares the position of the modern wage-labourer with those of the slave in the ancient and the serf in the mediaeval world, and declares that there has been no real change in the fundamental situation of the labourer, who is still at the mercy of a master, though the form of his exploitation and servitude has changed. There has, nevertheless, been, thanks to Christianity and despite its perversions, an immense change in the theory of human relations. It is now recognised, in theory but not in practice, that all men have fundamentally equal rights; and this progress of the human spirit has undermined the will even of the privileged to resist the claims of the poor, as soon as the poor are ready unitedly to assert them. Slavery, in any form, is the destruction of human personality, of the natural sovereignty of all men, in which even the opponents of democracy have been driven, since the Revolution, to profess some sort of belief; and a united demand, in the name of God, upon Governments to act up to their Christian principles will be effective without violence, if only it is persisted in long enough. Lamennais goes on, in this striking essay, to state the stark opposition between capitalist and proletarian, as no less absolute than the old antagonism between master and slave. He describes how the poor are oppressed by the law, as well as by their economic tyrants. His language in describing these social relations is often not far removed from that of the *Communist Manifesto*. It is certainly no less vigorous. But it leads up, not to a summons to revolution, such as had seemed to be at least

implicit in *Paroles d'un croyant*, but to an assertion that the modern proletarians will not need to resort to a slave revolt after the manner of Spartacus, and must not hope to have their ills remedied save by stages corresponding to the progress of opinion under the influence of the universal right to vote.

*De l'esclavage moderne* was followed in 1841 by *Du passé et de l'avenir du peuple*, in which Lamennais further developed his historical speculations and also delivered his attack on the various contemporary schools of Socialism and Communism. It is impossible to read this work without being reminded again and again of Saint-Simon — especially of his *Mémoire sur l'homme* and of his *Nouveau Christianisme*. Here are the same conceptions of the historical function of the mediaeval Church and of the reasons for its break-up, the same insistence on the service done to men by the growth of the spirit of scientific enquiry, and the same recognition of the limitations of both these great historical influences. Lamennais, like Saint-Simon, insists on the need for a linking together of the two sides of man's progress — the spiritual and the scientific. Science by itself, he contends, leads to an emphasis on materialistic and determined forces which, not content with its own sphere of factual knowledge, invades the province of the human spirit and, in professing to take over the realm of values, actually destroys them. Like Saint-Simon, he wants a revived Church, no longer in opposition to science or to the enlargement of human knowledge by free enquiry, but co-operating with these forces and giving meaning and direction to the efforts of the scientists to increase men's knowledge of nature and to bend its forces to men's use. This last, he says, is especially the object of social and economic studies, which, with the rest of the sciences, have been twisted awry by the acceptance of Utilitarianism as a standard of judgment. The Utilitarian doctrine he condemns as essentially egoistic, and as denying duty and therewith God. But he condemns hardly less that 'supernaturalism' which stands aloof from science, or denies its claims.

It is in the criticism of the Socialist schools that Lamennais's own ideas of the future come out most clearly. He accuses the Owenites, about whom he does not appear to have known a great deal, of a total denial of God, and of losing themselves

utterly in the Cimmerian darkness of mere naturalism, so as to make of man merely a machine controlled by external forces. Of the Saint-Simonians he says that they accept God, but deny the Creation, thus cutting the link between God and man, and substituting for the fatalism of the naturalists an abstract fatalism which tends to relapse into materialism and provides no conception of duty as a basis for moral action. The Fourierists, he says, go astray in regarding all men's passions and wishes as equally legitimate, and thus denying the entire distinction between good and evil: so that they relapse into absolute individualism, and share with the Benthamites the acceptance of the false standard of utility and of the identification of morality with interest. Yet other sects, he maintains without specifying them, do not trouble their heads about fundamental ideas, but allow their projects to be governed by fleeting notions of the moment. All the 'systems', he says, are wanting in the two essentials for any true solution of the social problem, because they fail to establish right and duty on firm foundations in the relation of God to man. He accuses their upholders of being mere traditionalists without knowing it; of borrowing the idea of human equality from Christianity without accepting its Christian basis, and thus of giving to the idea an abstract and absolute form as derived entirely from nature. From nature, he says, no such principle can be derived; for nature shows evidence fully as much of inequality as of equality. The conception of God as father of all men is the only proper foundation for an equalitarian position that does not fall into endless contradictions. Reliance on nature as the guiding light leads to the rule, not of love or of justice, but of force. It leads to an exclusive emphasis on rights, without a parallel emphasis on duties, and thus requires the invocation of force to harmonise conflicting rights. This involves a conception of government, set over the people to keep them in order, instead of collective self-government by the people themselves. Therefore, the sects fall into hierarchical notions of social control, which involve only a new sort of tyranny.

Most of the sects, he goes on to say, make the mistake of turning their backs on politics and, instead of working for popular sovereignty based on universal suffrage, concentrate

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their attention on projects for the regulation of the relations of property. This leads him to an attack on the Communism of Cabet and his Icarian followers, who propose that all property should be held in common. Nothing, he says, could be more absurd than this ; for property is indispensable to human liberty, and should be diffused and not concentrated. What is everybody's property ceases to be property at all : the very notion of property (*proprium*) involves individual possession. Men cannot have liberty without property because property is the means to the free exercise of labour as well as the spur to exertion. It must, in order to afford the effective right to work, be accumulable, so as to be usable as a means of production ; and it must also be transmissible, because the true unit of society is the family, and the family lives on from generation to generation. Concentration of property in the hands of the State, therefore, means tyranny of the State over family and individual. The real problem is not to abolish the proletariat by abolishing property, but to find means of establishing a system in which 'everybody will be a proprietor'. Communism will lead, not to freedom and brotherhood, but to the 're-establishment of castes' — the governing castes set over an enslaved people.

Lamennais then turns to the question of equality of incomes. He refers to the squabbles between the sects on this issue, with some advocating distribution according to 'works', and some according to 'needs'. All nature's laws, he says, put insuperable obstacles in the way of equal distribution ; and those who advocate it therefore find themselves fighting against these laws by seeking to abolish property, which is natural to man's life as the outcome of his mingling his labour with external things in order to convert them to his use. Moreover, God and nature have made men unequal, and no social arrangement can abolish their natural inequality. But the principle of rewarding men according to their capacities is no better ; for who is to be judge of these capacities ? The sects which favour this solution are driven to make some caste of superiors the judges — a hit, this, at the Saint-Simonians ; and then we are back at the tyranny of the few over the many.

Lamennais then comes to his own solution, which is that of absolute political equality through universal suffrage and



the continued subjection of the deputies and administrators to the will of the people, the repeal of all laws restraining free economic action, and the granting of the fullest freedom of association. '*Qui dit association dit liberté*', he exclaims. The conditions lacking in existing society are three, apart from that religious faith without which there is no more social than eternal salvation. These three essentials are participation of the people in government, participation in the administration of communal affairs, and the 'material condition of property'. The possession of the first of these will soon be followed by the conquest of the other two.

In order to become men of property, Lamennais goes on to say, there is no need for the poor to attack the existing property of the rich; for property is for the most part not a store, but a current product of labour. The unpropertied classes, given political power and the right of association, will be in a position to acquire property for themselves and to reduce the existing property of the rich to unimportance. The worker, free to bargain with his employer on equal terms, will refuse to accept conditions of exploitation. He will be in a position to insist on his right to universal free education, and to training in such arts and sciences as he is capable of mastering. The rich will lose their monopoly of access to knowledge and to the higher techniques of production: the workers will become their own masters, and will be able, by association, to build up such capital as they will need. All this will not happen in a day; but when once political power has been transferred into the hands of the people themselves, the rest will follow in due time as a matter of course.

All this was written by Lamennais in the 1830s, during the troubled years which followed the French Revolution of 1830. In 1840 his book *La Pays et le gouvernement* cost him a year's imprisonment at the hands of the ministers of Louis-Philippe. In gaol he composed *Une Voix de prison* (published 1840), in an apocalyptic manner like that of *Paroles d'un croyant*; and he also wrote an *Esquisse de philosophie* (1840), which includes a remarkable study of the relations between art and religion. In the 1840s he continued his propaganda, under financial difficulties, and contributed to Louis Blanc's *Revue du progrès* articles which showed considerable sympathy

with Socialism of the 'associationist' type which Blanc had advocated in *Organisation du travail*. As the new revolution approached, he became President of a Société de Solidarité Républicaine, which at once commanded a large following. After the Revolution of 1848 he was elected to the Constituent Assembly, where he sat with the left Republicans, and drafted a constitution which was rejected as much too radical. He also started a journal of his own, *Le Peuple constituant*, which was suppressed after the days of June had destroyed the power of the Parisian workers. Napoleon's *coup d'état* ended his political career; he spent his last years, to his death in 1854, mainly in translating Dante. He died unreconciled to the Catholic Church: an immense concourse attended his body to Père La Chaise cemetery, where he was buried without religious ceremony.

Lamennais — from first to last 'a romantic' — was a man of immense moral fervour and of an eloquence in writing that has given his work a lasting place in French literature as well as in the history of French democracy. His thought was, from first to last, profoundly religious: he could not understand any morality that was not rooted in faith in God. He believed firmly in the certainty of human progress because he believed in God as the beneficent Creator and the father of all men. Vehemently though he denounced the evils of his time, he had no doubt, after his conversion to democracy, that it was better than any previous time in men's history; and he was sure that humanity was on the verge of an immense further advance. This confidence, which he had been far from holding in his earlier years, was based on his belief in the unconquerable efficacy of ideas. In his own day, he saw men accepting the *idea* of human equality before God without translating it into practice; and he was certain that such a contradiction could not long endure, and that, in the conflict between idea and self-interest, the idea was destined to prevail, because God must so will. His faith in God's beneficence led him to attribute the world's evils to Satan, who was in his mind a living force perverting men from their duty to God and to their fellows. But Satan's realm, he felt sure, was near its end; and the task facing mankind in the new order that would be instituted by making the people their own masters was above

all one of enlightenment. Slavery, including wage-slavery, had kept the people in darkness and ignorance ; before long they would see a great light. Hence his insistence on the right to education, and also on the need for association as a means of material improvement. Lamennais, despite his insistence on individual and family liberty, had none of Proudhon's fear of association involving tyranny of the 'collective' over the individual. Just as he believed in the possibility of a Constitution that would place real power — real participation in government and administration — in the hands of the people, so he believed in self-governing associations as means of enlarging liberty, not restricting it, as long as they were firmly based on universal voting rights. Proudhon too believed in the people, but suspected that they lost their good sense as soon as they tried to act through representatives. Lamennais, with no less devotion to individual liberty, saw that it could be achieved in many spheres only by men acting together. He believed that the dangers of collective action were occasioned by men uniting their forces in the spirit of egoism — which he called the spirit of 'utility'. The true basis of association, he held, was the recognition, no less natural to man than self-interest, of a duty towards his fellows. This conception of duty was in Lamennais, as we have seen, thoroughly international : although he exalted the claims of *la patrie*, he always refused to regard it as more than a collection of individuals in families, and insisted that its claims were overridden by those of the greater collective constituting humanity as a whole. God's universal fatherhood made all men brothers. War, therefore, was utterly wrong, and led always to an exaltation of the claims of the State and its rulers against the common people.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that Lamennais was not a Socialist. He was not ; but he was the direct progenitor of much Christian Socialist doctrine and a great deal nearer to Socialism than many who later called themselves, or were called, Christian Socialists. I have a feeling that his historical writings and his characterisations of the condition of the proletariat in his own day influenced Marx a good deal more than Marx himself ever realised. *De l'esclavage moderne* is certainly one of the great documents in the history of the idea of the

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class-struggle. It forms an important link between Saint-Simon, who had the idea of historical evolution but none of the conflict between capitalists and labourers, and Marx, who went beyond Lamennais in welding both ideas together into the Materialist Conception of History. But, of course, in Lamennais the conception of history was idealistic, and the class-struggle he envisaged was to be waged with God as the inspirer of the proletarian crusade.

## CHAPTER XIX

### PROUDHON

PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON (1809-65) is almost alone among the major prophets of Socialism in having sprung from the ranks of *la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre* — to use once again Saint-Simon's phrase.<sup>1</sup> He was the son of a cooper and domestic brewer from the country near Besançon and of a mother of peasant stock. He was a self-educated man who never forgot, or wanted to forget, his social origins, of which indeed he was fiercely proud. Apprenticed to printing, he became a press-corrector and owed some of his extraordinarily miscellaneous store of knowledge — especially in the field of theology — to his study of the volumes he was called upon to correct. But he was, apart from this, all his life an omnivorous reader, continually piling up fresh scraps of knowledge from what he read. He wrote voluminously, but usually very well. He had a remarkably good natural sense of style. His writing was often very discursive: no one could accuse him of having an orderly mind. He was never a system-maker, and was usually more at home in criticism than in construction. Of the contemporary scene he was an unusually acute observer, both in his published books and articles and in the personal note-books in which he recorded his observations. Of his fellow 'Socialists' and 'Radicals' he was for the most part rather contemptuously critical — especially if they were intellectuals who had not their roots in the common people and therefore failed to understand them. He was particularly scornful of utopian system-makers, who appeared to him to know nothing of human nature, and of all whose proposals involved regimentation of the lives of men, or any exaltation of authority. His goddess was liberty — the liberty of individual men to do as they pleased; and he often spoke as if

<sup>1</sup> Cabet, too, was born of poor parents, but secured higher education first for teaching and then in the law.

this liberty should know no limits. But he had also a passion for 'justice', which he exalted as the essential idea of the great French Revolution — the idea which it was the mission of all true interpreters of the revolutionary tradition to make real in the social life of men. Justice, he often said, involved 'reciprocity', which was the only legitimate limiting condition of liberty. He wanted a society in which all men would enjoy liberty on 'reciprocal' terms — that is, on condition of allowing equal liberty to others. These principles of 'justice' and 'liberty' needed to be established as the very foundations of the social system ; but they could not, of their very nature, be enforced by any authority set over the individual man. Such social organisation as was needed must be man's servant, not his master. 'The ideal republic is a positive anarchy. It is neither liberty subordinated to order, as in a constitutional monarchy, nor liberty imprisoned in order. It is liberty free from all its shackles, superstitions, prejudices, sophistries, usury, authority : it is reciprocal liberty and not limited liberty ; liberty is not the daughter but the mother of order.'

This is the language of Anarchism rather than of Socialism; and it was actually Proudhon who first introduced the word 'Anarchism' into the political vocabulary. If he often spoke of himself as a 'Socialist', that was because the word 'Socialism' had not in his day the close association which it developed later with specifically political action and with the notion of the State. In Louis Blanc, as we have seen, this connection had already been made ; but in the 1840s, when Proudhon first came into prominence with his celebrated essay on Property, Blanc was simply the head of one among a number of 'Socialist' schools, many of which had no more use for the State than Proudhon had.

It has to be remembered that in the first half of the nineteenth century 'the State' was thought of by most advocates of social change — and indeed by most people — as an external power set over its *subjects*, and not as an agency representing a broad mass of *citizens*. The French Revolution had, of course, proclaimed the supremacy of an elected national assembly representing the whole nation ; and the Republican Constitution of 1793 — which was never allowed to come into force — had vested the right of election in a wide body of

voters under conditions nearly approaching manhood suffrage. That was why, in nineteenth-century France, the Radical Republicans of the left were continually harking back to 1793, as the point at which the true development of the Revolution had been broken off. After 1793 France had returned to forms of government in which, under Directory, Consulate and Empire, the State re-emerged as an embodiment of power over the people, with the vote allowed only to a privileged group and the executive authority placed firmly in the hands of a power structure over which even the deputies of the privileged electorate had only a very limited control. It therefore remained natural to think of 'the State' as primarily a coercive power over the people, and to demand some sort of new Constituent Assembly to express directly the people's citizen rights and to make a constitution which would embody the recognition of these rights as continuing under the new order.

Such a Constituent Assembly was thought of, not as 'the State' or as part of it, but rather as standing above 'the State', and as authorised by the citizens to abolish or transform 'the State'. Thus, it was quite possible for a social thinker who declared himself utterly against 'the State' to demand at the same time a constitution that would give legal recognition to whatever claims or rights he regarded as forming parts of the proper institutional structure of a soundly based society. Proudhon often did this, without feeling any inconsistency between it and his essentially anarchistic outlook. Louis Blanc, on the other hand, not only demanded a new set of basic social and political laws to guarantee the 'right to work' and to provide a framework for the 'organisation of labour', but also contemplated the continuing existence of a legislative chamber resting on manhood suffrage and of an executive authority responsible to it, and looked to these bodies to play a lasting part in sustaining, and where necessary modifying, the constitution thus enacted. Proudhon did not disagree with Blanc about the need for a new constitutional law; but he did not think of the body which was to make it as 'the State' or as having any continuing function when it had been made. At need, a further Constituent Assembly could be set up to make a new constitutional law; but there must be no

permanent body of delegates claiming to represent the people, or to have any authority over them. The continuing authority must be, in his view, the law itself — not a group of men who would be certain to pervert it and to become victims of the lust for power over other men. Blanc, on the other hand, believed in representative government, embodied in the institutions of a democratic State, though he, no more than Proudhon, wanted the political government to undertake the function of carrying on industry under bureaucratic control.

In Blanc's theory, as in Fourier's, in Owen's, and in that of Buchez and the French Co-operative school, the main work of carrying on the practical activities of society was to be in the hands of '*les associations*'. The self-governing association was to be the characteristic and omnipresent agent of the citizens in the collective conduct of their affairs. For this the Saint-Simonians, or at any rate the strict members of their school, substituted the '*société anonyme*' — the registered company — working under statutes which would ensure its compliance with the general interest, and controlled by a council of *savants* and *industriels* possessed of the requisite technical and administrative capacity. This council, having the financial power in its hands, was to become the real government of society in all its economic affairs. The political government was to be but a shadow in the sphere of economic relations. 'The State' was to be transformed into an expression of the true power in modern society — *les producteurs*. Thus, the main difference between the orthodox Saint-Simonians and the 'Associationists' was that the former insisted on the principle of technical competence and the latter on that of democratic functional control.

Proudhon was hostile to both these schools of thought. He disliked intensely the centralising principle of the Saint-Simonians and the subjection which it involved of the ordinary worker to the authority of the administrator and the engineer. But he also regarded the Associationists as violating the principle of reciprocal liberty of the individual by proposing to subject the worker to the majority rule of his association, in which he saw little better assurance of sound judgment than in the majority vote of a political assembly. Proudhon was suspicious of the power element in associations, as well as of the



State — suspicious of every kind of organisation that limited the freedom of the individual beyond what was absolutely necessary to ensure its 'reciprocal' character — that is, its *not* refusing equal freedom to other men.

In Proudhon's thought the key position was held, not by 'association', but by the family. Society, which he distinguished sharply from 'State' or Government, was, in his vision, essentially a grouping of families. He had the strong family sense of the peasant, and regarded the family as a patriarchal grouping under the head man — the father. Deeply attached to his own parents, he was scandalised by the attacks of some of the Saint-Simonians on the institutions of marriage and family life, and hardly less by their proposal to do away with inheritance, which he held to be intimately bound up with the solidarity of the family group. As we shall see, though in his most famous saying he defined property as 'theft', he was not an opponent of property itself, but only of what he regarded as its perversions under wrong institutional arrangements. The family and the individual were never separated in his mind: he thought of them as one and the same.

The family, then, stood within itself for a principle of social co-operation based on a national division of labour; and the wider society was made up of families between which there existed both a natural harmony and a natural discord. Each family would, by a law of nature, seek its own ends; but there was nothing, Proudhon held, to prevent the discords thus created from being sufficiently harmonised within a loose social framework based on reciprocal justice. It was the height of folly, he argued, to attempt to abolish the 'contradiction' between the self-seeking of the family and the solidarity which naturally bound together all the families in a common society. To do this would be to destroy all incentive to labour; for the effective incentive was the desire to improve the family lot. On this ground Proudhon denounced the Communism of Étienne Cabet and his followers as contrary to the fundamental nature of mankind: on this ground he repudiated every proposal to establish economic equality. Unequal labours, he said, must receive unequal rewards, and such rewards were fully in accordance with the principle of reciprocal justice. The common sense of ordinary people —

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peasants and workers — fully recognised this. Only the intellectuals were against it, because they did not understand the people.) What was needed was the abolition, not of inequality, but of injustice — that is, of inequalities resting not on unequal labours, but on privilege and monopoly. Every individual, every family, should receive the full fruit of their labours in accordance with the principle of fair exchange. It was this principle that all Proudhon's economic proposals were intended to further and to protect. On this he founded his conception of 'gratuitous credit', of 'mutuality', and of a society resting on 'free contracts' between its members. 'It is the business of the State only to pronounce on the justice of economic relationships, not to determine the manifestations of freedom.' Thus Proudhon expressed himself in his *Solution of the Social Problem*, written in 1848. In many of his books he refused to assign to 'the State' even this limited rôle; but in this work he was endeavouring to formulate an immediate programme for the new Government set up by the February Revolution. In the same passage he declared against Louis Blanc's demand for the 'organisation of labour'. 'It is not the *organisation of labour* that we need at this moment. The organisation of labour is the proper object of individual freedom. He who works hard gains much. The State has nothing further to say, in this matter, to the workers. What we need, what I call for in the name of all workers, is reciprocity, equity in exchange, the *organisation of credit*.'

This demand for a new credit system occupied a central position in Proudhon's positive programme. This above all, this almost alone, he held to be needed in order to enable the products of labour to be equitably exchanged and individual freedom to be assured. As fiercely as other monetary reformers he denounced the Gold Standard as the instrument whereby the monopolists were able to deny the right to produce wealth. No other standard was required, he maintained, than that furnished by the commodities themselves, as products of men's labour.) A credit system that made money available to everyone in proportion to his ability to produce would ensure full employment and high output without the need for any State system of Ateliers Nationaux or of any elaborate structure of associations. Gratuitous credit, limited only by productive

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power, would ensure ample markets and the rewarding of every producer in accordance with the social value of his product. This secured, there would be nothing further to be done by the State or by any other authority armed with compulsive power. The individual producers, using only such forms of voluntary association as the conditions of production made necessary, would do the rest for themselves.

Again and again Proudhon, in his voluminous writings, mingled criticism of the institutions of both landlordism and capitalism and also of most of his fellow 'Socialists' with a strong emphasis on the inherent capacity for self-expression and self-organisation to be found in the working classes. Self-taught as he was, he was convinced that the natural sagacity of the peasant rendered him easily capable of mastering any branch of knowledge it was in his interest to acquire. Proudhon himself was a very quick learner, and picked up without difficulty a vast amount of information about anything that he wanted to know. He was also, beyond doubt, a thoroughly competent business man. He taught himself book-keeping, to which throughout his life he attached great importance; and he engaged in various business operations, including the management of a transport concern.

Marx, when he first met Proudhon in Paris, in the middle 'forties, formed a high opinion of him and earnestly solicited his co-operation. Marx claimed to have initiated Proudhon, who knew no German, into the mysteries of the Hegelian philosophy, of which he had picked up some notion at second hand, and wanted to know more. But the two soon fell out. Marx charged Proudhon with misusing the Hegelian notion of 'contradiction' and of perverting the dialectic by his denial that 'contradictions' in society could ever be resolved. Proudhon, for his part, accused Marx of dogmatic system-making, of authoritarianism, and, most of all, of ungenerous treatment of his fellow Socialists, such as Karl Grün, whose influence Marx asked Proudhon to help him to undermine. When, in 1846, Proudhon published his ambitious economic study, *Système des contradictions économiques*, which bore the subtitle *Philosophie de la misère*, Marx retorted with a violent onslaught, which was also the first considerable exposition of his own economic doctrine. This attack on Proudhon for

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garbling the Hegelian Dialectic was contained in Marx's *Misère de la philosophie* (1847), later translated as *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Proudhon, it may be agreed, played endlessly with the idea of contradictions, oppositions and antinomies throughout his writings, and used a form of reasoning which had little in common with that of either Hegel or Marx. The difference, however, was not simply that Proudhon misunderstood Hegel, even if he did. It was that Proudhon differed radically from Marx in his entire philosophy. For Marx, as for Hegel, the essence of the Dialectic was that it represented reality in the triadic form of thesis and antithesis leading always to a higher synthesis, and thus, in the end, to a goal in which all contradictions would be resolved. Proudhon, on the other hand, regarded oppositions and contradictions in social affairs, not as imperfections to be resolved and superseded by the achievement of a synthesis of opposites, but as the very stuff of which society was and must continue to be made. The opposition between order and progress, between socialisation and individualism, between private property and collective ownership — all these were of the very fabric of social life, and solutions were to be sought, not by the elimination of either of the pairs or by reconciling them in a higher synthesis, but by arranging the institutions of society in such a way as to leave the antagonisms still in existence but sufficiently regulated by the rule of justice to allow the beneficial elements in them to operate without giving rein to the bad. It follows that whereas, for Marx, there was only one possible synthesis capable of resolving the antagonisms of thesis and antithesis, Proudhon's philosophy admitted of a variety of working solutions, and was thus directly in opposition to Marx's determinism and belief in the scientific predictability of the future course of civilisation. This, though often concealed by the form of the argument between the two, was the real division between them, and it goes very deep. In modern parlance, Proudhon was essentially a pluralistic, whereas Marx was a monistic and indeed a monolithic thinker.

Proudhon, it may be admitted, was often diffuse, long-winded and even pretentious. As a theoretical writer, he had many of the defects of the self-taught and undisciplined thinker who picks up from the prevailing atmosphere of speculation

whatever suits his purpose and is not worried by the untidiness or unsystematic character of his total doctrine. Indeed, Proudhon was set on not being dogmatic or systematic. He believed in an untidy world. Nevertheless — or perhaps because of this — he was often a very acute critic as well as a remarkable stylist, and his work is full of seminal ideas.

Let us consider rather more closely his onslaughts on his fellow Socialists, onslaughts from which he exempts Saint-Simon himself but by no means the Saint-Simonian Socialists of his own day. These attacks rest largely on his hostility to all *systems*. He insisted that the new order must grow naturally out of the prevailing conditions and could not be projected by pure exercise of the intellectual faculties. The 'revolution' — his favourite word — would be made by the people themselves and not by the scheme-making of revolutionary projectors. He attacked equally the 'State Socialists' of the School of Louis Blanc, the 'Associationists' who followed Fourier, the 'Communists' who followed Cabet, the Blanquist advocates of insurrectionism, and, later on, the Marxists when they had stated their rival doctrine of 'Scientific Socialism'. Against all these systems he set what he called 'the idea of the revolution' in the minds of the people — that is, the idea of social justice and of individual liberty as implicit in the great revolutionary movement of 1789, and as forming the basis for the true social movement of the nineteenth century. In attacking the 'State Socialists' he objected that democracy is no guarantee of sanity and that Parliamentary Government on a representative basis is not real democracy because no man can really represent another. Direct democracy (*i.e.* the plebiscite) he attacked no less strongly, on the ground that it makes directly for tyranny through setting one man or a small group of leaders over the people. Indeed, in Proudhon's view, all forms of *government* are wrong, because they all rest on a denial of human equality and set men in a wrong relation one to another. Proudhon, accordingly, hoped in the end to get rid of government altogether and to make the future organisation of society purely a matter of relations between man and man under conditions of the fullest mutual freedom. His leading idea was that of 'contract', which, he said again and again, was a notion perverted by Rousseau from its true meaning into a false

political formulation. The essence of 'contract', according to Proudhon, is that each man should be free to make what arrangements he pleases with other men under conditions which will ensure that all are in a position to bargain freely and that no monopoly of power or wealth upsets the fairness of the bargain. 'Contract', for Proudhon, was the essentially free commitment of the responsible individual, and therefore the necessary mode of action for men living in a free society. He carried this conception of 'contract' so far as to mistrust all forms of association which require men to give up direct action in their individual capacities in favour of action through any sort of collective or representative agency which takes away their personal responsibility. He admitted that where, for technical reasons, industries or services need to be organised on a large scale, association could not be avoided, but he wanted to keep it down to a minimum. He believed that by far the greater part of the work of society could be conducted on a basis of individual action without any need for collective organisation.

Proudhon always thought of society and of its problems mainly in terms of small-scale economic activity and of small social groups. He had indeed in mind mainly peasant families cultivating their small farms, or individual craftsmen carrying on small-scale production, and he regarded the tendency towards large-scale industrial organisation as mainly a result of economic inequality and wrong social conditions. He sometimes wrote as if he were hostile to all association, but he did not mean this in a literal sense any more than he meant to attack property in all its forms. He accepted the need for association among small-scale producers and in small groups for any purpose for which such association was useful in strengthening the position of the individual without taking away his independence. He tended, however, to think of the word 'association' as signifying a great deal more than group action in itself. In his day, the word 'association' was largely connected in people's minds, including his own, either with the pretensions of the Fourierists to solve the entire social problem by the association of men in self-contained communities following a comprehensive way of life of their own, or with such projects as Louis Blanc's, which involved grouping the *ateliers* into national corporations work-

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ing in accordance with a general plan of production. Such 'association' Proudhon cordially disliked. He wanted to maintain the family as the unit of economic, as well as of social, life and accordingly wished to limit association to the grouping for limited common purposes of men who lived an independent family life. Whereas most of his fellow-Socialists regarded 'associations' and collective activity as goods in themselves, because they would strengthen in men the spirit of collective responsibility and social service, Proudhon saw no need for any such reinforcement of the social bond. Indeed, he saw in association a danger of weakening individual incentive and undermining liberty. All association was, for Proudhon, at best a necessary evil, because of its tendency to restrict individual and family independence. When he said, 'Never, except in spite of himself and because he cannot help it, does man associate', he was thinking mainly of the kinds of association favoured by the Fourierists and other contemporary Socialist groups. He was not expressing any opposition to such association as the individual may need in order the better to carry on his activity by means of co-operative groupings for particular common purposes. He did, however, hold that association can play its right part only on a basis of individual freedom. The proper basis for society, he argued, is free exchange between individual producers on a basis of values created by labour; for Proudhon accepted the labour-time theory of value associated with Robert Owen and the English anti-capitalist economists whose views we have already considered.

This freedom of exchange Proudhon set out, as we saw, to secure by a system of what he called 'gratuitous credit' — that is to say, access to capital for all producers who were in a position to use it for producing marketable goods and services. He thought that this capital should be made available without interest, or rather at a rate of interest which was to be no more than enough to cover the administrative costs of the National Bank through which it was to be supplied. For a start he was prepared for a low rate of interest, sinking later to almost nothing as the new system got into full working order. The initial capital for the bank he wished to provide by means of a levy on the capitalist and landowning classes, including a levy

on the salaries of public officials — Proudhon had a very hearty dislike of functionaries. This National Bank, which was to be not a State-run but an autonomous institution, was to stand ready to provide free credit on a scale sufficient to ensure the means of labour to all, wherever possible individually, and in other cases — where large-scale production was unavoidable — through workers' associations. This is the system to which he gave the name '*mutuellisme*', from which his followers were often subsequently called '*mutuellistes*'.

Proudhon had some difficulty in applying his doctrine when he came to deal with the ownership of land. In his famous *Essay on Property*, which was his first important work, he had described property in general terms as theft ('*la propriété, c'est le vol*'), and had asserted that it was all extracted from the fruits of labour. He did not, however, as we saw, mean by this that all private property was to be done away with. He objected to it only when it assumed the form of an absolute ownership such as to imply a denial of the existence of a social interest in it. Property was one of those categories in which Proudhon found an opposition between individual and social claims that could be sufficiently reconciled only by holding a balance between private possession and collective right. He wished to ensure to every man the private possession of such property as he needed for actual use in production — for as long as he and his heirs actually used it and no longer. This, he thought, could be achieved in the case of the peasantry by handing over the ownership of land to the Communes, but giving full recognition to the peasant's desire for secure possession as a necessary means to the enjoyment of the fruits of his labour. He therefore proposed a system of guaranteed right to occupation of the land, subject to actual productive use of it, including the right of the peasant to pass on the land to his heirs provided they were in a position to carry on its cultivation.

It will be seen that these ideas of Proudhon's, although they aim at the abolition of the State as an institution, contemplate the continued existence of a system of law which will guarantee the essential foundations of his reformed system of property and of his Bank for gratuitous credit. He did not think of the abolition of the State as involving the absence of a constitution



or of a legal basis for his new society. The State to which he objected was what he called the State of 'politics', as opposed to the constitutional structure required to furnish a right basis for the organisation of work.

Society, Proudhon was always saying, echoing in this Saint-Simon, must be organised not for politics but for work. He was deeply imbued with the idea that there is a 'natural' economy based on mutual exchange which will secure a balance of interests as long as it is not interfered with either by state action or by monopoly. He argued that division of labour, acclaimed by Adam Smith as the principle underlying the wealth of nations, degrades the workers under capitalism, which subdivides the labour processes more and more, whereas, under a system of free exchange and individual production, division of labour would create plenty for all without need for this anti-human subdivision. Similarly competition, which beats down the workers under capitalism, would become a good under conditions of free exchange, because then it would be open to all and not limited to those who had a monopoly of the ownership of capital or of access to the market. Proudhon anticipated Marx's doctrine that the division of labour enables the owner of capital to appropriate the benefits of advancing social co-operation and to keep wages at subsistence level. He differed, however, from Marx in his theory of value. According to Proudhon, exchange equally with production creates value through the labour employed in it — for there is no valid economic distinction between production, distribution and exchange. All alike merely change the form of things. Marx attacked Proudhon on this point, alleging that Proudhon's theory of value was that of a *petit-bourgeois* economist, with a tenderness for the claims of the shopkeeper and the artisan who traded in his own products. Indeed Proudhon, though he insisted continually on the creative capacity of the working classes, thinking of the workers in terms mainly not of wage labour but of the peasant tilling his patch of land and the artisan engaged in individual production, always ranked the small master craftsmen and traders as members of the productive classes. Any useful work, in Proudhon's view, created value, and was entitled to its reward in accordance with the estimation put upon it by the buyer. The higgling of a really

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free market would secure to each man the equivalent of the value he created, whether as a direct producer or by helping the consumer to get what he wanted. Every useful worker was entitled, in common justice, to receive what his labour was worth to other men. This was the basis on which Proudhon rested his attack on economic equality. He rejected Louis Blanc's formula, 'From each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs', as inconsistent with the notion of contracts based on exchanges of equal products, which was fundamental in his thought. Reward, he held, should be proportionate to service, to the nature of position, to talents, and to the responsibility of the individual producer. This followed from his notion of 'free contract' as the economic basis of the new society.

Politically, as we have seen, Proudhon had no belief in representative democracy. He denied that there was any power in the multitude to divine the merits of candidates for election, or that there was any special 'principle of right in the collective that can be elected by ballot'. Politics, for Proudhon, always meant centralisation, to which he was bitterly opposed. It meant a concentration of power and a proportionate loss of liberty to the individual, who could find his freedom only if he were released from authority and status and left to settle his own affairs on terms of free contract. His belief in the creative capacity of the ordinary individual was high, but he thought that this capacity could be best exercised on a small scale, in matters which the individual himself was in a position to manage and to control and on which he could accordingly be expected to reach a rational judgment.

This makes Proudhon very much the ancestor of much Syndicalist and Anarchist-Communist thought, though the Syndicalists diverged from his extreme individualism in putting the emphasis on Trade Unionism and the Anarchist-Communists in putting it on local communal associations. Proudhon's distrust of politics further led him to a denial of the Marxian doctrine that the proletariat could emancipate itself by political or revolutionary action. The proletariat, he said, lacks leaders of the required capacity to choose from except in small affairs, nor can it hope to win the control of society unless it can secure the alliance of the peasants and the

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small masters, who are its natural allies against the politicians and the high priests of finance. 'To you, bourgeois, I dedicate these essays', he wrote at the beginning of his *General Idea of Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, pleading for conciliation between the middle and working classes. This made him, despite his frequent violence of language, essentially a moderate in action, and ranged him against the Marxists, who scorned the *petite bourgeoisie* as an obsolescent class and insisted on the dialectical antithesis between *bourgeoisie* and proletariat as the only real contestants for power.

No account of Proudhon's doctrines can omit reference to his attitude towards religion. Throughout his life, he was a determined opponent of the Catholic Church, contrasting the ecclesiastical conception of justice with the idea of social justice of which he regarded the great French Revolution as the torch-bearer. He was equally hostile to the attempts of certain of his contemporaries to found the new social order on the basis of a new religion. Saint-Simon's 'New Christianity', as developed by *Enfantin* and the later Saint-Simonians, repelled him, and he was no less repelled by Comte's conception of a religion of humanity based upon the Positivist doctrine of social evolution. All these religions, new and old, seemed to him to stand for a principle of authority which denied the right and capacity of the common people to make their own way of life by their personal efforts and by their voluntary collaboration for common purposes. But he did not deny God, though he attacked organised religion. He regarded Churches much as he regarded the State, as illegitimate impositions on human freedom and as tricksters manipulating human credulity for their own ends. He thought of true religion as a personal matter, calling for neither authority nor organisation, but only for the willing service of the individual human spirit. This, however, led him to a completely laicist outlook in respect of ecclesiastical intervention in social affairs. Proudhon's laicism has been not the least persistent among the strong elements of influence which he has contributed to later French social thought. It has, however, nothing in common with Marx's Dialectical Materialism, with which it is sometimes confused, for Proudhon regarded Marx's deterministic interpretation of history as yet another authoritarian system, calculated

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to continue the bad tradition of the old authoritarianism of the Catholic Church.

It remains to add that, true to his peasant outlook and to his strong belief in the family as the essential unit of social life, Proudhon was opposed to the views of many of his Socialist contemporaries concerning the emancipation of women. For him, woman's place was the home — that is, the peasant home in which the woman played a key part as the colleague, though the inferior colleague, of her husband in the work of farm and dairy and in the multifarious operations of the enlarged peasant household. On this basis, he asserted the supremacy of the male as head of the family group and fell foul particularly of the Saint-Simonians, whom he regarded as the potential destroyers of the family as the essential social unit.

Proudhon is an unmistakably original thinker, whose opinions were for the most part derived, not from other theorists, but directly from his personal experience and outlook on society. The strongest influence on his thought that did come from books was that of Rousseau — the Rousseau, not of *Du contrat social*, but of the Discourses on the *Arts and Sciences* and the *Origin of Inequality*, and of *Émile* and the *Lettres écrites de la montagne*. He shared to the full Rousseau's distrust of the intellectuals, his exaltation of *les sentiments*, and his view of man's infinite corruptibility under the influence of 'civilisation'. Like Rousseau, again, he worshipped 'nature', and reacted sharply against modernity in all its forms. But these opinions were not so much derived from Rousseau as the expression of his deep love of the family and of the independent peasant or artisan household living by its own collective labour under patriarchal rule. Thus, Anarchist and revolutionary though he is, he has not a little in common with the apostles of social reaction; and it is easy to discover in his writings passages that might have been written by ardent Catholics in revolt against democracy, or by Fascists denouncing soulless plutocracy, or of course by such irrationalists as Pareto or Sorel. Finally, he was very French. It never entered his head to doubt that France was the centre of the world or that the social struggle as it was working itself out in France was *the* struggle of humanity towards the achievement of social justice.

I am conscious that in this attempt to summarise Proudhon's

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place in the development of Socialist thought I may have made him sound more consistent and coherent than most of those who read his works will be likely to find him. On a first reading he appears to be continually contradicting himself, both from one book to another and even from page to page. This appearance is largely due to his love of paradox, and even more to his belief that life itself is made up of insoluble contradictions, which it is the business of the social projector, not to reconcile, but only to conciliate. He wrote, in his *Solution of the Social Problem*, as follows :

No great effort of reflection is needed in order to understand that justice, union, accord, harmony, fraternity itself, necessarily presupposes two opposites ; and that, unless one falls into the absurd notion of absolute identity, that is to say, absolute nothingness, contradiction is the fundamental law, not only of society, but of the universe. That is also the first law which I proclaim, in agreement with religion and philosophy : that is, Contradiction — universal antagonism. But just as life implies contradiction, contradiction in its turn calls for justice ; which leads to the second law of creation and humanity — the mutual interaction of antagonistic elements, or *Reciprocity*.

Reciprocity, in creation, is the principle of existence. In the social order, reciprocity is the principle of social reality, the formula of justice. It has for its basis the eternal antagonism of ideas, of opinions, of passions, of capacities, of temperaments, and of interests. It is the condition of life itself.

This is the expression, not of Hegelianism misunderstood, but of a totally different philosophy, with much less in common with Hegel than with Kant's conception of 'men's unsocial sociality'. It was Marx who misunderstood Proudhon, not Proudhon who failed to comprehend Marx's lessons in the Hegelian Dialectic.

The immense list of Proudhon's works forbids mention here of more than a very small selection from his writings. His earliest work was an *Essai de grammaire générale* (1837), containing a number of speculations on the development of language — the outcome of an early friendship. Then came an essay on Sunday observance — *De la célébration du dimanche, considérée sous les rapports de l'hygiène publique, de la morale,*

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*des relations de famille et de cité* (1839), followed by his first popular success *Qu'est-ce que la propriété ?* (1840). Thereafter he published roughly a book a year, up to his *Système des contradictions économiques* (1846). In 1848 and the following years he edited a series of journals, of which the best known is *Le Peuple*, and produced, at first serially, his *Solution du problème social*, already mentioned. *L'Idée générale de la révolution au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, often regarded as his most important work, appeared in 1851. Of his later works published in his lifetime the following stand out: *De la justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église* (1858), *La Guerre et la paix* (1861), and *Du principe fédératif* (1863). Many of his writings were published posthumously. The most significant of these is *De la capacité politique des classes ouvrières* (1865), on which he was still working at the time of his death. In addition he wrote many books and brochures dealing with contemporary issues as they arose, and some of his most acute comments are to be found in the note-books which he kept from day to day at certain times of crisis. These are full of apposite comments on current events, especially during the critical period of the European revolutions in and after 1848. Professor Dolléans has made much use of these in his *Life of Proudhon*, which is I think the best, though it is somewhat difficult to follow without a good deal of detailed knowledge of French radical history.

If it is difficult to summarise Proudhon's doctrine, it is no less difficult to estimate his influence. In France this has been profound and permanent. Proudhon's influence was predominant among the Parisian workers during the 1850s and 1860s, and controlled the French section of the International Working Men's Association during the early years of that body's existence. It was carried on into the later developments both of French Co-operation and of the French Trade Union movement. Internationally, Proudhon's influence has been greatest on the development of Anarchist and semi-Anarchist doctrines, especially on the less militant types of Anarchism. He deserves, indeed, to be called the father of the Anarchist movement, though as we have seen, the theory of Anarchism had been already developed before the name arose by a number of earlier writers, above all by William Godwin.

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RIGHT up to the revolutionary year, 1848, France was unquestionably the centre of Socialism and of Socialist thought. The only great Socialist thinker before Marx who was not a Frenchman was Robert Owen : Babeuf, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Enfantin, Leroux, Cabet, Blanqui, Louis Blanc, Buchez, and Proudhon were all Frenchmen. So was Lamennais. Against these names, with the single exception of Robert Owen, can be set, until well on into the 1840s, only the anti-capitalist economists in Great Britain — Hall, Thompson, Hodgskin, Gray, and J. F. Bray — the Christian Owenite John Minter Morgan — and, in Germany, or rather of it, for he was seldom there himself, Wilhelm Weitling. There are, indeed, a few others in Germany of whose claims it is necessary to take some account — J. G. Fichte, who was a sort of socialiser if not a Socialist in any sense that links him to the other thinkers considered in this volume, and, as precursors of Marxism, Feuerbach, and a varied assortment of 'Young Hegelians' — the Bauer brothers, Moses Hess, Arnold Ruge, and a number more. There were also, in the 1840s, groups of German exiles in London, Brussels, and Paris who live on in a corner of history largely because they became the collaborators (and often later the enemies) of Marx. And there are of course such great figures as Godwin and Paine who, scarcely Socialists themselves, are nevertheless important precursors of Socialist doctrines. There are, besides, lesser figures such as Thomas Spence and other early advocates of land reform, and such unknowns as Piercy Ravenstone.

None of these exceptions invalidates the general conclusion : Paris, up to 1848, was the place where every sort of socialistic, anarchistic, communistic theory of social organisation was thrown out, endlessly discussed, and subjected to the scrutiny of rival theorists, not merely in holes and corners or

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by limited groups of cranks and 'sea-lawyers' but *coram populo* in the most influential newspapers, in clubs and societies which attracted a wide following, in pamphlets and *affiches* and hand-bills, in cafés and in the streets — in fact everywhere. This was not only because France — and especially Paris — had been the scene of the great Revolution of 1789 and had then undergone a profound upset to its social as well as to its political institutions. That counted for much; for no new order had been effectively stabilised to take the place of the *ancien régime* and the entire future of the country and of its institutions was still under daily debate. What also counted was that France of the eighteenth century had been the principal home of philosophical speculation both about the developing powers of the applied intellect as manifested in science and about man as a social animal, man in his relations to other men and to nature, man both as a natural object and as a creative force working upon nature. Montesquieu and La Mettrie, Voltaire and Diderot, d'Holbach and Helvétius, Turgot and Condorcet, had all helped to open the great debate and to clear the way for the conflicts of Girondins and Jacobins and all the other groups which after 1789 disputed about the future of France and of humanity, and, as a sequel, for the renewed clamour of voices which followed Napoleon's eclipse. In Germany too there had been, in the eighteenth century, high debate about man and his place in the natural world — among the successors of Leibniz and among the contemporaries and successors of Immanuel Kant. But there was a difference. In France, under the *ancien régime*, the debate had already taken a social and political turn. In Germany it had remained on the plane of high philosophy and had been concerned much more with the processes of cognition than with the springs of action.

This was largely because, from 1789 onwards, urban France was aware of the presence in its midst of powerful and novel forces capable of explosive action. For a time, under Napoleon, these forces were diverted into military adventure; but as soon as the wars were over they reasserted themselves. Saint-Simon had attempted to comprehend them all within the single category of '*l'industrie*', embracing both the developing forces of capitalism and engineering technique and the working class.



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The peasant, having got the land, or much of it, into his own hands, had ceased to be an explosive element: the towns, above all Paris, were the acting as well as the talking centres of the new era. Germany, as compared with France, had neither a powerful capitalist class nor a proletariat in ferment. German philosophy, as Marx and Engels pointed out in *The German Ideology*, bombinated in a social and economic vacuum, and occupied itself with ideas rather than with material realities. Even when, as in Fichte and Hegel, it turned to political thought, its approach was from the angle of Idealist speculation, not from that of the practical politician or social innovator with his eye on the man in the street and his immediate economic and social preoccupations. Fichte might strive to rouse the spirit of the nation against French aggression; but it was to the nation he appealed, not to *les industriels* or to the working class. Hegel might create a new, totalitarian theory of the State; but in his theory the economic factors played no important part and gave rise to no distinctively new doctrine. Only in France did the developments of philosophy and of economic and class relations so come together as to generate the great debate about Socialism which carried scholars into the barricaded streets as well as reflective workmen into the study, made theologians into iconoclasts and engineers into social projectors, and brought into being the fascinating interplay of forces and ideas which the exiled Heine, and later Alexander Herzen, so acutely observed and recorded.

In a later chapter we shall have to consider why Great Britain, so much further advanced economically than France, showed no corresponding proliferation of socialistic and communistic theories. Britain too had its deep social discontents, even its secret societies, plots and uprisings. It had in Robert Owen one of the great Socialist projectors; and it showed the way in the development of anti-capitalist economic theories (with only Sismondi to rival it in this field). But London was never at all like Paris: in Great Britain there was no equivalent to the Parisian workers to put the very centre of the national life perpetually agog with anxiety. Neither workers nor intellectuals were strong enough to shake the very pillars of British society, or at any rate to overthrow them, even for a time. For one thing, France was centralised, as England was not, either

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in its political or in its economic affairs. The Government of the English aristocracy was diffused through the country: London was the seat of government but never the source of governmental power. The new industrialism, moreover, grew up in the North and Midlands, remote from London; and accordingly the main centres of working-class influence were not in the metropolis, so as to bring their weight to bear directly on the politicians assembled in Parliament and in Whitehall, but far away. In France, Paris was the main centre of working-class activity, with only Lyons in the provinces, and to a small extent Marseilles, to give it support; whereas in England Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Nottingham, Leeds, and a dozen other places supplied the driving force, and London counted for relatively little and could be easily overawed on most occasions by the police, with only occasional need for reinforcement by the military power. French centralisation and the concentration of the French proletariat in Paris counted for much in making France the home of the 'permanent revolution'. No other country was at all similarly situated. Only in France was the Revolution a continuously living force, which no one could ignore or forget.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the development of socialistic ideas in Germany and among Germans up to the point at which Marx created that distinctively German Socialism which was soon to assume an ideological dominance over most of the continent, driving the older forms of Socialism before it as chaff before the wind. Not that Marxism ever succeeded in expelling the earlier doctrines: what it did was to drive them for the most part out of the Socialist movement to seek habitations elsewhere — in Co-operation, in the various forms of Anarchism, even in so-called 'Radical-Socialism' — better termed 'Social Radicalism' — and in so-called 'Christian Socialism' within the bosom of the Catholic Church. The older Socialisms lived on, even after Marx had borrowed the label of 'Utopianism' to fasten upon them. But Marxism drove them out of the centre of both argument and organisation. On what, then — on what antecedents in the realms of theory and practice — did Marxism itself rest?

That it was distinctively a German doctrine no one who reads Marx can doubt. The connection with Hegelianism is

too manifest, not merely in Marx's phraseology, but in the very texture of his thought. He himself, in describing the evolution of his doctrine, laid stress on its German foundations, at the same time as he paid tribute to the French as having taught him the social and economic implications of his philosophical inheritance.

Yet the most important of the pre-Marxian thinkers who has been claimed as a founder of German Socialism was also pre-Hegelian, and professed an idealistic philosophy radically different from Hegel's. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) based his philosophical approach on that of Kant, from which Hegel's philosophy was a thorough breakaway. Fichte has sometimes been regarded — for example, by Bertrand Russell, in his *History of Western Philosophy* — as a joint precursor with Hegel of the metaphysical, totalitarian view of the State; but in truth he was nothing of the sort. Far from being a State-worshipper, he was the proponent of a theory which set society above the State and, as far as he exalted the 'collective', conceived of it in terms of a national spirit embodied in the entire complex of social institutions and traditions, and not in any one supreme governing authority. Even his nationalism, though enthusiastic, was not exclusive. He looked to every nation, according to its spirit and tradition, to contribute in its own way towards the achievement of the human spirit. His call, in his celebrated *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807-8) was for a rally of the German people against Napoleon's imperialism, not for German political supremacy over other peoples.

We are here concerned with Fichte and his philosophy, and with his politics, only in their bearing on the claim that he is to be regarded as the ancestor of German Socialism. This claim rests mainly on two of his numerous books, *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat* (*The Closed Commercial State*, 1800) and his lectures of 1813 on *Staatslehre* (*Theory of the State*). In these writings Fichte bases on his ethical theory, which lays great stress on individual creative activity expressing itself through 'inter-personal' associative behaviour, a demand that every man be given the means of expressing his personality in labour carried on in association with his fellows in an occupation suitable to his natural bent. This, he argued, involves

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a right of access to the means of production which will safeguard the labourer's right to his product. Society's method of securing this is to establish a system of self-governing productive corporations co-ordinating their efforts and exchanging their products by mutual agreement. These corporations should own the means of production, and should carry on the economic life of society apart from the political State, as autonomous organs of society as a whole. In his later work Fichte modified his doctrine, by assigning to the State the task of bringing the proposed corporations into existence and of defining their powers ; but he never proposed that the State itself should take charge of the work of production. His proposals, in their later form, were akin both to Louis Blanc's conception of the relations of his Ateliers Nationaux to the government and to that of the Orage-Hobson school of National Guildsmen in the twentieth century ; for the latter proposed that the National Guilds that were to control industry should be constituted and should act under charter from the State. The great difference was, of course, that Fichte had no notion of his corporations being based on Trade Unions or on any militant working-class movement, or indeed on any form of predominantly working-class association. He was thinking in terms, not of a struggle for power between rival classes, or of a revolt against exploitation, but simply of establishing the individual's social right to whatever was needed to ensure opportunity to express his personality in useful service to society. In modern terms, he had the idea of a 'national minimum' assured to all ; but he was not a democrat, and did not propose that his corporations should be democratically controlled.

Fichte's 'Socialism' was formulated in a Germany which was unready to pay attention to it. His influence, which was great, was based on his nationalism and on his development of the Kantian philosophy in the realms of the theory of knowledge and of morals, and not on his proposals for a new form of economic organisation. Indeed, Fichte's influence made in the direction of a strongly subjectivist development of Kant's ethical philosophy, and away from those elements in Kant's thought which had been most directly derived from Rousseau. Fichte, in the sphere of morals and speculation, emphasised

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almost as much as Max Stirner after him the pre-eminent importance of the rationality of the individual human spirit, and his disciples, far from wishing to merge their personal identities in the 'universal mind', were intensely preoccupied with establishing their individual moral accommodations with the realm of reason. Fichte's 'Socialism' was essentially individualistic in its moral foundations; and because of this his 'socialistic' ideas were the more readily submerged in the torrent of Hegel's metaphysical attack on the entire subjectivist position. For Hegel the State was above Society, whereas for Fichte Society was above the State. Hegel too proposed a structure of corporations for the conduct of industry; but Hegel's corporations were to be merely a part of the structure of 'Civil Society', standing at a lower level of reality, and subject to the universal law of obedience to the supreme will of the State. Fichte's later formulation of his views had no such metaphysical content: the purpose of his corporations, from first to last, was to serve the needs of individual men in their social relations, not any higher unity transcending them as co-operating individual powers in their own right.

Fichte, however, was an Idealist, though he was not a totalitarian. He believed in the nation as a real unity, not absorbing into itself the individuals who made it up, but inspiring them with an ethical purpose which enabled them to reach a higher level of personal self-realisation and achievement. In this spirit he was insistent on the need for a co-ordinated, planned society, organised as a self-subsistent system and subordinating its relations with other societies to the requirements of its autarchic unity. In his writings there appears plainly the notion, not merely of a nationalistic Protectionism designed to secure this self-subsistence, but also of a kind of collectivism as the means to its orderly realisation. This makes him the ancestor, though not of 'National Socialism' in its Nazi sense, of the sort of national policy which sets out to achieve 'Socialism in one country'. He is emphatically both nationalist and plannist, and therewith a believer in the national 'hero' as a maker of history — the aspect of his doctrine which most deeply influenced Carlyle.

During the period after Napoleon's final defeat there was no development in Germany of socialistic ideas, or even of

revolutionary organisation such as there was in France. There were liberal movements in the various German States, as reconstituted after 1815; but they had no tinge of Socialism, and the working classes played in them only a small part. Indeed, 'social' ideas found expression, as in the work of Franz von Baader, mainly in association with highly conservative, or even reactionary, political principles. Baader, for example, in pleading for the recognition of the need to guarantee the 'proletarians' (the word is his own) a tolerable standard of living, regarded such a guarantee as the modern equivalent of the feudal landlord's paternalistic responsibility for the welfare of his dependants, and argued for the preservation of the system of estates (*Stände*) and guilds as the means of staving off the advance of liberal-democratic notions. Baader and other political reactionaries who were also possessed by a social conscience continued to think in terms of a society dominated by agriculture and small-scale craft production. There was indeed in Germany no working-class movement beyond the old societies of skilled artisans; and these, where they had any political aspects, attached themselves to the liberal movements for constitutional reform. Only in 1830 did the French Revolution which established the *bourgeois* monarchy have some repercussions that gave a limited vogue to French socialistic ideas. The Saint-Simonians sent missionaries to spread their gospel in Germany, but with scant effect. What new thinking there was developed mainly out of the conflicts among philosophers and literary men; and even for them there was, under the censorship, only a very restricted freedom of discussion. There were, however, the seeds of intellectual revolt in these abstract controversies; and, especially within the dominant Hegelian school of thought, left-wing interpretations began to develop, becoming stronger in the 1830s, but not reaching a climax until the early 'forties, when the influence of Feuerbach became widespread.

In default of new German ideas on the economic and social order, after 1830 French ideas began to filter in, and to find followers among the German workers, at first without much contact with the 'left' philosophers. The most important of the apostles of this French-inspired German Socialism was Wilhelm Weitling (1808-71), himself the illegitimate son of a

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French officer and a German domestic servant. Weitling became a tailor — the tailors' clubs were the most affected by radical ideas — and gained a considerable influence. In accordance with the custom of the trade, he travelled through many parts of Germany making converts, but presently left Prussia in order to escape military service. Settling in France about 1836 he came under the influence of the groups round Blanqui and Cabet, and joined forces with the German exiles in Paris led by Felix Schuster, for whom he drew up his manifesto, *Man as he is and as he ought to be* (1838). Compromised in Blanqui's rising of 1839, he escaped to Switzerland, and there published his most important work *Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom* (1842). He was imprisoned in Switzerland in 1843, and was handed over to the Prussian Government, which, in order to get rid of him, allowed him to emigrate to the United States. On his way thither he stayed some time in London, where he established contacts with the organised group of German Socialist exiles headed by Moll, Schapper and Eccarius, and gained a considerable influence. He also spent some time in Brussels, where he crossed swords with Marx. In 1846 he went to America, but returned in 1848, to go back after the failure of the German Revolution and spend the rest of his days carrying on his propaganda among the workers of the United States.

Marx at first praised Weitling highly, as the first authoritative voice of the German proletariat, but subsequently fell foul of him in the course of the struggle between rival ideologies which rent the societies of German Socialist exiles during the 1840s. Weitling was, in Marx's view, essentially an 'utopian'. He had taken from Babeuf, Blanqui and Cabet the doctrine of absolute social equality, and in his writings he sought to link this idea with primitive Christianity. He was a complete utopian Communist, *à la Cabet*, and a believer in Blanqui's conception of the *coup d'état* as a means of arriving at the society of his dreams. Marx regarded such an attitude as entirely inappropriate to the conditions of contemporary Germany: he was against *émeutes* that were bound to fail and favoured support of the German liberals as a necessary stage in the development of the German working-class movement. Accordingly, he set himself to combat Weitling's influence;

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but it was not until Weitling had gone to America that Marx and Engels succeeded in establishing their ascendancy in the societies of German exiles in London, Paris, and Brussels.

Weitling, deeply as he was influenced by the French utopians, combined with his Communism a marked distrust of 'intellectuals'. 'In the end they will devour one another', he said of the rival socialistic sects. He was very conscious of his own status as a workman — probably the more so because of his unproletarian origin on the father's side ; and he always insisted that the workers' emancipation must be their own doing. His Communism was indeed a very simple doctrine of human brotherhood, quite innocent of intellectual subtleties ; and he had no use for the Hegelian philosophers who were busy developing German Socialism as a theory quite unrelated to political practice. He wanted action by the workers — action in the spirit of New Testament Christianity : among the Young Hegelians he found himself out of his depth and responded by mistrusting them as self-destructive logic-choppers devoid of real feeling for the masses.

Weitling, in addition to his utopian Communism, was strongly internationalist and anti-militarist. He laid great stress on the brotherhood of all men, and on the necessarily cosmopolitan character of the working-class movement. As a propagandist, he was excitable, and often confused. But his sincerity and depth of feeling were beyond question, and, though he loved to play the 'great man', he was widely loved and respected. In the United States he founded the Emancipation League and a journal, *The Workers' Republic* (1850-55), published in German, and devoted himself largely to the advocacy of Labour Banks. In Europe his influence disappeared after 1846, and for a long time his name was almost forgotten.

The organisation of the German Socialist workers outside Germany began in Paris about 1832. There were many skilled German craftsmen working abroad, in Paris, Brussels, London, and other centres, including a number who had fled after the troubles of 1830. The earliest group seems to have formed round the shoemaker, Efrahem, who published about 1833 a remarkable pamphlet calling for a Union of all the trade societies. This group soon joined the League of the Banished.



established in 1834 under the leadership of the lawyer, Theodor Schuster, who had been much influenced by the Saint-Simonians and by Sismondi. The League included, besides many kinds of Socialist, a non-Socialist moderate wing; and in 1836 the Socialists broke away from it, still under Schuster's leadership, and formed a new body, the League of the Just, which entered into close relations with Blanqui's Société des Saisons. This was the body which soon came under Weitling's influence; but it still contained rival groups, one mainly Communist, in the sense of aiming at a completely equal Republic by means of revolutionary uprising, while the other favoured in the first instance a campaign for universal suffrage. It was for this League that Weitling drafted his 1838 booklet, *Man as he is and as he ought to be*.

The League of the Just was broken up by the defeat of Blanqui's attempted *coup* of 1839. Engels, writing many years later, spoke of it as having maintained its secret existence right up to the establishment of the Communist League in 1847. If it did, its proceedings were so secret that no record of them has survived. What is much more probable is that relations were kept up between the members who had dispersed to various centres in 1839 and 1840, without any formal organisation remaining in existence. The largest group of members of the League went to London, where they joined forces with other Germans who were working there. Karl Schapper, Josef Moll, and Heinrich Bauer, on their settlement in London, found their most important allies in the tailor, Georg Eccarius, who was already building up a position for himself in the British trade union movement, and was later to become a close ally of Marx and secretary of the First International — only to break away still later from Marx's influence and to devote himself entirely to trade union affairs. In 1842 Engels, on his arrival in England, established contact with this group, which had set up in London a German Workers' Educational Society devoted to instruction in Socialist ideas.

A second group had established itself in Brussels; and a considerable number of German Socialists had remained in Paris, or came there after 1839. The Paris group came in the 1840s largely under the influence of Karl Grün, who had close relations with Proudhon, some of whose works he translated

into German. But from 1843 to 1845 Marx, driven out of Germany, was also living in Paris ; and between him and Grün a sharp animosity soon developed. Marx, who was at this time on good terms with Proudhon, tried to get him to break with Grün, but was sharply repulsed, and presently fell into a bitter dispute with Proudhon as well. In 1845 Marx was expelled from France and moved to Brussels, where he remained until 1848, except for a period in England with Engels in 1845. In Brussels Marx set out to capture the group of German exiles, forming a Workers' Educational Society on the model of the London body.

Marx and Engels had been working in close association since 1844, when they had met in Paris. Engels had submitted for publication in the *German-French Yearbooks*, which Marx was editing, an article criticising the orthodox classical political economy — an article which can be regarded both as drawing largely on the anti-Ricardian British economists and as an anticipation of the doctrines which Marx developed in his lecture-pamphlet on *Wage-Labour and Capital* and later in his *Critique of Political Economy* and in *Capital*. Marx undoubtedly owed to Engels his first knowledge of the Socialist economic theories already prevalent in Great Britain ; and it was also Engels who taught him that his philosophical speculations, at that stage still largely divorced from practical affairs, needed to be complemented by a good knowledge of economic developments and working-class movements in Great Britain — then by far the most advanced capitalist country. Engels was then writing his *Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844*, which appeared, in German, in January 1845 ; and Marx's visit to England was made for the purpose of supplementing what Engels could tell him by seeing English conditions with his own eyes.

From the first Engels, though he contributed, I think, fully as much as Marx to this partnership in its earlier phases, was content to accept Marx's leadership. It was Engels who broke down Marx's isolation from the practical side of the working-class and Socialist movement, and was mainly responsible for drawing Marx into the struggle to bring into being a new body, under German leadership but with international aims, to replace and transcend the defunct League of the Just. The two began

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their collaboration with a series of polemics against the main groups of German philosophical Socialists, and against the prevailing 'left-wing' German ideologies of the day. *The Holy Family*, directed against the 'Young Hegelians', Bruno and Edgar Bauer, and the two volumes of the long-unpublished *German Ideology* are the monuments erected in the course of this process of intellectual clarification, from which they emerged, fortified by Engels's knowledge of factory industry and of British conditions, ready to lead a new proletarian movement and very well assured that they, and they alone, knew how to give it form and direction.

Their way was smoothed by Weitling's departure, which removed their most powerful antagonist, though Grün remained in Paris to oppose them. At an earlier stage, Engels had been invited by the London group to become a member but had refused. But in 1847 Moll came from London to Brussels to invite Marx's co-operation in linking up the societies of Germans in the various centres into a single 'Communist' movement; and Marx and Engels, scenting the signs of coming revolution in Europe, agreed. In the summer of 1847 Engels attended in London a meeting at which it was decided to take steps to establish a Communist League, mainly German in the first instance, but with the aim of creating an international movement. It was also decided to prepare and issue a Manifesto, proclaiming the principles and objects of the new body. A few months later Marx himself went to London, where he addressed a demonstration in support of Poland organised by the Fraternal Democrats and participated in a further preparatory conference of the Socialist groups, at which he was entrusted with the task of drawing up the proposed *Communist Manifesto*, after its terms had been discussed and the lines which it was to follow broadly laid down for his guidance. He had preliminary drafts by Engels and others to work on; and, back in Brussels, he got the work done in January 1848, just in time for it to be published as the actual Revolution was breaking out over a large part of Europe.

The analysis of this famous document must be reserved for a further chapter. Before we come to it, some further consideration must be given both to its ideological antecedents and to the path by which Marx had travelled from his Hegelian

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beginnings to the 'inverted Hegelianism' of the Materialist Conception of History.

As we have seen, the German 'Socialist' ideologists of the period before Marx's ascendancy had either confined their speculations to the realms of philosophy and theology, or, when they ventured into the economic and social field, had lived mainly on French ideas at second hand. There had been a divorce, not complete but considerable, between the speculations of the 'Young Hegelian' and Feuerbachian schools and the German workmen who were influenced by Weitling or, working in exile, became disciples of Blanqui or Cabet or Louis Blanc or some other French Socialist leader. Seeing no hope of peaceful change in their own country, the exiled German workers naturally tended to revolutionism, which blended easily with utopian aspirations towards a totally new social order. Marx, on the other hand, was convinced both that such speculations were futile and that, after the failure of 1839, the chances of a successful *coup d'état* by a small, determined minority had disappeared. He and Engels had therefore to oppose both the utopianism of the groups they wished to influence and their tendency to think in terms of proletarian insurrection. Of course, Marx and Engels too were revolutionaries: they objected, not to revolutionism, but to the notion that the class-conscious section of the workers was strong enough to accomplish it alone. In Germany at any rate they were certain that the revolution would have to begin mainly as a *bourgeois* revolution against autocracy. They hoped that, when this happened, the workers would be strong enough both to keep their independence while helping the *bourgeoisie* to overthrow the old *régime*, and speedily to turn on their allies in the aftermath of victory and convert the *bourgeois* revolution into a second revolution under the leadership of the conscious elements of the proletariat and of its supporters from the intellectual classes.

Thus, in order to create the movement they wanted, they had to wean the German Working Men's Societies from their allegiance to the various brands of utopianism and also to hold in check their tendency to think in terms of purely proletarian *émeutes*. They had to fight Blanquism (Blanqui himself was away in prison), as well as Icarian Communism, and all the

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rest of the sectarian doctrines of the various schools. But if they had pursued their battle openly on both these fronts they would have stood no chance of winning the support they wanted. They could afford to attack the various kinds of utopianism only if they succeeded in sounding revolutionary enough not to antagonise the Blanquists. Some of the sound and fury of the *Communist Manifesto* is certainly the product of this necessity. The Communist League of 1847 wanted a clear call to revolution ; and in the circumstances, with actual revolution boiling up over most of Europe, Marx and Engels were ready to give it to them, and not to emphasise, in the *Manifesto*, to how great an extent the Revolution in practice was bound to be made under *bourgeois* leadership — above all in Germany.

BRUNO BAUER, HESS, AND GRÜN — THE  
'TRUE SOCIALISTS'

WE can now go back to the developments, mainly during the 1840s, of the intellectual movement of German leftism from which Marx and Engels broke away. This movement arose, as we have seen, largely out of the leftist tendencies, on the philosophical plane, which split the young generation brought up in the atmosphere of Hegelian State-worship. Hegel, ousting the influence of Kant and Fichte, had become the official philosopher of Prussia and of the Prussian-led movement towards German unity. Where Kant and Fichte had set out from the individual man and the power of reason in him which was the source and guarantee of human progress, Hegel insisted that the individual in himself was nothing and that rationality was to be found, not in his 'subjective' mental processes, but in the 'objective' totality of the State. The State, as idealised by Hegel, transcended the dualism of subject and object and stood for the highest reality and rationality to which the individual could aspire. The mere man became only a component part of this greater unity; his 'subjective' judgments of good and evil were derided: his task was not to judge, but to find his position in the service of the great whole. This whole, however, was not all humanity: for the individual, its frontiers could not extend beyond his own State, and in the world as a whole there were in any historical epoch States — or at least a State — with a mission to civilise and dominate the rest. With this view went the Dialectic — the conception of progress in terms of a continuous conflict, in which each condition or institution of society stood for a 'thesis', imperfect because falling short of absolute reason, and therefore calling into existence an 'anti-thesis', representing another aspect of rationality. From the conflict between these two would emerge something different

from both, but absorbing whatever was of durable value in them — a 'synthesis', which would then become itself a 'thesis', to be countered by a new 'antithesis', leading up to a further 'synthesis' — and so *ad infinitum*. This dialectical mumbo-jumbo offered fine opportunities for cleverness, and was irresistible to the young philosophers of the years after 1815, including Marx himself. It admitted, however, of more than one interpretation.

Hegel's own interpretation was entirely hostile to democracy. With his scorn of the individual and of subjective judgments, he could obviously have no use for voting, popular assemblies, or any sort of self-government resting on opinion. His doctrine ruled out of consideration the whole notion of the Rights of Man — for men, as individuals, were of no account: their function was to conform to the requirements of a higher order of rationality. To lay down the rules of this rationality, no doubt, was a thing only men could do: so there had to be a special kind of man, a statesman *par excellence*, who had so merged his private person in the State as to become its mouthpiece and natural ruler. These men were not to be chosen: they were to choose themselves by making themselves masters of such States as were the chosen instruments of history (chosen by God, or by the Absolute Idea, which was Hegel's God). The Prussian State, in particular, was such an instrument.

All this fitted in with one current of German nationalism, but not so well with another current, less favourable to Prussian claims. It was possible to construct a variant Hegelianism, in which the State as it was became the 'thesis' and liberal revolt against it the 'antithesis', with a prospective 'synthesis' in the establishment of a liberal *régime* based on constitutional government. Some 'left' Hegelians did this, while others proceeded on the basis of a different challenge. For Hegel, human history was the progress of the 'Idea': the world of matter and fact had significance only as the matter in which the development of rationality worked itself out. Matter, as far as it was real at all, was a mere emanation of 'spirit'. But what would follow if this conception were to be inverted, matter to be given the primary place in reality, and 'ideas' (without the capital 'I') to be regarded as mere epiphenomena upon material substance?

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Could not mind itself be regarded as a material substance ?

In this in itself there was of course nothing new — only a reinvocation of the materialist philosophies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries — of Hobbes, of La Mettrie, and of d'Holbach. But the materialism of the earlier period emerged — or at any rate so its exponents thought — purged of its crudity in the philosophy of Feuerbach. 'Being precedes consciousness' was the war cry of the reaction against Hegelian Idealism, which had treated material substance as a mere derivative of the 'Idea'. Feuerbach's new materialism, which Marx often contrasted with the crude materialism of the eighteenth century, called speculation back from the pure reason to observe the actual march of events as worthy of consideration in its own right. Not that Marx found Feuerbach's materialism satisfactory : on the contrary, he accused Feuerbach of failing to see the implication of his own doctrine. He set out to complete the new doctrine by including man himself, as an actor, within the realm of material existence, so as to take account of him, not merely as a contemplator of reality, but as an active agent, not outside, but inside the realm of material reality. The true philosophy, he contended, must be concerned, not with mere contemplation, but with the unity of thought and action. It was not enough, he said, to regard man as the creature of his environment. 'The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing and that, accordingly, changed men are products of changed circumstances and of changed upbringing, forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated' (Third *Thesis on Feuerbach*, 1845). Marx had no mind to accept the view of man as the mere creature of external circumstances : he insisted that man is himself a part of nature and that man's action forms a part of the action of material forces, as contrasted with the force of Hegel's 'Idea', in the shaping of human history. This leads him to the assertion of the fundamental unity of thought and action. 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in diverse ways : the need, however, is to change it' (Eleventh *Thesis*).

What precisely Marx meant by the 'unity of thought and action' has been the subject of endless debate. Clearly he did not take the view that he was merely stating a commonplace.



He was not asserting merely — if he was asserting at all — the existence of a reciprocal causal relation between the two — so that, if thought influenced action, equally action influenced thought. On the contrary, he was, I believe, affirming that the influence of thought on action was less fundamental than that of action on thought, and that men's thoughts were to be regarded as derived from what they did, rather than the other way round. In the terminology of his general theory, thought was part of the 'superstructure' which men raised on the real underlying structure of the conditions in which they found themselves called upon to act. Some Idealistic philosophers have argued that action is a mere externalisation of a prior occurrence in the mind — of a mental act of volition. Indeed, this is implied in the view that to know the good was the same as to do it, as Godwin had believed. Marx, I think, was saying that the real relation between thought and action was that the action gave rise to the thought — or rather, that the thought was the action translated into mental terms. Thus, he was looking for a programme of action for changing the world and was confident that such a programme would carry with it the philosophy men needed to make sense of what they did for the satisfaction of their rationalising impulses. But, of course, Marx's immediate concern was to make a case against those philosophers who were content with merely 'interpreting' the world to suit their subjective needs, and felt, or showed, no urge to improve it — or even recoiled from any such attempt because action involved compromise with actual forces and therefore besmirched the ideal purity of philosophic contemplation. If all value is to be found in right thinking, and action is a mere derivative of thought, the only thing worth while is to make men think better, and there is no value in impelling them to act — for they will act aright only by learning to think aright, and then right action will follow as a matter of course. This is what Marx is primarily concerned to deny.

Thus Marx, building on foundations laid by Feuerbach's critique of Idealism, sought to pass beyond the 'Young Hegelians' who, up to the appearance of Feuerbach's most important work, *The Essence of Christianity*, in 1841, had remained for the most part within the 'general framework of Idealist

philosophy. From the standpoint of Socialist thought, the most important of these 'Young Hegelians' were Bruno Bauer (1809-82) and Moses Hess (1812-75), and also, in a sense, Karl Grün (1813-87), whom we have seen already as Marx's antagonist among the German Socialists in Paris. Beginning as a 'realist' or 'materialist' critique of religion and of the established German idealistic philosophy, this 'left' Hegelianism, under the impact of which Marx was brought up, broadened out in his mind, under French influence, into 'Scientific Socialism'. The earlier stages of this process can be studied in the early work of Marx and Engels, especially in their *German Ideology*, which is a critical study of the development of German Idealism from the standpoint of Feuerbachian Materialism. On the basis of these critical studies Marx and Engels went on to formulate their Materialist Conception of History, which was first plainly stated in 1848 in the *Communist Manifesto*, though it was largely implicit in Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy*, published in 1847 as a reply to Proudhon's *Philosophie de la misère*.

But Marx, before he came to his tussle with Proudhon, had had to break finally with the Idealism in which he had been brought up. This break came in two stages: in the first, Marx was still very largely under the influence of Feuerbach, although he was already beginning to break away. In the second stage he had moved definitely away from Feuerbach, and had, together with Engels, arrived at a clearly defined standpoint of his own. The first stage is represented by his attack on the Bauers in *The Holy Family* and in the wider onslaught on the neo-Hegelians in *The German Ideology*. For the purposes of this book it is not necessary to enter at all deeply into this phase of Marx's development. I need only give, in the broadest outline, the substance of his quarrel with the Bauers.

Bruno Bauer and his brothers, in breaking away from Hegel, had not at all abandoned his Idealism. They continued to regard ideas — even the 'Idea' — as the moving force in history, and to treat the task of philosophy as unconcerned with practice or with the material basis of events. They conceived of their task as that of exposing false ideas by the application of ruthless critical logic to the philosophical defences

of the existing social order in Church and State, but not as involving any action, except in the realm of logical argument, towards social change. Indeed, Marx's attack on them was based largely on their tendency to belittle actual projects of reform on the ground that partial reforms were illogical, as involving acceptance of the existing social order, instead of eradicating it altogether, whereas Marx believed that partial reforms should be supported as means of weakening that order and thus preparing the way for its overthrow. With this logical purism went, in the Bauers and in others of the 'Young Hegelians', a strong suspicion of 'interest' as a spur to action. They had imbibed from Hegel a belief in the compelling force of sheer reason; and they could not stomach any attempt to improve society by appealing to men's self-interest, or even by ranging themselves on the side of movements which were tainted with interested motives. This led the Bauers and those who thought like them to hold entirely aloof from the working-class movement, as animated by such motives, and to pour scorn on democracy, as representing a force guided not by reason or philosophic insight, but by slogans which veiled materialistic, self-interested objectives. It followed that, in as far as they were Socialists, their conception of the advance towards Socialism involved a prior conversion of men to seeking it in a spirit purged of all self-seeking. Their appeal, as far as it had a practical side, was entirely to men of good-will, and principally to men of enlightened and rational good-will. It was part of their creed that a main obstacle to such enlightenment was to be found in the power of religion over men's minds. Accordingly, they devoted a large part of their attention to the explaining away of religion as a perversion imposed on men by priestcraft with the support of the secular power; but, unlike Feuerbach, they did not attempt to trace religious belief to its causes in the material environment of the peoples. Marx, on the other hand, found in Feuerbach's materialistic theory of religion both a stick wherewith to beat the Idealists and a starting-point for his general Materialist Conception of History.

Marx had not reached this root-and-branch opposition to the 'Young Hegelians' without passing through a phase of close association with them. He and Bruno Bauer had been close friends and philosophical associates before he turned against

the whole Idealistic school. Even when he had broken away from the Bauers, large elements of Hegelianism remained embedded in his way of thought, and were so to remain to the very end of his life. In particular, he retained from his Hegelian upbringing, despite his insistence on starting with facts and not with ideas and on treating ideas as arising out of facts, and not vice versa, a habit of regarding observed facts as 'phenomena' concealing an underlying reality. This comes out again and again in *Capital*, when he is treating of particular capitals and labourers as mere instances of a somehow more real universal Capital and Labour, which play their parts in history almost as collective entities more real than the particular units of which they are composed. As we shall see later, this metaphysical conception — for that is what it is — continued to dominate Marx's mind even when he had broken completely with the Idealistic element in the Hegelian doctrine.

Moses Hess (1812-75) was a much more important person than Bruno Bauer, and was indeed the principal creator of the German doctrine of 'True Socialism' which Marx and Engels attacked in the *Communist Manifesto*. But by the time this attack was launched Hess had substantially modified his earlier views and was collaborating fairly closely with Marx and his group. He had come to accept a large part of Marx's doctrine and policy, without ever abandoning his own fundamental point of view, which was essentially ethical. Hess was a deeply honest thinker, and a man incapable of animosity, universally liked and respected, a sort of Jewish saint fallen among revolutionaries. Brought up in the doctrine of Spinoza and Hegel, but much influenced also by Fichte and by Feuerbach, he developed his Socialism at first on a purely philosophical basis, with no recognition of the place of economic factors in the determination of social attitudes and no knowledge of the working classes. He read the writings of the various French Socialists, but came into contact with working-class Socialism and Communism only when he had been driven from his native Germany to France, where he established relations with the groups of German workers who were living in Paris during the 1840s.

Hess was one of the founders and editors, and later the Paris correspondent, of the *Rheinische Zeitung* (1842-3), in

which most of his earlier writing appeared. It was he who first converted Engels to Communism, and he was in turn induced by Marx and Engels to study economics and to get an understanding of the actual working-class movements of the day. His Socialism, before he came under their influence, and to a great extent also later, when he had broken away from them, rested on the conception of human solidarity as a great *natural* force, which was prevented from issuing in a right structure of human relations because of bad social institutions. In this he took over the characteristic attitude of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and arrived at a view which in many respects closely resembled Owen's. Like Owen, he regarded competition as the root of most of the evils of society — not only economic competition, but competition in all its forms — because it encouraged the egoistic impulses in men, and thus drew them away from their natural brotherhood. Hess's ethical theory, however, resembles Rousseau's rather than Owen's. He saw in men two principal impulses — egoism and brotherly love — and conceived of the second of these as the more truly representative of men's fundamental nature. Whereas in Rousseau *amour de soi* and *pitié* are equally parts of men's nature, and are amoral until they are transformed by social institutions, Hess thought of egoism as mainly the outcome of wrongly adjusted relations, and looked to its disappearance, or at any rate to its effective subjugation, through the establishment of a social structure based throughout on the principle of the brotherhood of men. This led him to a demand for complete Communism, after the manner of Cabet, as a direct deduction from his view of human nature. He differed, however, from Bauer and his group in that he was essentially activist. He was not prepared simply to denounce all existing social institutions without attempting to alter them; and he realised fully that they could not be altered except by the united action of those who believed in a radically new social order, resting on fraternity and justice.

The difficulty of Hess's position at this stage was that, holding action to be essential and union the necessary means, he felt it wrong to appeal to men to act except on grounds of the highest morality. The actual movements which he saw around him repelled him because they appeared to be moved

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almost exclusively by self-interested motives. He felt this to be the case both with the working-class movements, as far as he knew anything about them, and with the movements of the liberal *bourgeois*, about which he knew much more. On this ground he refused to support the demands of the latter for constitutional reforms, and denounced the tendency of advancing capitalism to rivet the egoistic principle of competition still more firmly upon society. On this issue Marx fell foul of him as he did of the rest of the 'Young Hegelians'. But Hess's distrust of the working class proved to be more open to modification than his hostility to capitalism and his consequent opposition to liberal reforms. When Marx accused him of being entirely unrealistic in supposing it possible to advance towards Communism by means of a purely idealistic appeal, he saw the point, set to work to study the working-class movement, and gave in his adhesion to Marx's theory of the historic rôle of the proletariat and insistence on the need to champion its demands. He was prepared thereafter to support proletarian claims, even if they were marred by egoism, because they made in the right direction and because he had come to believe that a real drive towards human brotherhood underlay them. What he could not do was to support Marx in the view that the Socialists ought to help the German *bourgeoisie* to climb to power and to dethrone the old privileged ruling classes; for he continued to regard the entrenchment of competition, which he saw as the outcome of a *bourgeois* victory, as certain to strengthen egoism in the minds of capitalists and workers alike, and thus to poison society yet further.

For a time in the late 'forties Hess wrote almost in Marxian language; but he was never a Marxist. He was, however, entirely devoted to the working-class cause, and this devotion induced him for a time to accept Marx's lead in 1848. In the meantime, in the 1860s, he had collaborated with Lassalle; and in the International he again fell foul of Marx's dominance.

Hess, indeed, could never have worked for long with Marx. Like the rest of the 'True Socialists' he had a strong dislike and distrust of coercion and held that the use of violent means would necessarily lead to a perversion of the end, however valuable and desirable the end might be. Such ethical inhibitions always infuriated Marx, whose 'realism' carried with it

a will to use whatever historic forces were available, without enquiring into their ethical character. In Marx's view, ethical standards were merely relative, and it was entirely illegitimate to invoke the ethics of the existing society against the forces that were destined to transform it and to impose their own ethical standards upon the new age. The 'True Socialists', on the other hand, held an absolutist theory of ethical values, and already entertained fears that the imposition of Socialism by force might convert it into a new authoritarianism no less oppressive and egoistic than the old. This gulf could never be bridged: it yawned as widely between Marx and the Anarchists in the First International as between Marx and the 'True Socialists'; and later it became part of the dividing line between Communism and the democratic Socialism of the West.

Hess's ethical doctrine led him naturally to an internationalist position. But he was also a nationalist, insisting strongly that the brotherhood of men had to find expression through the different contributions to be made by national groups on the basis of their various cultures and social attitudes. Hess was a Jew and, unlike Marx, a deep believer in the value and individuality of the Jewish culture. He is one of the great forerunners of Zionism. He wanted for the Jewish people a national home, and made proposals for a colonisation of Palestine, with the purpose of establishing there a centre of Jewish influence which would not only serve as a rallying point for world Jewry, but would also enable the Jewish people to make its national contribution to the development of Socialism. The Israel of to-day owes much to his intellectual influence, though no great attention was paid to his teaching until after his death. He was also the first Socialist to develop a clear theory of the place of nationality in the world-wide Socialist movement. He wrote much against the perversion of nationality into aggressive nationalism, which he regarded as an expression of the egoistic, competitive principle on the world plane, and deemed to be ineradicable except by a change in national institutions which would purge them of the egoism that underlay their collective antagonisms. He saw the coming Socialist society as a federation of co-operating national groups, each working out its own special form of Socialism in accordance with its national way of life. In this conception he put

the main stress on cultural rather than economic differences, though in his later writings he gave the economic factors a not inconsiderable place.

Hess's debt to Marx and Engels comes out most clearly in his essay, *Die Folgen der Revolution des Proletariats* (1847), which antedates the *Communist Manifesto*, and anticipates some of its salient doctrines. His most important studies are reproduced in his *Sozialistische Aufsätze* (Studies in Socialism). In one of his early works, *Die europäische Triarchie*, he made proposals, after the manner of Saint-Simon, for a Federation of Germany, France and Great Britain as the basis for a new European society.

Marx and Engels respected Hess: they detested the other leading exponent of what was called 'True Socialism'. This was Karl Theodor Ferdinand Grün (1817-87), whom we have already encountered as Marx's rival for the leadership of the German *émigrés* in Paris. Grün, much more than Hess, was the typical representative of 'True Socialism'. Like Marx, he was deeply influenced by Feuerbach, on whose theory of the real nature of religion his conception of Socialism was largely based. Feuerbach had treated religion as resting on man's projection of himself outside himself: according to his theory everything supernatural was in reality simply a product of man's imagining through this process of 'self-externalisation'. Grün took over this notion and applied it to social structure. Property, he argued, is also something which man has externalised — from the community, to which it naturally belongs. This externalisation has destroyed the basis of community and human brotherhood; and the solution of the social problem is to be found in bringing back property into common ownership. Grün, like Marx, accepted the nature of the class-struggle as the clue to the understanding of human history, which he envisaged as a series of struggles for the possession of private property. He accepted the necessity of industrial development and large-scale production, to which he looked to make possible the abolition of property as soon as it had been brought under common ownership and control. But in his theory of the 'contradictions of capitalism' he followed Proudhon rather than Marx; and he held, like Hess in his earlier writings, that the way of advance towards Socialism must be



rather that of a philosophical conversion of men to it, through the exposure of the true character of the processes of 'projection' in the human mind, than that of a daily struggle for power and material advantage. He was strongly attacked by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*, as well as in the section on 'True Socialism' in the *Communist Manifesto*. Much more than Hess, he was the opponent of every form of co-operation with, or help to, the *bourgeois* liberals, and he went to the length of outright opposition to liberal proposals, as tending to make the anti-social system of private property stronger and more secure. He opposed the movement to force the German rulers to grant constitutional government, and insisted that the task of Socialists was to educate the people, without meddling with current politics, until they were ready to take power into their own hands. The proletariat, he said, did not want a constitution; it did not want anything; the 'True Socialists' must remain true to their principles and not allow their doctrine to be perverted by association with a day-to-day struggle in which there was no true principle at stake, but only a blind conflict of interests.

It needs to be borne in mind that, in the controversies of the 1840s, which preceded the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels often had the appearance of moderates, setting themselves in opposition to Socialists who were taking a more extremist line. They were at variance with the Blanquists, who were always plotting revolutionary *émeutes*, irrespective of the chances of success; with the purists of 'True Socialism', who would on no account come to terms, even temporarily, with anyone who was not actuated by the highest moral principles; and with the utopians, who either wished to withdraw from the world as it was into model communities that would provide men with living examples of the world as it ought to be, or supposed that it was possible to leap by revolution straight into a completely communistic society. They had, of course, also plenty of enemies on the right — so-called Socialists who hoped to advance towards Socialism within the framework of political and social privilege (the 'feudal' Socialists of the *Manifesto*); mere 'associationists', who put their entire trust in voluntary Co-operation; 'State Socialists', like Louis Blanc, who thought that universal

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suffrage would lay the foundations for the new society and make everything else easy to accomplish ; Christian Socialists, who made religion the spring of social action — not the ‘opium of the people’ ; and mere radicals, who had no vision of the rôle of the proletariat in the construction of the new order. But, among the groups on which they were mainly trying to impose their ideas, they looked like moderates because of their insistence, at any rate in Germany, on the necessity of helping the *bourgeoisie* to power and continually spurring them on to make larger demands on the authoritarian governments of the old *régime*. The men they met with in the revolutionary societies, composed mainly of workers, found it difficult to reconcile Marx’s ferocious denunciations of the *bourgeoisie* with his insistence on the need for helping them to power, and no less difficult to understand his contempt for the *petite bourgeoisie*, with which many of them, as skilled artisans, had close family and personal connections. It is remarkable that, in face of these difficulties, Marx and Engels succeeded in 1847 in capturing the new Communist League and imposing their own *Manifesto* upon it. They could not, I have already suggested, have done this unless they had adopted for the purpose a style and phraseology, and even in part a policy, which were adapted to the ears of the revolutionary groundlings ; and they were doubtless the more prepared to do this because, as the Revolutions of 1848 were seen to be imminent, their own sense of what was needed changed. In an actual revolutionary situation, while it remained necessary to help the *bourgeoisie* to win power, it was no less necessary to emphasise the distinctive rôle of the proletariat and to help it to play an independent part ; to prevent it from acting as a mere implement of the *bourgeoisie* — as had occurred in Paris in 1830 and did in fact occur again in 1848 — and to prepare it for the entirely independent part which it was destined, they believed, to take on the morrow of the *bourgeois* triumph. Thus the *Communist Manifesto* was very much the product of a specific situation, rather than a full statement of the gospel according to Marx. Let us now see what this great revolutionary document did actually say.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

THE *Communist Manifesto* was written just before the outbreak of revolution in 1848. It was written and published in German, in London: the Communist League from which it emanated was to all intents and purposes a German organisation. Its appeal to the workers of all countries to unite was thoroughly international: the Germans who had approved it were internationally minded workers, who had been living in exile from their own country and playing a part in the working-class movements of their countries of temporary domicile — especially France. They believed that it was their mission to succeed the French as the ideological leaders of the world proletariat — or at any rate Marx believed this, and they accepted his line.

Except in Germany and among German refugees, the *Manifesto* was hardly known during the revolutionary troubles. A French translation is said to have appeared in Paris about the middle of 1848; but no copy of it seems to survive, and its very existence is doubtful. A Polish translation was published in 1848, in London, but was not widely circulated, and a Danish version also appeared soon afterwards. The first English translation was not published until 1850, in Harney's *Red Republican*, which had not a wide circulation. No Russian translation existed until the 1860s, when a version written by Bakunin was issued in Switzerland. Meanwhile, there had been numerous further issues of the German text in London, in the United States, and in Germany itself. A second English translation was printed in New York in 1872, in a periodical, and this was followed by a French version, made from this English text, and published in the New York *Socialist*. No second English version seems to have appeared, in England, until 1888, when Engels wrote a special introduction, as he had done for several German editions of various dates. Thus,

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the *Manifesto* made its way slowly : it was not widely known in 1848, and it was not even much known outside Germany during the life of the First International, founded in 1864.

### I

The *Communist Manifesto* begins with a statement that 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'. To this statement Engels in later editions appended a footnote in which he said that in 1847-8 he and Marx had known little about the existence of a condition of primitive Communism prior to the development of class differences in the historical stages of social evolution. The knowledge of this primitive Communism came mainly with later work of social anthropologists, especially Lewis Morgan (1818-81), whose *Ancient Society*, published in 1877, had a profound influence on Engels's later writing.

From this general statement about history as a whole, the *Manifesto* goes on to say that in modern times society is dividing itself more and more into two great hostile camps, *bourgeoisie* and proletariat. It then sketches the rise of the *bourgeoisie*. Every step in the economic development of the *bourgeoisie*, it says, has been accompanied by political advance, so that nowadays 'the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole *bourgeoisie*'. The *bourgeoisie* in its rise has played throughout a revolutionary part. Its economic achievement is to be seen in the establishment of the cash nexus as the exclusive recognised relationship between men, and of free trade as the embodiment of this relationship. The *bourgeoisie*, we are told, cannot exist without continually revolutionising the instruments of production, and, therewith, the productive relations between men and men to which the use of these instruments gives rise. The need for finding constantly expanding markets 'chases the *bourgeoisie* over the whole globe'. The exploitation of the world market gives its system a cosmopolitan character exemplified in its increasing dependence for raw materials on ever wider sources of supply. It compels backward peoples to adopt its methods as far as it has need of their services. It establishes the domination of town over country and of civilised

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over barbarian peoples. It agglomerates property, centralises the means of production in large units and concentrates property in fewer and fewer hands. Because of these tendencies it insists on political centralisation. The *bourgeoisie* developed within the feudal society until the institution of feudalism became a fetter upon it, limiting its growth: thereupon the bonds of the feudal system were burst asunder and replaced by the *régime* of free competition. But already *bourgeois* competition has reached the stage at which it can no longer control the vast means of production which it has conjured up. Commercial crises of increasing severity are the signs of this inability, manifested in absurd experiences of so-called over-production. 'The conditions of *bourgeois* society are too narrow to contain the wealth created by them'. Recurrent crises are overcome only by mass destruction of wealth through bankruptcy and ruin and by the discovery of new markets, but these developments only pave the way for worse and worse crises.

The *bourgeoisie*, because of these inherent contradictions of capitalism, has not only called the weapons of its overthrow into being but has also created the class capable of wielding these weapons — the proletariat. In proportion as the *bourgeoisie* develops, so does the proletariat. The *bourgeois* system has already converted the labourer into a mere commodity. The work of the proletarian under the machine system has lost all its individual character — the worker has become a mere appendage to the machine. Treated merely as the repository of a commodity — labour-power — the workman receives as wages only what is needed to secure his subsistence and the propagation of his species, or, at best, is almost entirely restricted to this pittance. As work becomes more repulsive and less skilled with the development of mechanisation, wages tend to fall, and at the same time the burden of toil increases. The workers are enslaved to the *bourgeois* class, to the machine, to the supervisor, to the individual master. Men's labour is more and more superseded by women's, as the machine destroys the need for skill. These same forces are continually flinging into the ranks of the proletariat more and more of the lower strata of the middle class, the *petite bourgeoisie*, such as artisans, shopkeepers, and small masters. The proletariat is recruited from all classes, including of course the

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agricultural workers driven from the land to become slaves of the machine.

The proletariat responds to this situation by developing from the level of individual struggle and incoherent machine-smashing aimed at preserving its old status to more highly organised forms of agitation, first on a factory basis, and then on a scale serving whole towns or regions. These steps towards a political proletarian movement are taken under *bourgeois* leadership, for the *bourgeoisie* find itself under the necessity of making use of the proletariat to defeat its surviving feudal and aristocratic enemies. But the proletariat becomes increasingly aware of its own strength, and more and more unified as machinery obliterates all distinctions between kinds of labour and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. Meanwhile, growing crises make earnings more fluctuating and insecure. The workers form Trade Unions and then bring their Trade Unions together, unifying their forces for the class struggle. These developments wring from the *bourgeoisie* legislative and other concessions to particular groups of workers. The *Manifesto* here cites the Ten Hours Act of 1847, which had just been passed by the British Parliament after a prolonged struggle of more than a quarter of a century.

The *Manifesto* then goes on to say that the *bourgeoisie* is always fighting on many fronts, not only against the old ruling classes at home, but also against the *bourgeoisies* of countries other than its own. In these contests it invokes the help of the proletariat, and thus in its own despite educates the workers. Meanwhile, the *déclassés*, flung down into the proletariat by the development of concentrated capital, supply elements of enlightenment and progress to the leadership of the revolution, and at the critical point a section of the ruling class itself — the left-wing *bourgeois* ideologists — goes over to the side of the proletariat because it understands the nature of the historic movement.

The *Manifesto* insists that in the nineteenth century the proletariat alone is a truly revolutionary class, directing its activities against the *bourgeoisie*. All other classes than these are doomed to decay and disappear in face of the development of modern industry, whereas the proletariat is the special and characteristic product of modern industrial methods. The

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*petite bourgeoisie* — the small masters, the artisans, the shopkeepers, and also the peasant proprietors — fight against the *bourgeoisie* only in the hope of preserving their existing status. They are fundamentally conservative, or reactionary, not revolutionary. They are reactionary in the sense that they are trying to turn back the movement of history. As for the *Lumpenproletariat* — the social scum at the bottom of the existing system — this element may turn revolutionary at times, but is in general much more likely to act as the hired tool of reaction.

The *Manifesto* next goes on to assert that under the conditions of modern industrialism the proletariat is stripped of all family relations, of all national characteristics, of all individuality. The result is that law, morality and religion become for the proletarian so many *bourgeois* prejudices behind which *bourgeois* interests lie hidden in ambush. The proletariat, the *Manifesto* asserts, is in a different position from every previous aspirant to the position of ruling class. All previous ruling classes have sought to establish the domination of their own 'conditions of appropriation'. The proletariat, on the other hand, has the mission of destroying the entire legal superstructure created for the assurance of individual property. Moreover, whereas all previous class movements have been movements of minorities, aiming at privilege for themselves, the proletarian movement stands for the immense majority of the whole people, and seeks to abolish privilege, not to acquire it.

Despite the destruction of the national character of the proletariat, the struggle is, in the first place, carried on nationally. The proletariat of each country must first settle accounts with its own *bourgeoisie*. This, it is laid down, involves open revolution and the violent overthrow of the *bourgeoisie*. This revolution will lay the foundations for the rule of the proletariat. Previous subjected classes rose to importance and strength under the rule of their predecessors before overthrowing them; but the modern labourer, instead of rising with the progress of industry, is sinking deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. Pauperism grows faster than either wealth or population. This impoverishment, in face of increasing productive power, reveals the unfitness

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of the *bourgeoisie* to rule, for it cannot even ensure the means of existence for its own slaves.

For the *bourgeoisie* the necessary condition of existence is the accumulation of capital. This depends on wage labour, and the existence of wage labour depends on competition between labourers for employment. Modern industry, however, drives the labourers to combine, and thus digs the grave of *bourgeois* society.

This is a summary of Part I of the *Communist Manifesto*, in which Marx set down the essential underlying ideas. What are these ideas? First, the affirmation of class struggles as the gist of human history. Secondly, the assertion that the State is essentially a class institution, expressing the will of the economically dominant class — a political superstructure on the underlying economic structure, which corresponds to the stage reached in the development of the powers of production. Thirdly, the characterisation of the essentially expansive nature of capitalism, based on the progressive development of the powers of production and on the consequent need for ever larger markets and sources of materials. Fourthly, the laying bare of the 'contradictions' involved in the failure of purchasing power in the developed countries to expand enough to absorb the growing product of capitalist industry — whence arise recurrent crises, overcome only by vast destruction of productive instruments. Fifthly, the demonstration of the necessary creation of the proletariat within the system of capitalist industry, and therewith the destruction through the increasing application of machinery of the varied skills of different types of labour and the reduction of the labourer to a mere undifferentiated commodity status. Sixthly, an assertion of the tendency, as skill is destroyed, for the labour class to be beaten down more and more to uniform subsistence level — a tendency aggravated by the limitations of the market and by the recurrent crises of unemployment. Seventhly, a statement of the tendency for the intermediate classes, the *petite bourgeoisie*, to be crushed out between the proletariat and the *bourgeoisie* through the growing concentration of capital, which flings more and more of them into the ranks of the proletariat. Eighthly, an affirmation of the key importance of the development of Trade Unions among the proletariat, at first on a narrow



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sectional basis, but thereafter increasingly on a class basis with a corresponding awakening of political consciousness. Ninthly, a recognition of the service rendered to the proletariat by intellectuals and members of the ruling class who, either flung down into proletariat or understanding the nature of the historical movement, pass over to the proletarian side. Tenthly, an acceptance of the national character of the struggle against the *bourgeoisie*, despite the increasing cosmopolitanism of capitalism itself. Eleventhly, the drawing of a contrast between the proletariat and all previous insurgent classes in that, whereas these previous classes developed their importance and strength within the preceding social order, the labouring class is driven to revolt through its own increasing misery. Finally, an assertion of the dependence of the *bourgeois* system both on the progressive accumulation of capital and on its periodical destruction by crises which tend to become continually more severe.

In commenting on these points it is above all necessary to bear in mind the conditions under which the *Manifesto* was written. Great Britain was in 1848 by far the most advanced capitalist country ; and it seemed reasonable to take the course of events in Great Britain as indicating the general tendencies of capitalist development and as likely to be repeated in other countries as industrialism advanced, until capitalism was overthrown. Marx and Engels, looking at British conditions in the 1840s — which were not for nothing called the ‘hungry ’forties’ — could not help observing that the vast increase in productive power made possible by the revolution in the means of production had by no means brought increasing wealth to the labourers in the new mines and factories. On the contrary, it had unquestionably brought deep unhappiness and an insecurity manifested in recurrent periods of severe unemployment. The workers in mines and factories had reacted to this situation first by forming Trade Unions in particular occupations and then by attempting to group these Unions together on a class basis — as in the great movement which culminated in 1834 and in the renewed attempt to form a ‘General Union’ in 1845. The collapse of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union had been speedily followed by the rise of the mass political movement of Chartism, which had

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all the symptoms of a hunger revolt based on acute misery. At the same time, capitalism had responded to working-class agitation and to the humanitarian appeals of a section of the ruling class by making certain limited concessions — above all, the Factory Acts, including the Ten Hours Act of 1847, which had seemed to show that working-class conditions could be improved in some respects even while the capitalist system remained in being.

In this environment it was not unnatural for Marx and Engels to suppose that there was a tendency for capitalist production to depress wages to a common subsistence level and to drive the small independent producers out of business by the competition of power-driven machinery. Nor was it unnatural for them to suppose that the workers, driven together by common exploitation, would create a powerful political mass movement which would in due course prove too strong for the *bourgeoisie* to resist. What seemed to them to be missing in Great Britain among the requisites for revolutionary success was the theoretical leadership which would enable the working class to understand its historic mission and to draw added strength from this understanding. This leadership, they were disposed to think, only the Germans, with their higher level of theoretical understanding, could supply; and accordingly, despite the relatively backward condition of German industry and of the German proletariat, they looked to Germany rather than to England, where Chartism had evidently lost much of its force, to give the lead to the European Revolution.

It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if the revolutions in Europe had been deferred for another ten years and if the *Communist Manifesto* had been written in 1857 instead of 1847. By that time, in Great Britain, the Chartist movement had practically disappeared, despite all Ernest Jones's efforts to keep it alive. The proletariat, instead of being flung together into an undifferentiated mass of 'detail labourers', was clearly beginning to develop new forms of skill, based on the operation of power-driven machinery; and these new groups of skilled workers were organising by sections. The new craft unions, based on modern productive techniques, were beginning to achieve higher wages and improved condi-

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tions, both in the textile industries and in the metal, engineering and shipbuilding trades. True, this improvement had not yet spread to the miners, but it was on the point of doing so, as they reorganised their forces under the leadership of Alexander Macdonald. The less skilled labourers had not yet had much share in the improvement; but it could hardly have been denied that in Great Britain the proletariat was becoming more and not less differentiated, and was becoming so on the basis of modern large-scale productive techniques. At the same time, the development both of industry and of many branches of professional and other services was rapidly creating a new *petite bourgeoisie* which, unlike that of which Marx wrote, did not depend on obsolescent forms of production, but on the contrary grew larger and more powerful as the means of production developed. Economic crises also had become less severe. There was no depression in the 'fifties of anything like the severity of those which had occurred in the later 'thirties and the 'hungry 'forties'.

Marx, being in England after the collapse of the Revolutions of 1848, had ample opportunity to observe these changes and to modify, had he so desired, the doctrines set forth in the *Communist Manifesto*. But he never did so. The *Manifesto* had served its turn, and he never revised or elaborated its trenchant paragraphs. Indeed, one cannot help feeling that after 1848 he buried himself so completely in his study of the British records of the early part of the nineteenth century as never to observe, despite his residence in England, what was happening there at any later time. Of course, I do not mean that he lost interest in contemporary affairs. His record in building up the International in the 'sixties gives ample evidence of his concern; and right through the 'fifties he was encouraging Ernest Jones to persist in his efforts to revive the dying embers of Chartism and was in touch with British developments. But from 1848 onwards, when he took his eyes off the books and reports in the British Museum, he paid much more attention to continental than to British affairs, and placed his hopes of revolution on Germany and France rather than on Great Britain. He was, I think, fully aware that in Great Britain, the most advanced capitalist country, the diagnosis of 'increasing misery' accompanying increasing

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capitalist concentration was not being verified ; and he thought this could be explained in terms of Great Britain's ability, by virtue of its advanced economic techniques, to capture all it wanted in an expanding world market. On this view, the improving situation of the skilled workers was due to their getting a share in the proceeds of world exploitation — and becoming therewith allies of the *bourgeoisie* rather than the enemies. These conditions he regarded as temporary. On the other hand, on the Continent, with its long lag behind Great Britain in capitalist progress, the diagnosis of 1848 still seemed to him to hold broadly good ; and there seemed no need to produce an amended version. It is, however, not without significance that throughout the years during which Marx was directing the affairs of the First International, no English edition of the *Communist Manifesto* appeared, though a new German edition, with a preface by Marx and Engels, was issued in 1872. Evidently, Marx did not regard the *Manifesto* as suitable reading for the English Trade Unionists with whose aid he was seeking to foment revolution abroad.

At all events, Marx in his later writings gave no evidence of any willingness to alter his general theory of capitalist concentration and 'increasing misery' on account of the course of British capitalist developments after 1850. Nevertheless, his analysis, as related to British conditions, no longer looked valid, even to most Socialists, at any time during the second half of the nineteenth century, or until British capitalism had failed to make a satisfactory recovery from the effects of the first world war. It is easy to say now that Marx in 1847 was wrong about the processes of class differentiation as capitalism developed, that he greatly over-estimated the effects of the 'contradictions of capitalism' as manifested in recurrent economic crises, and that he mistook what was a temporary phase of the development of modern industrialism for a continuous tendency calculated to result in the speedy overthrow of the entire capitalist system. That was one great reason why Marxism in Western Europe underwent so profound a transformation in the hands of Marx's successors, whereas the original diagnosis of 1847 continued to fit very much better conditions in the less developed countries of the world, and above all in Russia.

From the declaration of fundamental principles in its opening pages the *Communist Manifesto* proceeds, in its second Part, to a statement of the rôle of the Communists in the coming Revolution and of their relation to the proletariat as a whole. The Communists, the *Manifesto* insists, are by no means to be regarded as a separate party opposed to other working-class parties : they have no interests opposed to the interests of the proletariat as a whole. On the contrary, they are the understanding representatives of the entire proletariat in relation to its historic mission. They are simply the section among the proletariat which best understands the historic tendency of the facts — that is to say, of the underlying economic forces which are the determinants of historical development. The Communists, say the manifestants, are not the proponents of any universal programme of reform. It is not their task to devise Utopias but to organise the proletariat for the struggle that is destined to carry it to power. At this point follows a longish section filled with arguments against *bourgeois* objections to Communism. This, for our present purposes, we can afford to pass over, as of no more than secondary interest. The *Manifesto* then goes on to say that 'The first step in the revolution by the working classes is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, and thus to win the battle of democracy' — a celebrated phrase which has given rise to much controversy among later Marxists. The victorious proletariat, we are told, will thereafter use its political supremacy to wrest by degrees all capital from the *bourgeoisie*, and to centralise all the instruments of production in the hands of the State — that is to say, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class. It will use this control to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible in the interests of the whole society.

Next follows an outline programme of action for the proletarians in the coming European revolution. The main points of this programme are as follows. (1) The abolition of landed property and the use of rents derived from land for public purposes. (2) Heavy and progressive taxation of incomes. (3) Abolition of inheritance. (4) Confiscation of the property of *émigrés* and rebels against the proletariat's authority. (5)

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The establishment of National Banks with a monopoly of credit. (6) The nationalisation of the means of communication and transport. (7) The extension of State factories and of State ownership of instruments of production, including public cultivation of lands lying waste. (8) Enforcement of the equal liability of all men to labour, and the formation of 'industrial armies', especially for agriculture. (9) The reintegration of agriculture and industry and the gradual abolition of differences between town and country. (10) Free public education for all, and therewith abolition of child labour in its present forms and the combination of education with industrial production. Finally, this section of the *Manifesto* asserts that when class distinction has disappeared the public power will lose its 'political' character; that is to say, in more modern terminology, the State will 'wither away'.

This programme bears obvious signs of its mixed origins and also of some indecision about the state of affairs to which it relates. It seems clearly to contemplate a gradual, though rapid, transition from Capitalism to Socialism and the carrying through of this transition under the auspices of a new kind of State representing the power of the working class. It is to be observed that the phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is not employed in the *Manifesto*, though an idea closely akin to it is clearly present. Moreover, the assertion that the Communists are not a separate party, but stand for the entire proletariat in its historic mission, can fairly be regarded as the germ of the idea of the mass party as developed by modern Communism and as implying the dominance, after the Revolution, of a single party — for if the proletariat has only a single historic mission only one party can be supposed to be needed to represent it, or can truly express its will.

I do not propose at this stage to enter further into the controversy about the meaning of this part of the *Communist Manifesto*, in its bearing on the form of government appropriate to carry through the tasks of the victorious proletariat after the Revolution. I doubt if Marx, at this time or later, had himself any clear vision of what would be required, or considered it possible to take up a dogmatic attitude. The notion of 'the proletariat organised as a ruling class' was not invented by Marx: it was an echo of many earlier cries that went back

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to Gracchus Babeuf and the Conspiracy of the Equals and had resounded in the Socialist and Communist clubs of Paris in the 1830s and 1840s. It was what the rank and file of the Communist League of 1847 expected and wanted to hear. What Marx did was to give the notion a new and distinctively German twist by linking it to the idea of the proletariat's 'historic mission' and casting it into a form which made it particularly acceptable to the ideologically minded Germans who had been influenced by 'True Socialism'. What had been, for the Socialist 'Young Hegelians', a mission of philosophers, reasoning on the plane of Ideastic doctrines, was transmuted into the mission of the proletariat itself, with the philosopher playing at most only the rôle of midwife. As for the claim of the Communists to represent, not a sect, but the entire proletarian class, that too came naturally out of the inverted Hegelianism which Marx had reached by way of Feuerbach's new version of materialism. The class, not the individual, was the vital historical category; accordingly, the policy must be the class's — not merely that of a number of men who had arrived at a common opinion.

### III

The third and fourth parts of the *Manifesto* are devoted to a series of criticisms of the various Socialist schools of thought which had preceded the Marxian discovery of 'Scientific Socialism'. These various forms of Socialist doctrine are in turn cursorily reviewed and their shortcomings exposed. The *Manifesto* deals in turn with 'feudal Socialism' (and incidentally with Christian Socialism, which is treated as a form of feudal Socialism), with *petit-bourgeois* Socialism, with 'German' or so-called 'True' Socialism', with conservative or *bourgeois* Socialism, and finally with 'critical-utopian' Socialism. Of some of these criticisms a good deal has been said already, in the chapters dealing with German Socialism from Fichte to Hess and Karl Grün. From the attack on the 'True' Socialists and their alliance with the feudalists against capitalist development Marx turned in the *Manifesto* to his criticism of the utopian Socialists. To Utopianism, the Socialism of Marx's most important predecessors, the *Manifesto*, while critical,

assigns a position of great importance in the development of the Socialist doctrine. Utopian Socialism, the *Manifesto* proclaims, is closely related to a phase of social development which preceded the emergence of an organised and class-conscious proletarian movement. It belongs to a stage at which the proletariat did not as yet appear to be a possible instrument of revolution, so that the utopian Socialists were driven to build their projects of reformation on their own subjective consciousness of right and wrong, and to preach a moral crusade rather than lead a revolutionary movement. The *Manifesto* praises the critiques of Capitalism made by the Utopians, especially Fourier, Saint-Simon and Robert Owen, but argues that the persistence of these doctrines in 1847, despite the onward movement of the historical conditions, constitutes the successors of the earlier Utopians, who were the advance guard of their own day, reactionaries in the changed situation of the 1840s. The later 'Utopians', it was argued, were reactionaries because the effect of their moral preachings was to deaden the class-struggle, to foster hopes of help from the benevolent rich or from the existing State power, and to lead the workers away from political action into impracticable visions of the future. In this spirit, it was alleged, the Owenites were found opposing the Chartists, and in France the followers of Fourier opposing the political demands of the *Réformistes* or Social Democrats; that is to say, the followers of Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc. As against this, the final part of the *Manifesto*, in defining the immediate political attitude of the Communists, proclaims their support in France for the Social Democrats and in Germany for the coming *bourgeois* revolution, which it is their task to ensure shall be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution. Finally, the *Manifesto*, which has announced earlier 'that the working men have no country', sets forth its slogan for 'workers of all lands'. 'The proletariat have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. ) Working men of all countries, unite.' This slogan was deliberately put in place of the slogan, 'All men are brothers', which had been used by the League of the Just and by the groups which had developed out of it among the Germans in exile.

As a pendant to the *Communist Manifesto* it is necessary to



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consider Marx's *Address to the Communist League*, delivered in 1850 when the European Revolution had already gone a long distance on its way to final defeat. Clearly, Marx in 1850 expected this defeat to be merely a temporary set-back and hoped for the speedy coming of a new and more successful revolutionary outburst. His *Address* of 1850 makes his revolutionary strategy even plainer than the *Manifesto* itself. It calls not only for the arming of the proletariat but also for the creation of independent Workers' Councils side by side with the Provisional Governments which will be set up in the early stages of the Revolution, largely under *petit bourgeois* control. The true revolutionaries must set out to discredit these Governments and, as the contradictions of the half-way revolution become manifest, to fight against them with the mass support of the working class. Here, as modern Communists never weary of pointing out, is to be found the germ of the notion of Soviet power as it developed in Russia in the Revolutions of 1905 and of 1917.

The *Communist Manifesto*, being in its essence a clarion call to action rather than an exposition of doctrine, can by no means be taken as a balanced formulation of Marx's ideas. He put into it no more of his fundamental philosophy than he thought could be digested by the members, actual and prospective, of the body under whose auspices it appeared, or than would be endorsed by the delegates whose approval it required. He also put in a good deal that was much more an argument with those very delegates and their followers than with the rest of the world, and not a little that had to be there because they demanded it, whether he would or no. (The criticisms of the various Socialist schools were intended to wean the Communist Leaguers themselves away from old allegiances; and the programme of immediate demands was a sorting out of the resolutions which the League itself had put forward and instructed him to include.) He put as much as he thought expedient of his own and Engels's ideas into the *Manifesto*; but by no means all. In particular, he left out altogether what was already the central conception underlying his historical sociology — the dominant part played by the evolution of the powers of production in the determination of social relations. This was implicit, no doubt; but it was not explicitly stated.

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Accordingly, in order to get a fair picture of Marxism as it existed in the thought of Marx and Engels in 1848, we have to look not merely to the *Communist Manifesto*, but to the whole body of Marx's early writing and to what he said later about the course of his mental evolution during the 1840s. The ensuing chapter will be given to this explanation of Marx's entire doctrine as it was when the *Manifesto* was prepared.

CHAPTER XXIII

MARX AND ENGELS — MARXISM TO 1850

KARL MARX'S intellectual odyssey, up to the drafting of the *Communist Manifesto*, is described in his preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*, which he published in 1859. He there explains that his main study at the University was jurisprudence — which he 'pursued, however, in connection with and as secondary to the studies of philosophy and history'. These courses were followed first at Bonn and subsequently at Berlin University, of which Fichte had been the first Rector, but which had fallen later under the domination of Hegel's powerful personality. At Berlin Marx became a member of the 'Young Hegelian' circle, the intimate of Bruno Bauer, Köppen, and the rest of the group which was giving a 'leftish' interpretation to Hegel's idealistic doctrine. In 1841 he took his doctor's degree at Jena, rather than in Berlin, because he could say more freely what he liked at a University less directly dominated by official censorship. He was then a close associate of Bruno Bauer, and had intended to join him at Bonn, where he was teaching, and to collaborate with him in a new philosophical review. But Bauer lost his position because of his attacks on orthodox religion, and, instead of going to Bonn, Marx presently established himself as the collaborator of Arnold Ruge, who from 1838 had been editing the *Hallische Jahrbücher*, in which he had published as much as he dared of the writings of the Young Hegelian left. In 1841 trouble with the censorship caused Ruge to move his headquarters to Dresden, in Saxony, where he issued the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* in place of his previous venture. Marx agreed to contribute, but the censor again intervened, and Ruge decided to issue from Switzerland a volume of *Anecdota Philosophica* containing the articles which he dared not publish in Germany. Marx's contributions were to be among these ; but Marx was slow in producing what he had promised, and

the *Anecdota* nearly went to press without him. While he was still working on his projected articles, a different opportunity arose. In January 1842 a group of Cologne liberals founded the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and Marx was invited to become a contributor. In October he was made editor, at the age of 24. Early the following year the paper was suppressed, and Marx found himself again out of a job, but not before, as editor, he had quarrelled with the Berlin 'Young Hegelians' because he refused to publish some of their contributions in the paper. He had, indeed, a difficult time between the Prussian censor, his liberal financial backers, and the Young Hegelians, who were then hot on the trail of the Christian religion, as well as of the German *bourgeoisie*.

After his severance from the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx decided to join Arnold Ruge in producing a successor to the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, to be published outside Germany. Paris, and the title *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*, were finally settled on : Marx married Jenny von Westphalen in June 1843, and in November set up house with her in Paris.

Only one number of the new 'Yearbook' ever appeared, in 1844, including contributions from Heine, Feuerbach, Herwegh, Hess, and Bakunin, as well as from Engels and Marx. In Paris Marx met Proudhon and other leaders of French Socialism, and made what was his first real acquaintance with French Socialist doctrines. He also met Engels, fresh from his experiences in Manchester, and settled down to serious study of English economic doctrines and conditions. Then came, in 1845, his expulsion from Paris by the French Government and his migration to Brussels, where he worked, as we have seen, with the collaboration of Engels, on his attacks on the German ideologists, and met Wilhelm Weitling. At Brussels he wrote *The Poverty of Philosophy*, attacking Proudhon and giving the first general account of his new economic theories ; and thence he went, at the instance of Engels, to play his part in the establishment in London of the Communist League.

Even before his exile from Germany began, he had come deeply under the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72), who published in 1839 his *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy*, and in 1841 his most celebrated work, *The Essence of Chris-*

*tianity*, which was later translated into English by George Eliot (1854). Feuerbach was, above all others, the philosopher who displaced Hegelian idealism from its position of dominance in German thought and substituted a materialist approach by insisting that the starting point for all philosophy and for all social thought must be not God, or the 'Idea', but man. This is no place for any full consideration of Feuerbach's contribution to philosophy. He is relevant here mainly because of his profound influence both on Marxism and on German Socialist thought as a whole. Like many others of the German philosophers of the 1830s and 1840s Feuerbach was concerned first of all with the criticism of religion and with the evaluation of its place in the mind of man. He saw religion as essentially a means of satisfying certain deep human needs, but, as we have seen, regarded the theological element in it as simply a projection by the human imagination of man himself. Man, he said, had made God in his own image,<sup>1</sup> and the problem before mankind was that of finding a substitute for theology — rendered obsolete by the advance of scientific knowledge — that would satisfy the human need for an ideal. This object of worship he thought could be found in man himself conceived not individually but in his social relations, through which he transcended his individual limitations, and could identify himself with something at once greater than, and not external to, his own nature. The love of man for mankind thus came to be the central tenet in Feuerbach's philosophy. His 'materialism' consisted, in its essence, of this substitution of man for God as the starting point of all realistic philosophic thinking. Feuerbach did not say that body and mind were the same, or that the mind was no more than the brain; but he did assert that there could be no spirit without a body, and that it was necessary to set out from the conception of man, as a mind in a body, rather than from any dualism of matter and spirit. He did not himself press this doctrine to the point of formulating any definite political philosophy — much less any Socialist programme — but he deeply influenced towards Socialism many of the younger philosophers who had grown up in the Hegelian atmosphere, and eagerly embraced his

<sup>1</sup> An idea to which expression had already been given by Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Idea* (1819).

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'materialism' as a means of escape from Hegel's anti-democratic metaphysics. The depth of his influence on Marx can be seen in the *Theses on Feuerbach* which Marx drew up while he was in the process of clearing his own mind ; and Engels, in his short treatise on Feuerbach, later paid tribute to the importance of Feuerbach's doctrine in the development of his and Marx's philosophy.

Marx, however, was not destined to find his abiding place in the Feuerbachian gospel of love of man for his fellows. This gospel, as it was developed by his contemporaries, seemed to him to result in an entirely abstract approach. 'Man' and 'society', as general categories, failed to satisfy him as soon as, escaping from the highly philosophical environment in which he had grown up, he found himself in 1842, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, compelled to deal with concrete economic issues. At that stage, he knew hardly anything about economics, theoretical or practical : even Socialist ideas had reached him mainly in the abstract forms into which they had been translated by the 'Young Hegelian' philosophers. In 1842 appeared Lorenz von Stein's important book, *Socialism and Communism in Contemporary France*, the first comprehensive survey of French Socialism written by a German. Marx must have read this soon after its appearance. Stein attached great importance to the development of the proletariat as a product of industrialisation, and predicted that what had occurred in France as a result of its emergence would spread to other countries as capitalism developed further. He described the course of the class-struggle in French society and offered at any rate the outline of an economic interpretation of historical evolution, with classes as the embodiment of economic forces. Stein, however, by no means drew from his study the conclusions which Marx was soon to draw. Stein looked to social reform from above as a means of checking the growth of working-class discontent. His objective was a monarchy ensuring good conditions to the working classes, and thus gaining their loyalty. He was not in any way hostile to the *bourgeoisie* or to the growth of capitalism. He believed in a 'Welfare State' organised on a basis of harmony among the classes, with the State standing outside class differences as a superior, reconciling power. This was the kind of doctrine

that Marx, in the *Communist Manifesto*, was soon to denounce as 'feudal Socialism'. But Stein's analysis of social forces was not the less important because his conclusions were conservative and anti-revolutionary. Marx does not mention him in the account of his own mental evolution in the Preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*; but that does not mean that Stein's work played no part in the development of his ideas.

In the Preface, Marx says that, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842-3, he 'found himself embarrassed' when he had 'to take part in discussions concerning so-called material interests'. The very shape of the phrase indicates his philosophical remoteness. He goes on to say that, at the same time as he had to deal as editor with concrete issues turning on such things as the condition of the Rhenish peasantry and the national controversy about free trade and protection, 'a weak, quasi-philosophic echo of French Socialism and Communism made itself heard' in the paper. Marx despised this vague stuff, but had to admit in dealing with it that he did not know enough about the subject to hazard an independent judgment. He does not say at this point how much his introduction to Engels and his visit to England under Engels's guidance helped him to clear his mind, though he does, a few pages later, pay tribute to Engels's collaboration in settling accounts with the German ideologists and in directing his attention to the study of economic theory. But what Engels had done most of all was to open Marx's eyes, for a time, to the facts of life.

Marx, however, did not see it that way. It seemed to him much more important that during the years between 1843 and 1846 he had 'settled accounts' with the ideologues among whom he had grown up, and, in particular, had found a standpoint that enabled him to escape from the Hegelian view of the State. He began, he explains in the Preface to the *Critique*, with 'a critical revision of Hegel's *Philosophie des Rechts* (Philosophy of 'Right' or 'Law' — neither translation quite conveys the meaning), which contains Hegel's account of the State as the embodiment of Reason and as having an unlimited claim upon men. The opening part of Marx's critique of Hegel appeared in the solitary issue of the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher* in 1844. These studies, he says, led him 'to the conclusion that legal relations and the forms of 'state' structure

could neither be understood by themselves nor explained by the so-called 'general progress of the human mind' — as the Young Hegelians, including Moses Hess at this time, sought to explain them. On the contrary, he came to the conclusion that such forms were 'rooted in the material conditions of life, which are summed up by Hegel . . . under the name "Civil Society"'. This is a reference to Hegel's distinction between 'the State', as a purely rational thing, and all the rest of the social structure, which in Hegel's view obeys an inferior law of utility, save to the extent to which the State gives it rational purpose and direction. Thus Marx was turning his eyes away from Hegel's 'State' to the actual structure of society as a working apparatus: 'the anatomy of that "Civil Society"', he goes on to say, 'is to be sought in Political Economy'.

Engels, Marx then tells his readers, 'came to the same conclusions as myself by a different road' — witness his book on *The Condition of the Working Classes in England*. At Brussels the two worked together, laying down the essentials of their common doctrine, with Hess often discussing things with them, and largely agreeing with their views. Marx, in the Preface from which I have quoted so much already, sums up these conclusions in a memorable, but all too brief, couple of pages — pages so concentrated that there is nothing for it but to cite them in full, often though they have been cited before.

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations which are indispensable and independent of their will: these relations of production correspond to a definite stage in the development of their powers of production.

The sum-total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society — the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life.

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness.

At a certain stage of their development, the material powers of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or — what is but a legal



expression for the same thing — with the property relations within which they had been at work before.

From forms for the development of the powers of production these relations turn into fetters upon them. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change in the economic foundation the whole vast superstructure is fairly rapidly transformed.

In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production — which can be determined with the precision of natural science — and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophical, in short the ideological, forms in which men become aware of this conflict and fight it out.

Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its own awareness: on the contrary, this awareness has rather to be explained from the contradictions of material life — from the actual conflict between the social powers of production and the relations of production.

No social order ever disappears until all the productive powers for which there is room within it have been developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear until the material conditions for their existence have matured in the womb of the old society.

Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it is in a position to solve; for, when we look at the matter more closely, we shall always discover that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions needed for its solution are also present, or at the least are in process of formation.

In broad outline, we can designate the Asiatic, the Ancient, the feudal, and the modern *bourgeois* methods of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society.

The *bourgeois* relations of production are the final antagonistic form of the social process of production — antagonistic, in the sense not of individual antagonism but of antagonism arising out of conditions environing the life of individuals in society. At the same time the productive powers which develop in the womb of *bourgeois* society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism.

This social formation therefore constitutes the closing chapter of the prehistoric stage of human society.

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This remarkable passage is almost all that Marx ever told his readers — apart from what he wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, about the absolute foundations of his doctrine. Upon it, to borrow his own phrase, an immense 'superstructure' has certainly been raised. Sharply defined as Marx's phrases are, they leave a great deal of his meaning open to doubt. What he means is clear enough up to a point. He is stressing, in the first place, that what and how men *think* is greatly affected by the conditions under which they *live*. So much is obvious now: it was not obvious to the German philosophers Marx was repudiating, who were seeking absolute answers, true irrespective of time and place, to the question how the perfect society should be organised and what should be the content of the rational man's moral beliefs and code of conduct. Secondly, Marx was saying that, of the conditions in which men live, by far the most important, and indeed the determinants of the others, are the economic conditions, to which, in their fundamental character, he gives the name 'powers of production'. Up to a point, this too is now a truism which every anthropologist, and every student of world history, accepts. It was not so in Marx's day, though many thinkers, from the eighteenth century at any rate, had stressed the influence of environment on institutions and on the *mores* of different peoples. Where Marx was going beyond these predecessors — Montesquieu, Rousseau, Owen, and many others — was in isolating the *economic* environment from other environmental factors as the fundamental determinant. This was a denial of the adequacy of such statements as Owen's that bad social institutions make bad characters. The bad institutions, Marx was saying, are not original causes, but themselves the products of economic forces. It is futile, he argued, merely to call them bad: the essential thing is to understand why they exist.

Institutions exist, Marx argues, because the 'powers of production' call them into being whether men will or no. At any stage in the development of the 'powers of production' there must be some sort of social organisation to control their use. Men have to lay down rules about such matters, and to see that the rules are kept. They have to become organised in co-operating groups for carrying on the work of production ;

and this involves an ordered arrangement of the working relations between man and man. They have to lay down who is to have the use of the means of production, including both the land with its fields, pastures, mines and forests, and the instruments which men themselves have made. There has to be a system of property relations, as well as a system for organising labour. These systems, he argues, are determined not by men's free will but, in their general character, by the nature of the means of production which are at men's command in any particular place and at any particular time. The 'powers of production' determine the 'relations of production'.

But the 'relations of production', thus determined, settle a great deal besides. The ways in which men are organised for work, the ways in which they hold property, give rise to a social structure which settles men's mutual relations not only while they are working, but in other aspects of their living together. These factors elevate some and subordinate others, not only in their work, but in their status and place in the common life. They give rise to *classes*, which Marx holds to be definable primarily in terms of their different relations to the productive structure. What appear as social distinctions are basically economic distinctions, dependent on and varying with the conditions under which production is carried on.

This is a disputable opinion. It obviously — obviously to us, living in the twentieth century — contains a substantial element of truth. Nobody is now likely to deny that the distinctive class-structures of *modern* communities are to a great extent products of economic forces — for example, that the middle and working classes, both in their general character and in respect of the sub-groups which make them up, are alike children of what we call the Industrial Revolution and of the transformations which it involved in the occupations and techniques that had to be mastered for the control of the new powers of production. What is less certain is that the structures of the pre-industrial age are equally explicable in economic terms — indeed, whether, in the more primitive types of society, the category 'economic' can be without ana-chronism differentiated from others nearly as much as it can be in modern societies, and also whether more must not be allowed than Marx was prepared to allow to military factors as

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formative influences on class-structure. Nor, of course, will everyone be prepared to accept Feuerbach's interpretation of religious beliefs as the results of a process of 'projection' by the human mind, or Marx's development of the view which treats religion as equally with other parts of the social complex finally referable to the influence of economic conditions.

Marx's theory is called sometimes 'materialistic' and sometimes 'economic'. Either word suggests a priority of the needs which are satisfied by physical goods — food, clothing, shelter, and the like — over needs which call for immaterial satisfaction, such as the need to propitiate a potentially hostile environment regarded as capable of being influenced by ritual observances, or the need for fellowship. In a sense, of course, men must eat if they are to live; but what if they prefer death to life without satisfactions of the second sort? Modern anthropologists are much less ready than Marx was to accept economic explanations of the whole basic behaviour of primitive peoples, and modern psychologists are equally unwilling to accept the 'economic man'. It is not self-evident, nor is it inductively demonstrated that, in Engels's phrase, "man eats before he thinks". It can be pertinently asked 'How much food must he have before he starts thinking?' and even 'Could he eat without taking thought at all?' The question of priorities is at any rate a good deal more complex than Marx and Engels made it. Marxists nowadays usually prefer the word 'materialist' to the word 'economic' as a label for Marx's conception of history: perhaps that is because 'materialist' gives more scope for taking account of non-economic factors, when it is understood as including men, and men's minds, within the world of material powers.

These, however, are in relation to the main part of Marx's theory no more than secondary issues, though they raise fundamental problems in connection with his whole attitude to 'values'. The great uncertainty left by Marx's account of his general theory centres upon the precise meaning to be attached to the term 'powers of production' and to the process by which these powers are supposed to develop. In the first place, Marx seems to be assuming that the 'powers of production' progress independently of men's wills. But do they? Is it really true that men can do nothing to obstruct the progress

of human knowledge, on which the advance of the 'powers of production' evidently depends? A 'power of production' does not spring spontaneously out of man's non-human environment — nor did Marx suppose that it did. It is the outcome of men's learning something about natural forces and the means of controlling them and bending them to human use. The advance of productive power *is* the advance of human knowledge in the acquisition and use of things which were there before men found out how to use them, but were not 'powers of production' till men *had* found out. Indeed, things become powers of production only when the knowledge of their use has been sufficiently diffused to make its application possible, and only if the knowledge, or the means of using it, be not kept from men by the power of superstition or vested prejudice or interest armed with sufficient force.

Marx appears to imply that such obstructions are bound to be overborne, as they were increasingly in the West from the sixteenth century onwards. But were they overborne in China, or in India, or over a large part of the world, except by the impact of the West on these areas? Is there not, on the scale of world history as a whole, a tendency on Marx's part to personify the force of economic progress and to endow it with a sort of will of its own independent of the wills of men? Or, if not this, is there not a tendency to confusion through treating the mind of man sometimes as a part of the force of nature and sometimes as a thing operated on from outside by this very force? More crudely, are not the 'powers of production' thought of sometimes as coal and iron, steam and water, and other things external to man, and at other times, without open or conscious transition of meaning, as man's power over coal and iron, steam and water, and the other external things which he manipulates for his ends?

These questions are of course highly relevant to the character of Marx's 'materialism'. He and Engels called themselves 'materialists' primarily because they wished to repudiate the *Idealistic* doctrine of the Hegelians, who regarded things as less real than 'Ideas' and indeed, after the manner of Plato, as inferior copies of them. They wanted, following Feuerbach, to assert that being is prior to consciousness — not the other way round. But the 'being' for which they claimed priority

included man, not merely as a body, but also as a mind. Feuerbach had sought to transcend the old dualism of body and mind, matter and spirit, by asserting the essential unity of the two — of the body-mind in one — and by denying, not the existence of mind or spirit, but the possibility of its existing except in a body. This was also Marx's position ; and he and Engels were accordingly at pains, again and again, to distinguish their doctrine from what they called 'crude materialism', as well as from those allegedly Spinozist views which conceived of matter and mind as incommensurable aspects of reality, obeying distinct laws. They were emphatically 'monists' ; but they were materialists only in this special sense of denying the independent existence of mind without matter.

'Men make their own history', Marx asserts, in addition to asserting that the productive relations into which men enter, and which shape their history, are entered into independently of their wills. Can both statements be true ? Only if men are conceived as making their own history under a law of necessity imposed on them, which governs the progress of their knowledge and of its application to the practical arts of life. Only if there is a necessity which is the universal mother of invention — so that whatever men originate is to be regarded as the necessary response to the conditions which pose the problem. Marx, I think, believed that there was such a necessity ; and in relation to the history of Western society since the Renaissance he was, at the least, mainly right. That, moreover, was the history he was really interested in, because it was the provider of the factual situation in which he felt himself called upon to act. On this basis, he generalised about all history. It would have been surprising if he had not done so ; for universal laws of history had been, from the eighteenth century, very much in the air, and were intoxicating stuff to breathe. Hegel had been the author of one of these vast generalisations — the vastest of all — in representing 'History' as the march of God-Reason on earth. Marx wanted to escape from Hegel by finding an equally comprehensive generalisation that would release him from this Idealism and enable him to think fruitfully about the actual problems of society as a champion of the oppressed, not as a deifier of the oppression. He formed his generalisation, and for his practical

purposes it worked. If objection were taken to it on the ground that it was true neither *sub specie aeternitatis* nor over all times and places, he could answer that thought was valid only within the limitations of the thinker's historical situation, and as an interpretation of actual experience and a guide to action in a particular context, and that in this connection his generalisation was true enough — because it answered the question that needed answering in his own time and place.

In other words, Marx was really looking for a 'working hypothesis', rather than for a dogma. 'Dogmatic' as he often was, in the popular sense of the term, he did not believe in dogmas, in any ultimate sense. He was telling his contemporaries, not so much 'This is true' as, in the spirit of the social enquirer, 'This is how to do it'. He was trying to find a formula for organising and disciplining for practical ends the class-power of the proletariat. As a rallying-cry, the idea of the proletariat's 'historic mission' had an undeniable appeal; and Marx felt that it was his business to make full use of it.

But did not his belief in the inevitability of the proletariat's victory destroy the force of his appeal? Why should men trouble to work for a cause which is bound to succeed even if they do nothing? Does not Marx's view lead, not to action, but to fatalism? He did not think so. On the contrary, he flung the charge of fatalism at the very philosophers whose views he was combating. What led to fatalism, in his view, was a doctrine which exalted the 'Idea' above the fact, the cause of rationality above the movement of men in relation to their everyday affairs. The ideologues, he pointed out, were continually pouring cold water on reforms which involved compromise and on movements which they regarded as tainted with egoistic motives. This led them to stand aside from the contemporary struggle, instead of taking part in it and seeking to use every actual social force that they could turn to good ends. Marx did not mind operating with imperfect weapons: he was realist enough to know that there was no other way of getting things done. And he was also realist enough to understand that a belief in the certainty of victory makes most men fight harder, and not hold back from the battle. This is, no doubt, illogical; but it is sound psychology none the less. The whole subsequent history of Marxism shows this; and

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plenty of people knew of it before Marx. The warriors of old did not go home when they believed that the 'God of Battles' was fighting for them: they fought harder.

Feuerbach, in characterising religion as taking its forms from the projection by men of themselves outside themselves, had in no wise denied that religion, in some form, was necessary to men. He had wished, like Comte later, to put the Religion of Humanity — of man as a social being — in place of theological religion. Marx, in treating religious *forms* as dependent on economic factors, was neither affirming nor denying the necessity of the religious *impulse*. He was only saying that existing religions were class-religions, formed in the image of class-ridden economic structures. In his cry to the workers of the world to unite, he was formulating, if not a new proletarian religion — that is a matter of terminology — at any rate a gospel that would satisfy the element in the human mind to which religion had previously appealed, in such a way as to reconcile this element with the needs of the new society which was becoming appropriate and necessary as the superstructure on the new and developing 'powers of production'. It has often been said that Marx's messianic appeal is logically irreconcilable with his attempt to establish Socialism as a 'science', but from Marx's own point of view there was no inconsistency; for he did not regard formal Logic as offering a valid method for the interpretation of the real, changing world. Marx remained Hegelian enough to regard it as fundamental that a thing could be A and not-A at one and the same time; and he believed, with Feuerbach, that action preceded idea, and that ideas, as far as they had validity, were formulations of actions. Thus, his determinism was not, as he saw it, a determination of men's affairs by things, but a determination by actions upon things. Men's actions made the world what it was; but it was not causeless or casual but determined action, of which the will to act was a determined part. I am not saying I accept this view: I am saying that it was Marx's view, and that it is clearly a possible view, which cannot be excluded on merely logical grounds.

This business of the limitations of Aristotelian Logic, and of the 'Dialectical Logic' which Hegel put forward, not as a substitute for it, but as a higher and complementary form,



necessary for the understanding of Rational Reality, is a source of much confusion. Neither Hegel nor Marx was denying the validity of Formal Logic within its proper sphere: what Hegel was saying was that it was of no help in dealing with the dynamics of a developing world. Marx took over this view, and made use of it in formulating his Materialist Conception of History; but he is in no degree responsible for the nonsense about 'Dialectical Logic' as a *substitute* for Formal Logic which some of his admirers have tried to foist upon him. There is no contradiction between the view that 'A' cannot be at one and the same time 'not-A', and the view that 'A' can become something different from 'A'. Confusion arises only when the essentially negative concept of 'not-A' is identified with a positive 'something different from A'; and this confusion between 'contrary' and 'contradictory' pervades not only Hegelian but also a good deal of Marxian thought.

But *why*, it has often been asked, did Marx *want* the proletariat to triumph? Science might tell him that was its destiny; but why should he care? Could science inform his will? He would have regarded such a question as meaningless. He *did* want the proletariat to beat the *bourgeoisie*; he *did* want a classless society. This wanting was a fact on which he had to act: it was a 'fact-act' all in one — a *praxis*, to use the Greek word adopted to describe this unity. If other people — some other people — wanted something different, they would act differently; and there would be a struggle, at the end of which he was sure his *praxis* would have won. If he had been asked whether he and his opponents were alike determined to think-and-will as they did, I do not think he would have answered the question. At all events, I do not think he ever did answer it. He was not interested in the question of individual determination — only in *social* determination, in the determination of *class* action by the 'powers of production'. He was not, after his break with the Hegelians, a moral but a social theorist.

Further than this I do not propose at present to pursue the development of Marx's thought or of that of Engels either. I am writing in this volume about Socialism up to about 1850; and there will be much more to say about Marxism when I come, in a further volume, to discuss its later developments

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and consequences. Here, I need only sum up in a few paragraphs the gist of Marx's view about the determining influence of the 'powers of production' on human history.

According to Marx's general theory, the evolution of society depends on the changing character of the 'powers of production' — that is, in effect, of man's command over the rest of nature and over himself. Every stage in this development, he argues, results in a corresponding organisation of human forces for its exploitation, a particular arrangement of human relationships and of property rights, which in turn requires to be sustained by force through an appropriate political organisation and also by its impact on men's minds through corresponding ideological formulations. Thus both the political system and the whole structure of ideas and values existing in a society, though these are used to enforce obedience to the class conditions required by the contemporary development of the 'powers of production', are not the cause of the class system but the result of the underlying economic forces. They are in Marx's phrase a 'superstructure'. The real driving force resides in the 'powers of production' themselves ; and as these powers change through the further development of human knowledge and practical capacity there is bound to be a corresponding adaptation both of the social and political structure and of the ideological structures determining the society's 'way of life'.

The interests of the governing classes, however, are to prevent this adaptation from taking place in any respect in which it threatens their control ; and these classes accordingly use their power to keep the political structure as it is and to suppress 'dangerous' innovations, both economic and ideological, even when these are appropriate for the further development of the relations of production in order to make it possible for the advancing 'powers of production' to be fully employed. Thus, in any social system that is undergoing economic development a disharmony will arise between the continuous onward movement of the 'powers of production' and the statically resistant superstructure of the political and ideological institutions of the society concerned. The development of the 'powers of production' will be creating new real economic forces, in the hands of men who will be seeking to win control

over society ; and this clash will find expression in the form of a class-struggle between the existing ruling class and the class which is increasing its economic power through its mastery of the new forms of productive power. As the disharmony grows greater, intensified class-struggles will prepare the way for social revolution ; and the revolution, when it comes, will rapidly destroy the obsolete superstructure of social institutions and will replace it by a new superstructure which is in harmony with the changed condition of the 'powers of production'.

Such social revolutions include and involve revolutions in ideas as well as in institutions : they are the major turning-points in human history. Marx and Engels by no means supposed, as some of their critics have taken them to suppose, that every historical event could be explained directly in terms of this formula. The formula itself they applied directly only to the great revolutions of history, such as the French Revolution, which they regarded as not merely French but as part of a general movement of Western civilisation. They did not attempt to apply their broad formula to day-to-day events, except those which were directly related to the general movement of history. They did not even say that their formula was applicable to every outstanding event or development in the history of a particular country ; for they were thinking in terms of a general world movement from which they were prepared to admit that there could be considerable deviations in the history of any one country. They did, however, hold that the 'materialist' way of looking at current events in any country was able to throw a great light on many events which were inexplicable on the basis of any other approach ; and Marx and Engels themselves showed, in their accounts of the events of 1848 and the next few years, how fruitful this way of looking at contemporary history could be. Witness their publications — *Class Struggles in France*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte*, and *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* — all three most illuminating examples of the practical utility of their method.

Nor, again, did their doctrine involve the belief that individual men are moved only by economic or self-interested motives. Whether Marx believed this or not — and I do not

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think he did, for it belongs to Benthamism rather than to Marxism — such a belief would be beside the point in relation to his general theory, which refers not to the motives of individuals but to the general movement of historical forces. Whatever may be the motives that move individual men, Marx is saying, men in the mass are impelled by a historical necessity to adapt their social structures and their ideas to the requirements of the developing 'powers of production'. 'Man always makes his own history', but man does this only within the limiting conditions which are set by the material realities of his own time and place and by the problems to which these realities give rise.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MAZZINI — THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS OF 1848

IN the foregoing chapters I have said nothing of Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872). Yet Mazzini appeared to many men in his own day to be a revolutionary leader closely akin to the Socialists and Anarchists whose theories I have attempted to describe; and there was in fact a common element, despite Mazzini's reiterated and passionate declaration of his hostility to Socialism. The common element is to be found in the word 'association', which held a central place in Mazzini's conception of the coming society and links him to the numerous other theorists who accepted, in one way or another, the idea of 'Socialism'. The essential difference between him and most of these thinkers — though not all — is that, whereas they regarded association primarily as a means of organising the working class and enabling that class to play the part required of it by the march of historical development, Mazzini's idea of association was linked in his mind inseparably with that of nationality and of a national — and indeed also an international — unity which transcended differences of class. It was in the name of Humanity in general, and of the nation as a species of the genus, Humanity, that Mazzini called for association; and he was acutely hostile to any form of association that he regarded as running counter to the spirit of national unity, and of an international fraternity resting upon the co-operation of national groups. *De facto*, he might have to exclude from this unity the elements in each country which set themselves against the national spirit; but he would have nothing to do with any doctrine that was based on the unity of the class rather than of the nation. This was the root of his strong hostility to Socialism, especially after the *Communist Manifesto* had put forward a doctrine of Socialism as based upon class-war. He thought of the middle and working classes, not as essentially

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antagonistic forces, but as constituting within each country parts of an indissoluble national group, which it was his function to unite in pursuance of a common objective.

Mazzini's nationalism was of course profoundly Italian. It developed as a protest against the division of Italy and its consequent subjection to alien and despotic rule. In theory, he was prepared to recognise other nations as having equal claims with the Italians : indeed, he endeavoured during his residence in Switzerland to create a Swiss nationalist movement on the model of the 'Young Italy' movement which he had set on foot in 1831 ; and he also laid out the constitution for a similar organisation of 'Young Europe' that was to link the peoples of the various European nations together in a common crusade. Nevertheless, his nationalism was curiously limited. He was utterly blind to the claims of the Irish Nationalists, and refused to regard Ireland as a nation on the strange ground that it had no specific national contribution to make to the cause of Humanity. He was also deeply suspicious of France, even of French Nationalism ; and he could never get away from the notion — which had its analogue in both French and German thought — that it was the mission of the Italian nation to show all others the way to the general culture of the future. Perhaps all nationalists have to suffer in some measure from such romantic illusions and from suspicions that other nations are not quite on the same plane as their own. Mazzini certainly did suffer from this, almost as much as Hegel, though much less unpleasantly.

Besides the idea of national unity, two other ideas dominated Mazzini's thought — that of Republicanism and that of duty. He detested monarchy, temporal or spiritual, in all its forms, from legitimacy to Caesarism and from Papacy as temporal to Papacy as spiritual power. But this hostility to the rule of one did not proceed from any faith in the rule of the many. He repudiated democracy as an idea falling 'below the conception of the future epoch which we Republicans are bound to initiate'. This repudiation rested on his belief that democracy was a gospel of revolt and not of social construction because it rested on the notion of rights — individual rights — rather than of duties, and was therefore tainted with egoism and utilitarian materialism. Like Kant, he rejected the entire utilitarian

philosophy, contending that the function of society was not to promote the general happiness but to help men to do their duty in the sacred cause of Humanity. His philosophy rested on the idea of God as the symbol of a common humanity, and on the disinterested service of God and Humanity as the only valid norm of social behaviour. Though he acknowledged the great service done by the French Revolution in establishing the principle of the Rights of Man, he regarded this achievement as merely a preliminary clearing of the road for the higher idea of the Duties of Man; and he was strongly suspicious of contemporary France because it seemed to him still to be dominated by the philosophy of egoism, instead of seeking to transcend it. This appeared to him to apply to the French opposition groups as much as to those in power; he would have no truck with anyone who argued that it was necessary to build the new order on any collective organisation that was mainly pursuing egoistic or group ends. He wanted the 'association' which was to achieve the new order to rest exclusively on motives of utter purity and regardlessness of self; and he believed that it was in the concept of the Nation that the means of inspiring men with this idealism could be found. (Therein he resembled Fichte, who also influenced his conception of 'duty' as 'service' through self-identification with the national 'cause'.)

Mazzini, however, did not believe this conception of duty could be realised unless the ideas 'Nation' and 'Republic' were welded firmly together, in the connotation, not of democracy, but of devotion and obedience to these ideas themselves. As he thought of himself as the selfless servant of these linked ideas — which indeed he was — he was apt, as a leader, to insist on unquestioning obedience from his collaborators to his orders, as embodying not his own will but the dictates of duty. In the name of duty he did not hesitate to send men to certain death or to embark on revolutionary plots without adequate preparation or prospect of success. Mild in his personal relations, he was ruthless in his self-righteousness in every political affair, and prepared even to countenance assassination, though only in rare circumstances, when the cause required it. As a revolutionary, he was certainly quite as ruthless as Marx — indeed, I should say much more so. Clash between them was inevitable, because they were both

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trying to organise revolution, but on entirely incompatible principles. 'Class' *versus* 'Nation' was an opposition of basic ideas which could not be compromised.

In the matter of actual social proposals, however, there was much in Mazzini's ideas that was borrowed straight from the various socialistic theories which have been described and discussed in this volume. Looking forward to the future, Mazzini built large hopes on Co-operative production. He had a keen sympathy with the working classes, and denounced the theories of the classical economists as vigorously as the Socialists. 'The workman', he wrote, 'has no freedom of contract : he is a slave : he has no alternative but hunger on the pay, however small it be, that his employer offers him. And his pay is a *wage* — a wage often insufficient for his daily needs, almost always unequal to the value of his work. His hands can multiply the employer's capital threefold, fourfold, but not so his own pay. Hence his incapacity to save ; hence the unrelieved, irreparable misery of economic crises.' Mazzini derived much of this from Sismondi, who was his friend ; and he also loved to echo Lamennais, whom he described as the only true priest of his generation and adjured to come forth and lead a great spiritual crusade.

'Economics', he wrote elsewhere, 'must be the expression, not of the human appetite, but of man's industrial mission' — that is, of his service to his fellow-men. He prophesied the coming supersession of capitalism, and its replacement by 'association'. (For Italy he recommended a great plan of 'home colonisation' of unreclaimed lands.) He wanted the State — the regenerated National State — to take over the lands of the Church, the railways, the mines, and 'some great industrial enterprises', and to apply the income from these sources to create a 'National Fund', which was to be used to aid the development of Co-operative production, to provide a system of popular education, and to assist any European people that was still struggling for its freedom. But with this he combined, like Sismondi and Lamennais, a firm belief in the virtues of private property as a spur to productive effort and as a necessity for human freedom. But private property did not necessarily mean individual property : (he thought of property as destined to assume increasingly an associative character.)



In the last resort, his social outlook, though not fully equalitarian in an economic sense, was based on the idea of a steady diminution of economic inequality. He favoured highly progressive direct taxation, to be devoted to the promotion of popular welfare. He wanted also the highest possible productivity, as a means to an improved standard of living. He thought of it as quite in order to wish to improve other people's material conditions, but as entirely wrong to set out to improve one's own. Everything that was good had to be a matter of duties, and not of rights or claims resting on self-interest.

Thus Mazzini was necessarily horrified by Marx's materialistic philosophy and by the notion of organising the workers on a basis of class-egoism, even supplemented by a sense of historic mission. On this issue he was entirely uncompromising — and also entirely unrealistic. He was always expecting the mass of the people to respond to his idealistic calls — always surprised, but never disillusioned, when they failed to respond. And his utter idealism made him at times unscrupulous in ways that puzzled his admirers. It has always to be remembered that his first political affiliation was to the Carbonari, and that he was brought up in the atmosphere of secret conspiracy and unquestioning obedience to a secret leadership. When he broke away from the Carbonari on the ground that they had no clear ideas and were merely destructive, he did not abandon their methods : he only sought to clarify aims. And he was so sure of himself that he could never really co-operate with others. He could only issue orders in the name of the 'Cause'. This came out when, after 1848, he attempted to work with Kossuth and Ledru-Rollin in a sort of European Republican Triumvirate ; but that phase of his career falls outside the period covered in the present volume.

Of the European revolutionary movements of 1848 a good deal has been said incidentally in the course of the preceding chapters. This is not the place for any full discussion of these movements, in which Socialism, of any kind, played only a minor part. But a little must be said to indicate in general terms their relation to Socialism, in the various forms in which it has been presented in the study of its leading adherents. The European revolutionary movement burst into action first in the opening months of 1848 — first of all in Sicily. In

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France it began with the Paris revolt of February, which brought about the abdication of the *bourgeois* monarch, Louis-Philippe, and the installation of a Provisional Government representing a wide range of Republican groups, with Louis Blanc as the Socialist representative and Ledru-Rollin as the leader of the unbending Republican democrats. Hardly had the Revolutionaries installed a Provisional Government when the workmen's clubs, headed by Blanqui, threatened a revolt unless work were found for the unemployed and the proposed elections for a national assembly postponed. The Government promised to recognise the right to work, but postponed the elections only for a few days. Held in April, they resulted in the return of a reactionary majority, as the left-wing parties had little strength outside Paris. In May the deferred revolt broke out, headed by Barbès. Blanqui considered the moment inopportune; but he and his followers joined in when they had failed to prevent the outbreak. The rising was easily crushed: the Provisional Government proceeded to repressive measures, which provoked a second attempt by such of the left-wing leaders as were not already under arrest or in flight. In the 'Days of June' General Cavaignac, who had been given dictatorial powers, quenched this second revolt in blood, and the defeat of the left was made complete. The Socialists and left-wing Radicals who remained were driven into opposition, under the leadership of Alexandre-Auguste Ledru-Rollin (1807-74), the Republican lawyer-orator. In December 1848 Louis Napoléon Bonaparte was elected President of the Republic by a large majority over Cavaignac, most of the left and centre voting for him on the strength of his democratic promises. The National Assembly which met in May 1849 to draft a new constitution was dominated by right-wing elements, and popular demonstrations against it in Paris were easily dispersed. The remaining Radicals and Socialists did their best to oppose Louis Napoléon's rise to power, and particularly his policy of intervention against Mazzini's Roman Republic; but they were helpless. Ledru-Rollin followed Louis Blanc into exile in England: Louis Napoléon consolidated his influence, and at the end of 1851 was in a position to carry through his *coup d'état* and establish himself as Emperor under the title of Napoleon III.

Meanwhile, the Revolution had been running its calamitous course in a number of other countries. In Italy, the Sicilian revolt had been followed in the early months of 1848 by uprisings and demonstrations in a number of other States and areas, including Naples, Tuscany, Lombardy, Venice, and Rome itself. Under pressure of popular feeling, Charles Albert of Piedmont declared war upon Austria, but was defeated in July, and made peace. The King of Naples and Sicily revoked the Neapolitan and Sicilian constitutions he had been compelled to grant. Tuscany held out, proclaiming a Republic: the Pope fled from Rome, and a Constituent Assembly, headed by Mazzini and Garibaldi, declared that he had forfeited his temporal power. Charles Albert renewed the war against Austria, but early in 1849 was completely defeated at Novara: he abdicated in favour of his son, Victor Emmanuel, who had to make peace. The Austrian General, Haynau, brutally suppressed a revolt in Lombardy. Venice was captured by the Austrians, and the Sicilian revolt was crushed by the King of Naples. Meanwhile in Rome, Mazzini and Garibaldi had proclaimed a Republic; but the French, despite promises of non-intervention, sent an army against the Romans, and Rome fell to them in July 1849 after a long and heroic siege. The Italian Revolution was over.

In Germany the Revolution began in Baden in March 1848. There were riots in Berlin. The King of Bavaria was forced to abdicate. The Frankfurt National Assembly, summoned to draft a new constitution for Germany, met in May and remained in session until the middle of 1849, but accomplished nothing. In September 1848 revolts in Prussia and in Baden met with defeat. The Prussian Assembly, which had been engaged in drafting a new Constitution, was dissolved in November. In April 1849 the Frankfurt Assembly offered the crown of Germany to the King of Prussia. When he refused to accept it, the Right Wing of the Assembly melted away. In the following months there were revolts in Saxony, the Rhineland, the Palatinate and Baden, but they were all defeated. The Rump of the Frankfurt Assembly retired in May 1849 to Württemberg, and in the following month crossed over into Switzerland. Its evacuation marks the end of the German Revolution.

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In Austria-Hungary the Revolution began in March 1848 with a popular uprising in Vienna. Metternich fled, and the Emperor promised a Constitution, and accepted a demand from the Hungarians for extensive reforms. An Hungarian ministry, under Louis Kossuth, proceeded to decree the abolition of feudalism and to introduce a constitutional régime. The Croats, influenced by fear of Magyar oppression, sided against the Hungarians: Jellacic was made Governor-General, and attacked Hungary, but was repulsed. Vienna rose again, in support of the Hungarians, but fell to Jellacic, and the Emperor, who had fled, returned. Jellacic again marched against Hungary, and Vienna again rose, but was retaken. The Emperor abdicated in favour of his nephew, Franz Josef; and reaction resumed its hold in Austria. An attempted Czech revolt was crushed in the summer; and a rising in Cracow met with the same fate. The Hungarians, still unsubdued, went on in April 1849 to proclaim a Republic, under Kossuth, but were defeated. Kossuth resigned in August, and fled to Turkey, whence he went later to England and then to America. Hungary was deprived of all constitutional rights. The Austro-Hungarian Revolution was also at an end.

In Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland there were moderate constitutional reforms, without revolution. In Ireland, there was a rising so tiny and so easily crushed as hardly to count. In Great Britain there was only a Chartist demonstration, which marked the end of Chartism as an effective popular force. By the end of 1850 the whole affair was over, and the forces of revolution had everywhere gone down in defeat.

How much Socialism was there in the European Revolutions of 1848? Except in France, hardly anything; and even in France the Socialists were never able to play more than a minor part. Of course, in every country where an uprising or even a demonstration took place the working classes provided the main body of the crowds that appeared in the streets and of the fighters when it came to actual combat. But, except in Paris, where alone the Socialists, of various brands, had a hold on a large body of the working classes, the workmen who took part in the uprisings were hardly more Socialists than the leaders of the Revolution. Everywhere the great movements of 1848 were primarily constitutionalist, with a

strong admixture of Nationalism in Italy, Germany, and Austria-Hungary. The working class was barely articulate as a distinct force save in Paris and Lyons — not in the rest of France. The Hungarian and Italian movements were almost purely Nationalist, except in Southern Italy, where they were more constitutionalist than anti-Austrian. The German movements were highly confused ; but in none of them did working-class or Socialist influence play a really important part — not even in the Rhineland, despite Marx's efforts to give the proletarian wing a consciousness of its separateness from the *bourgeoisie*. Marx's idea, as he saw the European Revolutions approaching, had been that over most of Europe the *bourgeois* revolution, aided by the *petite bourgeoisie* and the workers, would succeed in overthrowing the old forms of autocracy and feudal aristocracy, but that the triumphant *bourgeoisie* would find itself immediately in difficulties both with the vacillating *petite bourgeoisie* and with the working classes. The opportunity of the workers to make a second revolution on a proletarian basis, Marx hoped, would come swiftly on the heels of the victory of the *bourgeoisie*. But in fact the *bourgeois* Revolution went down to defeat, partly through its own incompetence, and the opportunity Marx had looked for never arose. It is not much use to speculate how far its victory, had it come about, would have cleared the road, as Marx hoped it would, for a successful rising of the proletariat against the States' new masters.

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IN Great Britain, as we have seen in a previous chapter, the year 1848 brought forth no revolution. There was, however, great excitement, as revolution after revolution broke out in Europe, and the battle between Right and Left seemed to be joined all over the continent. Immense preparations were made to put down a widely anticipated Chartist revolt; but beyond the ineffective Kennington Common demonstration nothing happened. The Chartist Petition was rejected; the much-feared Chartist Convention and Assembly dispersed without issuing any call to action; the little bands of revolutionary plotters either realised their weakness too well to stir or were dispersed and arrested while they were still considering what to do. Even in Ireland Smith O'Brien's attempt at a rising was put down almost before it had begun. There was no need for the upholders of the established order in Great Britain to teach the workers a lesson by mass murder. Chartism was already flickering out of itself, as Feargus O'Connor's Land Scheme came to its inglorious end; the Chartists were deeply divided among themselves, and there was no leader capable of uniting them. Nor was there, as in France and Germany, any *bourgeois* revolutionary movement which the working classes could follow Marx's advice by first helping to power and then stabbing in the back in the hour of victory — a game, as the French showed, at which two could play. In Great Britain the *bourgeois* revolution had already happened — in 1832 — and the greater part of the *bourgeoisie* was fully prepared to join forces with the old aristocracy in suppressing any revolutionary tendencies among the workers. There were middle-class Radicals who wanted a further extension of the suffrage, and even some who were prepared to defend Trade Unions and endorse claims for sanitary legislation, popular education, and improved working conditions. There were Radical-Tories

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who made menacing noises about the oppression of the poor, and hated the individualism of the dominant 'Manchester School'. But, apart from a few eccentrics, there were no middle-class revolutionaries; even among those who were ready to back revolutions abroad, none, or almost none, would have any truck with the idea of revolution at home. The 'Hungry 'Forties' were getting less hungry; British capitalism was going ahead at a great pace despite the railway crisis of 1847; instead of 'increasing misery' and a grinding down to a uniform level of 'undifferentiated human labour', the more skilled workers were beginning to earn better wages, and new skills, based on machine-operation, were achieving recognition. The Rochdale Pioneers' Co-operative Society, founded in 1844, was still small and struggling, and not yet widely known; but it was a symptom of a changing mood, and Leeds and other towns were already treading in Rochdale's footsteps.

Thus it came about that 1848 produced in Great Britain, not a political revolution or any sort of mass movement, but, in the realm of 'Socialist theory' and practice, a small, eminently unrevolutionary campaign headed in its more publicised appearances by two clergymen of the Church of England and a small group of lawyers and other professional men who were keen Churchmen, though suspect of dangerous heterodoxy by the leading parties in the Church. The movement they made was no more than a ripple on the surface of a country on which the sun of economic advance was shining with a deep, though murky, light. In what it set out to do it failed as completely as the many other idealistic endeavours that have been described in this book. But, though it owed much to French example, it was most characteristically English, both in its conception and in what it achieved in spite of itself.

The two clergymen who played a prominent part in the Christian Socialist movement which began in England in 1848 were Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley. But the idea of starting the movement did not come from either of them. The founder of Christian Socialism was the barrister, John Malcolm Forbes Ludlow (1821-1911). Ludlow had been born in India and educated as a boy in Paris, before coming to England in 1838. He had become deeply interested in the social movements which grew up in France in the 1830s—

particularly in the various ideas of '*association ouvrière*'. A devout Christian, he was attracted especially by the Christian Socialist doctrines of Buchez and later by Louis Blanc's *Organisation du travail*. When the Revolution broke out in Paris in February 1848 he hastened to the scene of action, and came back full of enthusiasm for the spirit of the associated workers whom Blanc was endeavouring to help through the activities of the Luxembourg Commission. Already a devoted follower of Maurice, he went to his master and tried to persuade him that the time was ripe for starting in England, not a revolutionary movement, but a campaign to unite the Church and the working classes against the abuses of the industrial system. He thought the Chartists were wasting their time in demanding Manhood Suffrage: what was needed was a demonstration of the workers' power to do good things themselves — to begin seriously on the task of 'organising labour' in the spirit, not of a self-seeking rebellion against the Government or the rich, but of true Christian brotherhood. Ludlow was as convinced as Lamennais, who also influenced him greatly, that no good social movement could be founded except on Christian principles; and for him this meant the principles of a national Church, uniting the people instead of dividing them into rival sects.

The English Christian Socialist movement is unintelligible unless its religious foundations are understood. Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-72), who was the religious inspirer of the men who took part in it, had come from the Unitarianism in which he had been brought up to an ardent belief in an inclusive national Church, having its roots in the people, and in the need for a reform in the Church of England that would restore its leadership. He had soon found himself at loggerheads with all the main parties in the Church — with 'High' Churchmen and with 'Low' Churchmen, and with liberal 'Broad' Churchmen as well. All these seemed to him disunited — the 'High' clinging to false doctrines, the 'Broad' throwing away too much of the Christian faith, and the 'Low' thinking far too much of hell fire and far too little of the needs of the people in this life.

Maurice and his followers were in especially strong opposition to the 'other worldly' tendencies of current Low Church



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and Nonconformist doctrines. They believed that the Kingdom of God should be established in this world, and that the task of establishing it was primarily one of moral regeneration through the awakening of the social conscience. Maurice had been strongly influenced by the social views of Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He had little belief in political democracy, but a great faith in the power of the regenerated human being to manage his own affairs. Maurice and the group which gathered round him had been watching the development and decline of the Chartist movement, and held that in its pursuit of a purely political objective it was doomed to failure, because it was making no appeal to the creative faculties of the people. From their point of view Robert Owen was very much nearer the truth ; but his hostility to Christianity repelled them, for they did not believe that the type of Co-operative living which he advocated could be established — even if it were desirable — except on a basis of religious belief. Maurice accepted the name 'Socialism' for his new movement only after many hesitations, partly because he was at least as much afraid of the connotations of the word 'Co-operation', which had then, as associated with the Owenites, a strong anti-religious tang. No doubt the Owenites also called themselves 'the Socialists' ; but 'Socialism' was a word of many meanings, and had already been associated with the word 'Christian' in a number of French connections. At any rate, Maurice allowed Ludlow to persuade him for the time being, though it became clear later that he had never really liked the name.

The English Christian Socialists were moved mainly by sheer horror at the appalling conditions which prevailed in the factories and workshops — especially the latter, for they knew much more of the sweatshops of London than of the factory districts. They were in revolt against the un-Christian spirit which seemed to them to pervade the entire industrial system, with its assignment of predominance to the cash nexus and its denial of other more human relations between man and man. (They saw in Louis Blanc's demand for the 'right to work' and the 'organisation of labour' an appeal infinitely superior to that of the Chartists.) Charles Kingsley, writing over the signature of 'Parson Lot' in *Politics for the People*,

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the first of the Christian Socialist periodicals, asserted that the 'French cry, Organisation of Labour', was worth a dozen of the People's Charter. *Politics for the People*, which ran only for a few months in 1848, under the joint editorship of Maurice and Ludlow, had no very clear programme. It contained, besides Kingsley's trenchant articles, a good deal of information in Ludlow's contributions about the ideas of 'association' and Co-operation in France, but no definite proposals for applying their lessons to Great Britain. It was chiefly devoted to impassioned appeals to the working classes to realise the hollowness of merely political reforms and to turn their attention to the reform of their own aspirations, to moralise their movements, and to accept the need for Christianity as their very foundation. At the same time it appealed to Christians of the higher classes to appreciate the iniquity of the whole 'Manchester' philosophy, and to throw in their lot with the 'social movement' on a basis of class-reconciliation through fair and brotherly dealing in all economic affairs.

From this phase of Christian exhortation, which lasted through 1848, while the Chartists still seemed to hold the field as the protagonists of the workers, Christian Socialism passed, with the definitive defeat of the Chartists, into a second phase, still mainly under Ludlow's inspiration. The revolutionary movement, as far as it had existed at all in Great Britain, being over, Ludlow turned to the attempt to do what Buchez had been attempting in France since the early 1830s — that is, to help the workers — or rather such of them as were ready and of the required mind — to establish Co-operative productive associations apart from any help from the State. With Maurice rather reluctantly continuing to preside over the movement, Ludlow and his coadjutors determined to embark on an experiment in the establishment, on a definitely Christian basis, of small 'Working Associations', which the richer of them helped to finance in the hope of sowing through these small-scale activities the seeds of a new 'socialistic' order. Their conception of Christianity and of a national Church standing above classes (as some of the German 'Socialists' thought the State should stand above classes) forbade them to accept any notion of a class-struggle. They sought reconciliation between the classes and removal of working-class wrongs

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with the aid of the more enlightened members of the superior class. At the outset there had not been a single working man among them, and they had had practically no contact at all with the working classes. During the first stage of the movement they had tried to remedy this by attending Chartist meetings and gathering little groups of sympathetic workmen to discuss their ideas with them ; and they now began to seek out among these sympathisers men who might be able to join with them in the founding of the associations they had in mind. It is not surprising that they found most sympathy for their new venture among Owenites, who did not share their religious views. This soon led to differences of opinion about the policy they ought to pursue. Ludlow, believing deeply in the necessity for a thoroughly Christian basis for their experiments, was suspicious of contacts with the wider Labour movement, whereas Edward Vansittart Neale (1810-92), who subsequently threw in his lot with the Co-operative movement and served for many years as the Secretary of the Co-operative Union, and Thomas Hughes (1822-96), the Radical barrister who wrote *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and gave outstanding help to the rising Trade Union movement, took a different view. Neale and Hughes believed that it was necessary to take the workers as they found them and, while preaching the necessity for a Christian basis for Socialism, to be prepared to assist every Co-operative or working-class effort which seemed to make in the right direction, whether it rested on a Christian foundation or not. Thus, while the Ludlow-Maurice group set to work to establish their Christian-based 'Working Associations', Neale, though he continued to support their efforts, embarked on a more immediately ambitious attempt to rally the Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies behind a new movement more like that of the 1830s, endeavouring to link together the local Co-operative Societies which had either survived the defeat of 1834 or sprung up subsequently, and the Trade Unions which were rallying their forces as economic conditions improved, behind a new Co-operative movement based on a partnership of producers and consumers in a common effort to escape from the oppressions of capitalism and *laissez-faire* economics.

Neale did not join the Christian Socialists until they had

already launched their first Working Association, nor was he previously known to the others. He had been keenly interested in the Owenite movement and also in the work of the English followers of Fourier ; and he was able to introduce Ludlow and his collaborators to a good many people who had been active in previous Co-operative attempts. Lloyd Jones, the Owenite organiser and propagandist, they had already met ; and despite differences on religion, he soon became one of their most active helpers and the principal means of bringing them into touch with the growing Co-operative movement in the northern factory districts. It was mainly through Neale and Lloyd Jones that the movement acquired for a time a national character and came into contact with the Trade Unions as well as with the consumers' Co-operative Societies.

Although Neale and Ludlow differed, they never quarrelled. Neale, a wealthy man with wealthy friends, was able to bring to Christian Socialism a considerable financial support, which was used to help both the 'Working Associations' and the producers' Co-operative Societies on a wider basis that seemed to him to be much more important, especially where Trade Union backing for them could be secured. The original group had followed up *Politics for the People* with a series of *Tracts on Christian Socialism* (1850) and then by *The Christian Socialist*, which ran from November of 1850 to the end of the following year, when it became *The Journal of Association*, ending in June 1852. They also founded in 1850 the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations, with Charles Sully, a bookbinder who had worked in Paris and had there taken an active part in the movement for 'association', as first secretary. The Christian Socialists wanted their Working Associations to be self-governing bodies ; but as they, through a Council of Promoters, were providing the initial capital, they retained a final control of finance in their own hands. Despite the attempt to select carefully the workers employed in the Associations, troubles soon arose between the managers and the workers and, when the managers appealed to the Promoters, between the workers and the Christian Socialist leaders.

The first Working Association was set up among London tailors. At this time Henry Mayhew was publishing in the *Morning Chronicle* his sensational exposures of conditions in

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the slums and sweat-shops of London ; and his revelations fired Charles Kingsley to write his celebrated pamphlet, *Cheap Clothes and Nasty*, which appeared in 1850, while he was engaged in writing his novel *Alton Locke*, which has a similar theme. *Yeast* had appeared earlier, in *Fraser's Magazine*, in 1848-9. The emotions roused in the members of the group by Mayhew's exposures had a good deal to do with the choice of tailoring for the first experiment in practical Christian Socialism. Others followed.

In the meantime Neale, in association with Lloyd Jones, had started in Charlotte Street, London, formerly a centre of Owenite and later of much international Socialist activity, a Co-operative Store intended to provide a retail outlet for the products of the Working Associations and of producers' Co-operative Societies generally. Out of this grew his wider plan for a Central Co-operative Agency, to link together the producers' and consumers' Co-operatives on a nation-wide scale. Ludlow attacked this project as tainted with commercialism and contrary to the spirit and principles of Christian Socialism. He demanded a complete repudiation of the Agency. Maurice compromised, by dissociating the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations from Neale's venture, without breaking with Neale and Hughes, who continued their connection with both bodies. But the Society removed its headquarters from Charlotte Street and decided to operate a Co-operative Bazaar of its own for the sale of the products of the Working Associations. Neale's Agency did for a time a considerable trade and established connections with a number of the Co-operative Societies in the factory areas. He added to it a Co-operative League, which issued volumes of *Transactions* devoted to the study of Co-operative problems. But the venture gradually petered out, and was wound up in 1857. Situated in London, whereas the real strongholds of Co-operation were in the north and Midlands, it was not able to establish itself firmly. The northern Co-operators were more interested in building up their own movement, and went on in 1864 to establish in Manchester the North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society, which later became the central trading body for the whole of England. The Co-operative Bazaar, intended to replace Neale's Agency as the outlet for the

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products of the Working Associations, was built but never actually opened.

These differences did not prevent the Christian Socialists as a group from throwing their weight on the side of the new Trade Unionism when it became involved in a contest with the employing class on a matter of principle. When the members of the newly founded Amalgamated Society of Engineers (1851) were confronted by their employers with a demand that they should sign a 'document' renouncing membership of their Trade Unions, the Christian Socialists as a body rallied to their support, and at the same time Neale and others of his group endeavoured to interest the A.S.E. in the development of Co-operative production. 'The Engineers' Executive Committee was interested, and appealed to the members to support the project, both on its own merits and as a means of combating the lock-out of its members in London and Lancashire which the organised employers had declared. This recalled the similar attempts of the Owenite Trade Unions of the 1830s and also the more recent projects of the National Association of United Trades which had been set up in 1845. But the members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers proved to be less enthusiastic than the leaders. They rejected the proposal to invest funds in Co-operative Production, and before long what funds they had were swept away in paying benefits to their members who were locked out. A plan for buying the Windsor Ironworks at Liverpool from the Owenite chief proprietor, John Finch, had to be given up. Neale, however, without financial support from the A.S.E., succeeded in establishing a Co-operative Ironworks — the Atlas Works — in Southwark; and with his help a body of A.S.E. members, headed by John Musto, brother of the President of the A.S.E., set up a similar establishment, first in Greenwich and then in Deptford. Neither lasted for more than a few years. The Engineers, exhausted by the lock-out, became cautious, and lost interest: Neale, who had sunk most of his fortune in his various ventures, emerged no longer wealthy. Meanwhile, the Working Associations had been collapsing right and left, though a few lingered on until about 1860, when the Working Tailors were laid low by the defalcations of Walter Cooper, who had been the first important workman convert of the

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Christian Socialists and the leading workman connected with the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations.

Throughout these years the Christian Socialists of both groups had been working hard to give the Co-operative movement a secure legal basis; and it was largely through their influence that the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852 was passed. Up to that year the Co-operative Societies had either done without any legal protection for their funds, or made what they could of the unsatisfactory provisions of the Acts dealing with Friendly Societies. The Act of 1852, though it needed amendment later, established them on a secure legal footing. The opposition, indeed, was not very strong, largely because it was possible to represent the consumers' Co-operative Societies founded on the model of the Rochdale Pioneers' Society of 1844 as valuable agencies for the promotion of working-class thrift and as a new form of business structure suited to attract working-class savings in the same way as the Joint Stock Companies were mobilising for investment the savings of the wealthier classes. Consumers' Co-operation, in its new forms, did not appear to be dangerous: it was even looked on as a means of drawing the working classes away from extremist notions and giving them a 'stake in the country'. In the same way the French Governments, after the defeat of the 1848 Revolution, did something to encourage peaceful Co-operation as an antidote to more dangerous ideas.

In the event, neither Ludlow's nor Neale's version of the Christian Socialist gospel achieved the results which had been hoped for. The Co-operative Societies of Producers which they founded or helped to found disappeared. Only the Consumers' Societies on the Rochdale model, in which most of the Christian Socialists took much less interest save as outlets for the products of Co-operative workshops, succeeded in establishing themselves firmly. Before long, the Christian Socialist group headed by Ludlow and Maurice accepted the fact of failure, and transferred its main activities to the field of working-class education, founding in 1854 the London Working Men's College, with Maurice as Principal, after he had been thrust out of his professorship at King's College, London, because of objections to his religious views. Neale and Hughes, with their wider aims, had to give up their attempts to bring

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the Trade Unions into the movement for Co-operative production, and to content themselves for the time being with continuing their aid to the consumers' movement — a task in which Ludlow, appointed as the Government's Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, also gave great aid. But Neale and Hughes were only biding their time : in the later 'sixties and early 'seventies, together with Lloyd Jones, they played an active part in a further and much more extensive movement towards Co-operative Production, into which the Miners and a number of other Trade Unions were drawn. The social implications of this later movement fall, however, outside the scope of this volume.

The Christian Socialists, except Hughes, who later did good work in Parliament for both Trade Unionism and Co-operation and was throughout the most Radical of the group, were never greatly interested in political action. Ludlow, for example, rejected universal suffrage as an immediate demand, on the ground that the people were not ready for it. As a half-way measure, he wanted household suffrage or some other extension of the franchise on a fairly wide basis. Maurice was much less of a democrat than Ludlow, favouring not only the retention of the monarchy but also the continued existence of an aristocracy to give social leadership to the people. He distrusted democracy, as part of his general distrust of private opinion as a guide to right action. Illumination, he thought, must come out of direct religious experience, which he distinguished from intellectual judgment ; and he looked to a reformed national Church to represent the truth — not to any voting power vested in the individual citizen. But the views of Maurice and Ludlow never made any impression on the main body of the workers, or even on those who supported their projects of 'association'. The impression made by Neale and Hughes, though also limited, was more substantial, especially because they did not disdain to ally themselves with the Owenites and other 'unbelievers' or to give all the help they could to the development of the consumers' Co-operative movement. The revived developments of Co-operative Production in the 1860s and 1870s were an outcome of the combined influence of the Owenite and Christian Socialist schools. It should be added that the Christian Socialists, in addition to



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their work for popular education, had a substantial influence on the movement for public health legislation. Kingsley, in particular, took a prominent part in the public health agitation ; but in this field, as in all others, the Christian Socialist influence was limited by the devotion of its leaders to the Established Church, whereas the main body of religious sentiment existing among the working class was attached to one or other of the Nonconformist sects.

English Christian Socialism, as we have seen, drew its inspiration principally from France. In Germany, the movement most closely analogous to it was set on foot by an extreme political Conservative, Victor Aimé Huber (1800-69), who combined with reactionary political opinions a belief in the value of Co-operative association on a basis of Catholic faith as the means of solving the social problem. Huber was by profession a doctor ; drawn into politics on the Conservative side, he was encouraged by Frederick William IV to found a journal, *Janus*, in which from 1840 he developed his Co-operative ideas. *Janus* lasted until 1848. After the German Revolution of that year Huber founded his Association for Christian Order and Liberty, through which he continued his propaganda. Finding little further favour in Berlin, he retired to the country town of Wernigerode, in the Harz Mountains, where he founded a number of workmen's societies. But his chief importance lay in his repeated journeys to Belgium, France, and England, for the purpose of keeping in touch with Co-operative ventures wherever he could find them. He became, in effect, the travelling missionary of Co-operation as an international movement. In Germany he worked in with Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler (1811-77), who after 1850 became the leader of the German Catholic Social movement, and also advocated Co-operative production as a means of class reconciliation. From Germany this movement, which owed much to Huber's influence, spread to Austria and Belgium : it was the beginning of the modern Catholic Social movements and parties which have sometimes been called 'Christian Socialist', but have nothing in common with Socialism in any modern sense of the word.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### A SUMMING UP

IT was no easier a hundred years ago than it is to-day to pin the words 'Socialism' and 'Socialist' down to an exact meaning. The Russians have often described the system under which the Soviet peoples are now living as 'Socialism', in process of developing towards 'Communism' as a higher social form. The British Labour Party proclaims 'Socialism' as its objective, but does not pretend that six years of Labour rule have gone more than a part of the way towards establishing it. In France there is still an important party of 'Radical-Socialists', or 'Socialist-Radicals', who are in strong opposition to the French Socialist Party, which is in turn acutely hostile to Communism. Hitler called his party in Germany the 'National Socialists'. As for 'Communism', though the word has now been almost entirely appropriated by the followers of Lenin and Stalin, the parties which are called 'Communist' have no bitterer opponents than the Anarchist-Communists, who follow Kropotkin and detest the State no less when it professes to embody the dictatorship of the proletariat than when it is dominated by the older governing classes. Many of the Socialist parties of the later nineteenth century called themselves 'Social Democratic'; and parties that would have been called 'Christian Socialist' at an earlier date now pass as 'Christian Social', or 'Christian Democratic'. All the words still slide from meaning to meaning; and it is futile to attempt to pin them down.

Yet the words do mean something, and did a century ago. All the theories that have been considered in this volume have something in common: they all take their starting point from the recognition of the key importance of the 'social problem' and from the belief that men ought to take some sort of collective or associative action to deal with it. They are all sharply hostile to *laissez-faire* — to the conception of a natural law

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which, in the absence of collective human interference with its operation, will somehow work out for good, however that good may be defined. They all rest on a belief in the virtues of collaboration, as against competition, or of planning, as against what their opponents call 'free enterprise'. They all require of men a more co-operative attitude and behaviour than are characteristic of capitalist society — still more, than were characteristic of it a century ago. The most obvious common factor among all the 'Socialisms' described in this volume is denunciation of the competitive spirit as manifested in capitalist industry and of its consequences in human ill-fare and oppression.

This attitude is, in the main, shared even by those thinkers who combine a deep interest in the 'social problem' with reactionary political views. Indeed, the insistence on collective action to solve the 'social problem' even comes easiest to those who believe in the State, not as an expression of the democratic will, but as the instrument of order and discipline over the people. The conservative reactionaries of the first half of the nineteenth century felt no hostility to State economic action, such as was felt by the representatives of the *bourgeoisie*. They did not put their faith in Adam Smith's 'hidden hand', or expect to arrive at their goal by letting things alone. They mistrusted the rising middle classes fully as much as they mistrusted the workers — or even more. They wanted to regulate industry, in fear that, if they did not, its leaders would get out of hand and begin pulling down the system of aristocratic privilege, as had happened in France in 1789, and again in 1830. Moreover, where they were affected by Hegelianism, their view that the State should have the final authority in every field was strongly reinforced. The 'feudal' Socialism of which Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* was an entirely natural phenomenon, whether it appeared in German aristocrats who wished to bind the people to the old order by patriarchal protectionism or in 'Young England' aristocrats who dreamed of an alliance of King and People against wicked Whig lords allied with soulless merchants and manufacturers. Nowadays, 'feudal' reactionaries do not call themselves 'Socialists', and are not so called by others. Mostly they did not so call themselves during the period covered by this

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volume ; but others did give them the name, which had not then fully acquired its modern, proletarian connotation.

There was thus something in common between the socially minded elements in the 'party of order' and the socially minded groups which wanted to upset the control of that very party. Among its enemies, on the other hand, there were fundamental differences. Republicans were united in their hostility to monarchy ; but between advocates of the 'Social Republic' and Republican advocates of free, capitalist enterprise there was a great gulf fixed. 'Democrats' might be united in demanding a wider franchise ; but some of them wanted only enough extension of voting power to include the middle, or even only a part of the middle classes, while others vociferously demanded universal, or at least manhood, suffrage. Some Reformers meant by Reform only a form of responsible government — the granting of a 'constitution' : others insisted that the constitution should be based firmly on the Rights of Man. Some Reformers were centralisers, both politically and economically ; others were ardent decentralisers in both fields. Some wished to make the State strong, and regarded the granting of a wide franchise as an insurance against tyranny ; others regarded the State in any form as an essentially tyrannical instrument, and worked for its abolition in favour of some system of 'free association' or 'free federation'.

Nor were the differences less marked economically than in the political sphere. Most of the Left were indeed united in denouncing 'monopoly' ; but they differed about what monopoly was, some regarding all large fortunes as monopolistic because they gave some men undue power over others, whereas most connected monopoly with legalised privilege, and associated it with the old systems of feudal rights and privileged economic corporations. Some — the Saint-Simonians in particular — favoured large-scale enterprise and ambitious projects of investment, especially in railways, canals, and other 'utility' undertakings : others were anti-industrialist and believed that men could not live well except in small communities or do satisfying work except on family agricultural holdings or in small craft workshops. Some wanted to diffuse property ; others to concentrate it under communal or some other form of collective ownership. Some wanted all men to

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have the same incomes, others looked forward to distribution to each man 'according to his needs'; yet others insisted that rewards ought to be in proportion to services rendered to the community, and regarded some measure of economic inequality as a necessary stimulus to high production; and yet others wanted everything to be left to the free higgling of the market — which the rest denounced as in truth most unfree because of the inequality of bargaining power. Some wished to reduce inequality of incomes within narrow limits by drastic progressive taxation, or by other means: others regarded the accumulation of large fortunes as the necessary means to securing adequate saving and investment, and therewith technical progress and increasing production. Some wanted to abolish inheritance: others regarded it as indispensable for the maintenance of family coherence and continuity and for the carrying on of successful businesses from one generation to the next. Some demanded that the State, or the Constitution, should guarantee a minimum standard of living and the right to work to all its citizens: others saw in this the destruction of the incentive to labour. Some wished to open all employments to women equally with men: others, solicitous for family life or for the carrying on of the race, denounced such notions as immoral and as steps towards race-suicide. Some wanted the workers to be given the chance to govern economic affairs on democratic lines: others wanted the rule of the technically efficient over the multitude.

Of course, not all these views were held by persons who could in any sense be called, or would have called themselves, 'Socialists'; but they were all held among the groups which made, or tried to make, revolutions, or at the least agitated for political change and opposed the Governments and the established order of the day. Every revolution, every pressure for reform of the political machine, was the combined work of men of widely differing opinions and attitudes, about both political and economic questions. It was indeed bound to be so; for, even apart from differences between the *bourgeoisie* and the workers, there were very wide differences within the *bourgeoisie* itself — partly economic, between the great and the little *bourgeoisie*, but also ideological, cutting across economic divisions.

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Marx, in his analysis of this complex social situation, naturally underestimated the ideological element and put all the weight on the economic factors, which alone, he thought, could count in the last resort. He attacked the ideologues as futile and unrealistic, as indeed in Germany they showed themselves to be. He considered that the effect of these ideologues was to divide the progressive forces into utopian sects, instead of helping them to concentrate upon realisable demands. As a logical deduction from his realism, he saw the task of the Revolution, at any rate in Germany, as that of getting power transferred in the first place from the old order to the *bourgeoisie*, because, until this had been done, it would be impossible for the proletariat to reach maturity or to fight its own battles with any hope of success. In relation to British affairs, he wanted the Chartists to follow a purely proletarian policy and to steer clear of all compacts with the middle classes. That was because he considered that in Great Britain the *bourgeois* revolution had in effect already occurred, so that the road was clear for the struggle between *bourgeois* and proletarians. In this he was partly wrong, as later events showed. The Reform Act of 1832 had not seated the British *bourgeoisie* in political power : it had only admitted them to a share in it, still under the political leadership of the old order, and there was needed a further united heave of a considerable section of the middle classes and of the workers to win the second Reform Act — that of 1867. In Germany, on the other hand, Marx wanted the proletariat, such as it was, to join with the *bourgeoisie* in the struggle for constitutional change, and realised that there could be no prospect of a proletarian except as the sequel to a *bourgeois* revolution. In France the situation was a great deal more complicated, because of the chequered history of the years since 1789 and of the existence, side by side with the remaining elements of the pre-revolutionary order, of the tradition of the new aristocracy established by Napoleon, involving two aristocracies, one of which was largely *bourgeois* in order and temper, and two 'parties of order' which only the threat of revolution could for long unite.

Moreover, neither in France nor in Germany — though more in France — was the proletariat yet really disentangled from the *petite bourgeoisie* to a sufficient extent to constitute

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an independent *national* force.<sup>1</sup> The proletarians to whom Blanqui appealed were hardly more than those to whom Babeuf had appealed a generation back really proletarians in Marx's sense. The Parisian workers who formed the main backing of the revolutionary clubs were not mostly working for large employers, except indirectly. Many of them were employed by small masters not greatly differing from themselves — indeed, quite often members of the same families or from a common family stock ; many more worked for sub-contractors, who in turn were employed by merchants, so that these sub-contractors formed an intermediate group at once exploiting and exploited, and siding now with their employers and now against them with the workers they employed. French capitalism was still largely at a 'merchant' rather than an industrial stage, though it was in transition. German capitalism, except in a few centres, was a good deal less advanced. So was Italian capitalism, with the consequence that in Italy there was, practically speaking, no proletarian movement at all, and even Mazzini's secret societies were largely recruited from the middle classes, with only a scatter of workmen in positions of local leadership outside a few centres, such as Genoa and Milan.

The countless variants of French ideological Socialism, Marx contended, owed their vogue, and their ability to attract little groups of working-class adherents, mainly to the absence of a common point of focus for working-class discontents. The *Communist Manifesto* was an attempt to provide such a focusing point — prematurely for the mass of the Germans to whom it was primarily addressed, and prematurely even for the bulk of the French workers. If there was one country in which the situation was ripe for such an appeal as Marx's, it was surely Great Britain ; but Ernest Jones was even less successful in rallying the British workers than Marx in Germany. It can be said that in Great Britain the proletariat was not merely ripe, but over-ripe. The psychological moment for the British Revolution, if it had ever been, had passed with the repeal of

<sup>1</sup> It may be objected that the proletariat never did become disentangled in any complete sense, despite the confident predictions of the *Communist Manifesto*. It did, however, become disentangled from the old *petite bourgeoisie* of master craftsmen, though it did so only to become speedily re-entangled with the new *petite bourgeoisie* of black-coated workers.

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the Corn Laws in 1846, or even with Peel's more moderate measures of 1842.

Up to 1848, largely because on the political plane the workers were tangled up with the middle-class movements for Reform, Socialism made its appeals largely in the form of economic or social projects standing more or less apart from politics. Fourierism, Owenism, Cabetist Icarianism, the Co-operativism of Buchez, and English Christian Socialism were all movements which set out to make at any rate a constructive beginning without requiring the State's help, and were all accused by the political Radicals of seeking to distract the workers' attention from the need to establish political democracy as the necessary foundation for economic change. The word 'Socialism' did not up to 1848 usually conjure up in men's minds the idea of a political movement — except to the extent to which Louis Blanc and Pecqueur in the 1840s gave it this connotation in France. It suggested a 'social system' rather than a political demand, though of course many of the Socialists' leaders, and many more of their followers, were political Radicals as well.

This is brought out very clearly in John Stuart Mill's celebrated chapter in his *Principles of Political Economy*, which was first published in 1848 — a chapter much altered in subsequent editions. In the second edition (1849) and in the third (1852) Mill considerably expanded his discussion of Socialist and Communist theories, modifying many of his criticisms and speaking much more favourably of their practicability, especially in connection with the Fourierists. In all these accounts, Mill took notice only of Owenism in Great Britain and of the leading French theorists. He does not appear even to have heard of German Socialism; nor are his comments in any way related either to it or to such doctrines as Babeuf's or Blanqui's. He speaks entirely of the utopian forms of Communism and Socialism, without reference to any sort of struggle between the classes; and he does not appear to have encountered the writings of Proudhon, with whom, on a number of points, he would have found himself in quite considerable agreement.

Mill draws two main distinctions between the Socialist and Communist theories which he sets out to analyse. Some, he says, proceed on a basis of strict equality in distribution, as



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well as common ownership and operation of the instruments of production : others admit inequality, but seek to limit it to differences proportionate to the value of the individual's labour. Secondly, some theories rest on the advocacy of small, self-governing communities, loosely federated into larger societies ; whereas others involve the centralisation of ownership and control of production and distribution in the hands of a controlling directorate operating over a large area and including many industries and establishments.

In relation to the first of these distinctions, the Saint-Simonians and the Fourierists are grouped together on one side, and the followers of Cabet and other 'Communist' groups on the other. In relation to the second, the Fourierists and Owenites are on one side, and the Saint-Simonians are the leaders of the centralising group. Mill treats Louis Blanc as belonging essentially with the Icarians, because he demands equality of incomes, and as going beyond them when he looks forward to a further stage at which each individual will receive, not equally, but 'according to his needs'. He neglects the point that Blanc insisted strongly on decentralisation and on the self-government of each individual factory. He also appears to treat the Owenites as advocates of complete equality of incomes, which some were, but some were not ; and he discusses Saint-Simonism mainly in the form in which it rested its 'industrial' government on popular election, and not in that in which the leadership was held to rest, as of right, with '*les grands industriels*' — the men of highest technical and administrative capacity.

Even in speaking of the 'Communists', Mill had come by 1849 to hold that the attacks upon their plans as impracticable because they would destroy the incentive to labour and result in an unregulated and rapid rise of population were invalid, if they were made on the basis of a comparison between Communism and the existing order. In the matter of population increase, he had come to hold that all the Socialist and Communist plans, or at any rate most of them, far from leading to an overgrowth of population, would impose much more effective checks than capitalism, because each person would see the direct effects on his own and his immediate neighbours' standards of living of increasing the number of mouths to be

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fed. As for the matter of incentives, he stressed the point that under the existing system the vast majority of workers had no real incentive to high output, and in fact did only as much as was needed to keep up with a pace set by the groups in which they worked — a pace which the employer could not increase by dismissals, for he would only get, instead of the dismissed workers, others who would behave in the same way. He went on to say that the Socialists by no means ruled out emulation as a motive, and that there was ample evidence from the existing system that educated men receiving fixed incomes did work quite reasonably hard. As all the Socialists postulated universal education, as much as this could be expected of most people in a socialist community. Moreover, Mill argued, there is good historical evidence for the practicability of moving large masses of men to great exertions and enthusiasms by the spur of non-economic incentives — witness the work of the Jesuits in Paraguay; and it would be presumptuous to rule out, on grounds of incompatibility with human nature, the idea that at some future date humanity might have advanced far enough to dispense altogether with such incentives as the critics of Socialism regarded as quintessential. On this issue, he argued, it was right to keep an open mind.

Mill did, however, regard as much nearer practicability those forms of Socialism which, at a sacrifice of idealism, accepted a modified degree of economic inequality. On this score he praised the Fourierists, or rather that form of Fourierism which assigned in the first place a basic income to all and then distributed the balance of the product in shares to capital, talent or responsibility, and work actually done. In speaking of the Saint-Simonians, he criticised their notion of the higher directorate assigning to each man an income proportionate to the value of his work, both on the ground that there was no clear principle on which such an assessment could be based, and on the further ground that the attempt to make it would give rise to perpetual bickering. On the question of inheritance, which the Saint-Simonians wished to do away with, he agreed with them in denying that children had any natural right to inherit their parents' wealth, but asserted that the right of bequest was an essential part of the right of private property,

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because a man had a right to give away anything he possessed, and this extended to a right of disposal at death. This meant in effect that only the property of intestates would lapse to the community, apart from such taxes on property passing at death as the State might impose.

On the question of localism versus centralisation, Mill came down strongly on the side of the Fourierists and Owenites against the Saint-Simonians and the 'Communists'. He denied outright the very possibility of centralised economic planning of either incomes or production, taking the proposal only in the extreme form in which it was then usually advocated. He believed that Socialism had a much better chance of working well if it were organised in small, self-governing communities of neighbours than if it were centralised. He also pointed out that the idea of local communities did not necessarily involve that of living in common : it was fully compatible with separate family households, each spending their incomes as they thought fit, while carrying on their productive activities in common. He praised the Fourierists, as against the Owenites, for admitting this ; and he also spoke favourably of the French experiments in Co-operative production, which need not involve any living together outside the hours of work. He did not mention Buchez, but clearly had in mind his ideas and those of the Luxembourg Commission in its work for voluntary Co-operative '*associations ouvrières*'.

Mill also spoke with sympathy, though not with full endorsement, of the Fourierist notion that most, if not all, forms of labour could be so arranged as to be attractive in their own right. He attacked most Communist projects on the ground that, in order to solve the problem of getting the 'dirty work' done, they proposed that all men should take their turns at every form of necessary labour. This, he said, would destroy the benefits of the division of labour. I do not think he fully understood the Fourierist idea that, given the elimination of unnecessary labour, all the work of society could be done on a basis of entirely voluntary choice of occupation, with each individual shifting from job to job of his choice, but not being called upon to undertake any form of employment uncongenial to him. This, of course, was bound up with Fourier's view that no man should be called on to work long

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*consecutively* at any one job : it was not at all inconsistent with the division of labour, unless division were taken as involving exclusive application to a single trade.

In general Mill, in his second edition, wrote very sympathetically about Socialism. His statement that Socialism was greatly to be preferred to society as it was has been quoted again and again. It did not, of course, mean that Mill, whatever his views may have been in the last years of his life, was then a convert to Socialism. He wanted Fourierists and Owenites, and other projectors whose plans were such as to make it possible for them to be tried out by small-scale experiment, to have their chance ; but he asserted at the same time that the main effort of society should be devoted to improving the system of private property, and not, for the present at any rate, to superseding it. The most he would admit in favour of Socialism as an economic remedy applicable to men as they were was that under it the workers and everybody else might, if it were well administered, enjoy as good a standard of life as was actually enjoyed by the workers in a well-managed capitalist establishment — so that anything over and above this standard enjoyed by the superior classes had to be counted, economically, to the credit of the system of private enterprise — not indeed as it was, but as it might become under more enlightened administration and regulation. He admitted the exploitation of labour by the bad employer, and indeed of most of the labouring classes, under the existing system ; but he believed the ills of private enterprise to be remediable, and a reformed system resting on private property to offer better prospects for most people than a Socialist arrangement — which would demand a higher general standard of education and morality than existed, or could soon come to exist.

This was the view of Socialism taken by the leading British economist of the classical tradition at a time when Socialism had been, in its utopian forms, a living issue for nearly a generation in France — or perhaps one should say, in Paris and Lyons — but nowhere else. It did not occur to Mill to discuss, in connection with his critique of Socialist theories, either the work of the English Socialist economists of the 1820s and 1830s, or the significance of such mass movements of the workers as Chartism. The two ideas were simply not

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connected in his mind, or in those of most of his contemporaries in Great Britain. In as far as he thought of them as in any way related, he probably regarded them as antagonistic — having in mind the controversies between Owenites and English Fourierists on the one hand and on the other political Radicals and Chartists who insisted that political enfranchisement was a necessary prelude to the economic transformation of society. Of Marxism and of other forms of historic determinism and class-war doctrine, as they had developed on the Continent and among the exiles in London, Paris, and Brussels, he knew nothing, or next to nothing; and what he may have known did not seem to him relevant to the question of the merits of Socialism or Communism as an alternative economic system.

We have seen that the promoters of the Communist League of 1847 chose that name for it, rather than 'Socialist', largely because the word 'Socialism' carried in their view too many associations with dreams of Utopia, and too few with the working-class struggle. The 'Socialists' had nearly all appealed, first and foremost, to the brotherhood of men, not to the spirit of class-solidarity. In Marx's view, all men were by no means brothers: they were class-enemies, fighting each other for power. Where the 'Socialists' had thought in terms of ideals, Marx thought in terms of power; and the word 'Communism', though it too was tainted with idealism through its use by Cabet's Icarians, was at any rate much more challenging. It suggested, as we have seen, not only common ownership and common enjoyment of the fruits of labour, but also the 'commune' — a word which, long before 1871, had some revolutionary tang. The Communist League stole the name from Cabet and his followers, and set out to impregnate it with a new meaning. They meant to scare the possessing classes with it; and they did. Here, they wished it to be felt, was a movement, surging up among the exploited in their local neighbourhood groups, to put an end to property, and to claim redress of wrongs, not as suppliants, but on the basis of the collective power of labour. The proletariat, in the *Communist Manifesto*, was claiming not merely equality with other classes, or that recognition as a class which Flora Tristan had demanded for it, but supremacy, power over other classes,

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like the power which these other classes had wielded over it hitherto. No doubt, in point of fact, the proletariat was doing nothing of the sort ; and the European revolutions were soon to demonstrate that it was far from possessing the power the Communist League claimed for it. Its power was potential, not actual, and was to take a long time to develop into a fact — as far as it ever has. But the claim was made, and made in terms which appeared to throw all questions of morality overboard and to stake it wholly upon power — upon power as the necessary outcome of circumstance and historical development of the economic forces underlying social institutions.

The power in question was, then, a power conceived of as arising, in Marx's phrase, 'independently of men's wills' — though not of their ability to make themselves part of it and to aid its growth. This differentiated it from the power-concept in Blanqui's social philosophy, which made power rest less on the productive forces than on the resolute initiative of small groups of men. Marx's power-concept was much more impersonal, and therewith more frightening. It suggested to many liberals and liberal 'Socialists' a blind multitude pressing forward, knowing only its oppression and sufferings, to pull down the whole structure of existing society ; and, fiercely as many of these persons had denounced existing society, most of them regarded it as an advance on what had gone before it, and as a stage in the evolution of humanity under the influence of the growing 'Enlightenment' — of men's progress in the arts and sciences and in the mastery of their environment. The idea of a force representing not the most enlightened but the least educated elements in society pulling down the whole structure erected by centuries of effort appalled them. But, of course, Marx did not see the matter in this light. He believed, as firmly as they did, in a progressive theory of history, in the present — however bad — as better than the past, and in the value of the cultural tradition — especially in its German aspects. He did not really for a moment suppose that the proletariat, in its hour of victory, would pull down and destroy all the great achievements of the past. He meant them to transform, much more than to destroy, when once they had destroyed the actual forces which obstructed the process of transformation. Marx's vision of the proletariat

was not that of a mob of hungry and angry men blindly devastating civilisation :<sup>1</sup> it was that of a vanguard of highly intelligent persons drawn from different classes, guiding as well as leading the proletariat, and telling it where to spare as well as where to smite. He differed from Blanqui, not about the necessity for leadership, but about the need for the leaders to gain a mass-following before they could afford to strike. He did not suppose that the masses would read the *Communist Manifesto* : he did expect it to be read by the men who would, helped by it, become their leaders ; and he had more faith in the intelligence of the natural leaders among the educated workers than in the ideologues who were seeking to win a battle by the might of the idea rather than of the movement created by economic need. He was, of course, an ideologue himself — none more ; but he thought of himself as an interpreter of forces which existed independently of his ideas, and he possessed that sheer conviction of rightness which comes most easily to men who are convinced that God, or Nature, is on their side.

In a second volume, which is to follow this when I can get it done, I shall have to follow out the consequences of this challenge on the development of Socialist thought during the second half of the nineteenth century. The great new factor that came into play during that period was the advance, over most of Western Europe, of representative government based on a franchise wide enough to give the States affected by it, at any rate superficially, an element of political democracy. This posed the Socialists with a new problem. Broadly speaking, before 1850 — and indeed for some time afterwards — there were only two possible roads of advance towards Socialism as an alternative social order. One of these was violent revolution ; the other was voluntary Co-operative action apart from the State. There was not — though Louis Blanc among others envisaged it — any real possibility of persuading the State, without social revolution, to act as the sponsor of Socialist projects. As voting rights were extended, the possibility of the 'Welfare State', resting on democratic pressure without violence, came gradually into view. In the coming volume,

<sup>1</sup> Later, as we shall see, this was to be one of the issues between Marx and Bakunin in the First International.

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we shall see Marx, in 1875, reacting violently against such a notion, as far as it related to Germany. But my desire here is not to anticipate discussion of these later controversies, but simply to point out that, for the 'Socialists' about whom I have been writing in this volume, the possibility of this third course did not really exist. Paine, in the 1790s, could write down an admirable programme for the 'Welfare State'; and so could Louis Blanc half a century later. But such projects were not merely as utopian as the ideal republics and communities of such men as Fourier, Owen, and Cabet: they were much more utopian. The 'utopians' could at least appeal to men of good-will to help them found oases of justice and brotherhood within the existing society, or in a still largely uncontaminated New World of endless opportunity (New Harmony, Icaria, and so on). The advocates of the 'Welfare State' could get nowhere till they had democratised the State; and in the first half of the nineteenth century there seemed no means of achieving this except social revolution.



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Charles Hall's *The Effects of Civilisation* was published in 1805, and reissued by John Minter Morgan in 1850. The best discussion is Max Beer's in his *History of British Socialism*.

## CHAPTER IV

The fullest set of Saint-Simon's works is in *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin* (1865-78). Most of his important writings are in *Œuvres choisies*, 3 vols. (1859), edited by Charles Lemonnier. The *Œuvres* of 1844 are very inadequate. His more important books and brochures are *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains* (1802); *Introduction aux travaux scientifiques du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1807-8); *Lettres au Bureau des Longitudes* (1808); *Nouvelle Encyclopédie* (1810); *Mémoire sur l'homme* (1810); *Mémoire sur la science de l'homme* (1813); *Travail sur la gravitation universelle* (1813); *De la réorganisation de la société européenne* (1814) — in collaboration with A. Thierry; *L'Industrie* (1816-18); *L'Organisateur* (1819-20); *Système industriel* (1821-1822); *Catéchisme des industriels* (1824); *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles* (1825); *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825).

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Among books on him may be mentioned — E. Durkheim, *Le Socialisme : la doctrine saint-simonienne* (1928); Maxime Leroy, *Henri de Saint-Simon* (1924), and *La Vie véritable du comte Henri de Saint-Simon* (1925); Georges Weill, *Un Précurseur du socialisme, Saint-Simon et son œuvre* (1894); Charles Bouglé's *L'Œuvre du Henri de Saint-Simon* (1925) is a volume of selections. See also some of the books cited under Chapter V.

It is remarkable that, so far as I know, only one of Saint-Simon's works has been translated into English, and that there is no English study of him. I began to write one; but, hearing that several other persons had the same idea, decided to wait and see. The one translation is of his *New Christianity* (1834), by J. E. Smith, the Owenite Universalist who edited *The Crisis* and, later, *The Family Herald*.

## CHAPTER V

The best book on the Saint-Simonians is Sébastien Charléty, *Histoire du saint-simonisme* (1896, new edition 1931). See also H.-R. d'Allemagne, *Les Saint-Simoniens* (1930), which reproduces many documents from the Saint-Simonian archives. Earlier works of merit include Georges Weill, *L'École saint-simonienne* (1896). Paul Janet's critical *Saint-Simon et le saint-simonisme* (1879) is interesting. See also A. J. Booth, *Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism* (1871), and E. M. Butler, *The Saint-Simonian Religion in Germany* (1926). Consult also, for the influence of Saint-Simon on later French Socialism, C.-C.-A. Bouglé, *Chez les prophètes socialistes* (1918) and H. Louvancour, *De Henri de Saint-Simon à Charles Fourier* (1913).

Enfantin's works are in the huge collection, *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin* (1868-76). See also S. Charléty, *Enfantin* (1931) — a volume of selections.

The general theory of the Saint-Simonians is set out in *La Doctrine de Saint-Simon* (1829-30: new edition, edited by Bouglé and Halévy, 1924) and in *Le Producteur* (1826) and *Le Globe* (1830-31).

Pierre Leroux's most important writings are *De l'égalité* (1838); *De l'humanité* (1840); *D'une religion naturelle* (1846); and *Du Christianisme et de son origine démocratique* (1848). Much of his best writing is in *Le Globe* (1824-31); in the *Revue Encyclopédique* (1831-1835); in the *Encyclopédie Nouvelle* (1834-41), edited jointly with Jean Reynaud; in the *Revue Indépendante* (with George Sand, 1841-2); and in the *Revue Sociale* (1845-50). There are studies of him by D. O. Evans, *Le Socialisme romantique: Pierre Leroux et ses contemporains* (1948); P. Julien, *Pierre Leroux, socialiste* (1896); C. RAILLARD, *Pierre Leroux et ses œuvres* (1899); P.-F. THOMAS, *Pierre Leroux: sa vie, ses œuvres, et sa doctrine* (1904); and H. MONGIN, *Pierre Leroux* (1838). See also L. BUIS, *Les Théories sociales de George Sand* (1910) and W. KARÉNINE, *George Sand, sa vie et ses œuvres* (4 vols. 1899-1926).

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

### CHAPTER VI

There is a volume in English of selections from Fourier — *Selections from the Works of Fourier*, translated by Julia Franklin, with an Introduction by Charles Gide (1901). Also in English is *The Passions of the Human Soul* (1851), translated from Fourier, with a long essay on him by Hugh Doherty, his principal English follower. There is also an American translation, C. Fourier, *Theory of Social Organisation* (1876).

There is a useful selection from Fourier's writings in French, by F. Armand and R. Maublanc (1937), and also a shorter selection by E. Poisson (1932).

Fourier's chief works were collected in his *Œuvres complètes* (6 vols. 1841-8); but a great mass of his manuscripts has been published since. It adds little to his main writings. His principal books published in his life-time were: *Théorie des quatre mouvements* (1808); *Traité de l'association domestique agricole* (1822 — reissued as *L'Unité universelle*); *Le Nouveau Monde industriel et sociétaire* (1829); and *La Fausse Industrie* (1835-6). E. Poisson's *Fourier* (1932) is a handy selection from the works. Much of Fourier's writing is contained in the leading Fourierist journals, *Le Phalanstère* (1832), and *La Phalange* (1836). See also J. Gaumont, *Histoire générale de la co-opération en France* (1923); H. Bourgin, *Fourier* (1905); C. Gide, *Fourier, précurseur de la co-opération* (1923).

Fourier's disciple, Victor Considérant, who led the school after his death, summarised Fourier's system in *La Destinée sociale* (1834-1844). Other writings of his are *Nécessité d'une dernière débâcle politique en France* (1836); *Principes du socialisme* (1947); and *Le Socialisme devant le vieux monde* (1848). See also H. Bourgin, *Victor Considérant* (1909), and M. Dommanget, *Victor Considérant* (1895).

Albert Brisbane, the leading American Fourierist, published a summary of Fourier's teaching, *The Social Destiny of Man* (1840); *Association, or a Concise Exposition of the Practical Part of Fourier's Social Science* (1843); and also *A General Introduction to Social Science* (1876), and *A Mental Biography* (1893). For American Fourierism, see also A. E. Bestor, jr., *Backwoods Utopias* (1950). For Horace Greeley, see his *Recollections of a Busy Life* (1868); C. Sotheran, *Horace Greeley and other Pioneers of American Socialism* (1892); and James Parton, *Life of Horace Greeley* (1877). For Brook Farm, see Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Bliethedale Romance* (1852).

### CHAPTER VII

Cabet's main work on Socialism is *Voyage en Icarie* (1840). He also wrote an account of his actual foundation in America, *Colonie icarienne*

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aux États-Unis d'Amérique (1856). His other works include his *Histoire populaire de la Révolution française* (1839-40), and his *Le Vrai Christianisme suivant Jésus-Christ* (1846).

See also Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son fondateur* (1907); Paul Carré, *Cabet : de la démocratie au communisme* (1903); and Albert Shaw, *Icaria* (1884).

## CHAPTER VIII

Sismondi's most important book from the standpoint of this study is his *Nouveaux Principes d'économie politique*, which first appeared in 1819, and was revised in 1827. The first volume of a new edition in two volumes was issued in Switzerland in 1951, edited by G. Sotiroff. Sismondi's earlier economic treatise, *De la richesse commerciale* (1803) is of much less interest. His *Tableau de l'agriculture toscane* (1801) is important for its study of a peasant economy. There is much of interest in his *Études sur les sciences sociales* (1836-8), and also in his *Histoire des républiques italiennes au moyen-âge* (1807-18), of which a much abridged version, *History of the Italian Republics* (1832) is available in English in a modern reprint. Sismondi also wrote a monumental *Histoire des Français* (1821-44) and an important book *De la littérature du midi de l'Europe* (1813). This last was translated by Thomas Roscoe.

The following are among the best studies of Sismondi's work : J.-R. de Salis, *Sismondi* (1932); Albert Aftalion, *L'Œuvre économique de Simonde de Sismondi* (1899); H. Grossman, *Simonde de Sismondi et ses théories économiques* (1924); M. L. Tuan, *Simonde de Sismondi as an Economist* (1927); and R. Jeandean, *Sismondi, précurseur de la législation sociale contemporaine*.

## CHAPTER IX

Owen wrote voluminously and repetitively. Much of his most important writing is contained in his autobiography, *Life of Robert Owen* (1857), of which only the first volume and a supplementary volume of documents (1858) appeared, and in my Everyman's Library selection, *A New View of Society, and other Writings* (1927). The most important of his earlier works were *A New View of Society* (1813-14) (often reprinted, originally issued as *Essays on the Formation of Character*); *Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System* (1815); *An Address delivered to the Inhabitants of New Lanark* (1816); *Two Memorials on behalf of the Working Classes* (1818); *Lectures on an Entirely New State of Society* (1820); *Report to the County of Lanark* (1821).

There are many biographies of Owen. The fullest is Frank Podmore, *Robert Owen* (1906). See also G. D. H. Cole, *Life of Robert Owen*

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

(1925, revised 1930); Lloyd Jones, *Life, Times and Labours of Robert Owen* (1889-90); E. Dolléans, *Robert Owen* (1905) — in French; and, for Orbiston, A. Cullen, *Adventures in Socialism* (1910) and A. Combe, *The Sphere of Joint Stock Companies* (1825). See also, for the Co-operative aspects, G. D. H. Cole, *A Century of Co-operation* (1945).

Further references to Owen will be found in the note on Chapter XI.

## CHAPTER X

The most important works of the British socialistic economists of the 1820s and 1830s (except J. F. Bray, for whom see note on Chapter XII) are as follows:

HODGSKIN. *An Essay on Naval Discipline* (1813); *Travels in the North of Germany* (1820); *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital* (1825); *Popular Political Economy* (1827); *The Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted* (1832). Much of Hodgskin's later writing is contained in *The Economist*, and remains uncollected.

THOMPSON. *An Enquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth most conducive to Human Happiness* (1824); *Appeal of One Half the Human Race* (1825); *Labour Rewarded* (1827); *Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities on the Principle of Co-operation* (1830).

GRAY. *A Lecture on Human Happiness* (1825); *The Social System* (1831); *An Efficient Remedy for the Distress of All Nations* (1842); *Lectures on the Nature and Use of Money* (1848).

MINTER MORGAN. *On the Practicability of Mr. Owen's Plan* (1819); *The Revolt of the Bees* (1826); *Hampden in the Twentieth Century* (1834); *The Christian Commonwealth* (1845).

RAVENSTONE. *A Few Doubts as to the Correctness of some Opinions generally entertained on the subjects of Population and Political Economy* (1821); *Thoughts on the Funding System* (1824).

EDMONDS. *Practical, Moral, and Political Economy* (1828).

The only biography is Élie Halévy's *Thomas Hodgskin* (1903) — in French. The main general studies are Max Beer's, in his *History of British Socialism*, vol. i; E. Lowenthal, *The Ricardian Socialists* (1911); H. L. Beales, *The Early English Socialists* (1932) and H. S. Foxwell's Introduction to A. Menger, *The Right to the Whole Produce of Labour* (1899).

## CHAPTER XI

Among Owen's later writings the following may be mentioned: *The Book of the New Moral World* (1836-44); *A Development of the Principles and Plans on which to Establish Home Colonies* (1841); *Lectures on the Rational System of Society* (1841); *The Revolution in the Mind and Practice of the Human Race* (1849); *The New Existence*

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of *Man upon the Earth* (1854-5). Much of the most important material for the study of later Owenism is in periodicals, especially *The Pioneer* (1833-4), *The Crisis* (1832-4), *The New Moral World* (1835-45), and various journals conducted later by Owen in his old age.

See also Robert Dale Owen's autobiography, *Threading My Way* (1874); W. L. Sargent, *Robert Owen and his Social Philosophy* (1860); Mary Hennell, *An Outline of the various Social Systems and Communities founded on Co-operation* (1844); E. T. Craig, *History of Ralahine* (1893).

For New Harmony, see Podmore's *Robert Owen* (1906); A. E. Bestor's *Backwoods Utopias* (1950); G. R. Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities* (1905); *The New Harmony Gazette* (1825-9); A. E. Bestor (ed.) *Education and Reform at New Harmony* (1948); R. W. Leopold, *Robert Dale Owen* (1940); J. H. Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (1870); W. W. Hinds, *American Communities* (1878, last edition, revised, 1908), and C. Nordhoff, *Communitistic Societies of the United States* (1875) contain much information about the various American experiments, religious as well as socialistic. See also R. T. Ely, *The Labour Movement in America* (1886), Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* (1903); and C. Southeran, *Horace Greeley and other Partisans of American Socialism* (1915).

Holyoake's writings contain a great deal of information — not always accurate. See his *History of Co-operation in England* (1875-9; and later revised edition, 1906); also his autobiographical *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (1892), and *Byegones Worth Remembering* (1905). Much of his best work is in his various periodicals, especially *The Movement* (1844-5) and *The Reasoner* (1846-72). See also his pamphlet, *A Visit to Harmony Hall* (1844) and A. Somerville's *A Journey to Harmony Hall* (1843).

Consult also, for another English project, J. Silk Buckingham, *National Evils and Practical Remedies* (1849).

For the great Trade Union period of the early 1830s see G. D. H. Cole, *Life of Robert Owen* (1925, revised 1930), and also G. D. H. Cole, *Attempts at General Union, 1829-34* (Reprint from *International Review for Social History*, 1939). See also S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism* (1894, revised 1920); R. W. Postgate, *The Builders' History* (1923) and his essay on J. E. Smith in *Out of the Past* (1922). For J. E. Smith see also *The Crisis* (1832-4) and *Lecture on a Christian Community* (1833). See also the biography, *Shepherd Smith the Universalist*, by W. A. Smith (1892). There is a great deal of valuable material also in *The Pioneer* (1833-4), edited by James Morrison.

## CHAPTER XII

J. F. Bray's earliest known writings, signed 'U. S.', are in the *Leeds Times* of 1835-6. In 1837 the same paper reported a series of lectures



## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

by him which were later developed into *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy* (1839). There is a good account of his views in Max Beer's *History of British Socialism*, and his book is quoted extensively by Marx in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847). Soon after publishing this book he wrote another, *A Voyage from Utopia to several unknown regions of the world*; but this he never published, and its existence remained unknown until the manuscript was discovered in the 1930s. It has not yet been published: the manuscript is now in the Library of the London School of Economics. After his return to the United States in 1842 he published a series of pamphlets, *The Coming Age* (1855) — which was left unfinished — a pamphlet entitled *American Destiny* (1864), and a further book, *God and Man a Unity and All Mankind a Unity* (1879). He also contributed extensively to American Labour and Socialist periodicals, and left a number of unpublished manuscripts. An account of his later American writings is to be found in an article by M. F. Jolliffe in the *International Review for Social History*, vol. iv, 1939.

## CHAPTER XIII

The socialistic aspects of Chartism have to be sought for in general books about the movement. G. D. H. Cole, *Chartist Portraits* (1941) includes studies of Harney, O'Brien, Jones, and other leaders. R. G. Gammage's *History of the Chartist Movement* (1854, new edition 1894) contains much first-hand material. Other histories are: Mark Hovell, *The Chartist Movement* (1918, revised 1925); Julius West, *History of the Chartist Movement* (1920), R. Groves, *But We Shall Rise Again: a Narrative History of Chartism* (1938); E. Dolléans, *Le Chartisme* (1912); F. F. Rosenblatt, *The Chartist Movement in its Social and Economic Aspects* (1916); P. W. Slosson, *The Decline of Chartism* (1916); J. L. and B. Hammond, *The Age of the Chartists* (1930). See also S. Maccoby, *English Radicalism, 1832-1852* (1935); T. Rothstein, *From Chartism to Labourism* (1929); and, of course, F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844* (1845, English translation 1892).

Bronterre O'Brien's work is mostly in periodicals, especially *The Poor Man's Guardian*, *The Northern Star*, *The Destructive*, *The National Reformer*, and Reynolds' *Political Instructor*. His translation, with commentary, of Buonarroti's book on *Babeuf's Conspiracy* has been mentioned in the note to Chapter II. His only consecutive (and unfinished) theoretical work is *The Rise, Progress and Phases of Human Slavery* (1885, reprinted from Reynolds' *Political Instructor* of 1849). He also wrote an unfinished *Life of Robespierre* (1838).

Harney wrote no books. His work, too, is in periodicals: *The London Democrat* (1839); *The Northern Star* (1841-50); *The Democratic Review* (1849-50); *The Red Republican* (1850); *The Friend*

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of the People (1850-2); and *The Vanguard* (1852-3). See the many references to him in Marx's letters.

Ernest Jones too must be sought in his periodicals: *The Labourer* (1847-8); *Notes for the People* (1851-2); *The People's Paper* (1852-8) and *Evenings with the People* (1856). See also his pamphlet, *Capital and Labour* (1867) for his later views. There is a pamphlet life by P. Davies, *A Short Sketch of the Life and Labours of Ernest Jones* (1897). A volume of selections, *Ernest Jones: Chartist*, with a long Introduction by John Saville (1952), appeared after the present work had been written.

For Lovett, see his *Life and Struggles* (1876), and his *Chartism* (1841), written in collaboration with John Collins. For Hetherington, see *The Poor Man's Guardian* (1831-5), and a short biographical sketch by G. J. Holyoake, *The Life and Character of Henry Hetherington* (1849).

## CHAPTER XIV

Blanqui's writings were largely in periodicals. The only books by him published during his life were *La Patrie en danger* (1871) — reprinted from his periodical of that name, and *L'Armée esclave et opprimé* (1880). His writings were partly collected in *La Critique sociale* (1885); *Ni Dieu ni maître* (1925); and *Science et foi* (1925).

There are a number of books about him and his affairs. The standard work is Gustave Geffroy, *L'Enfermé* (1897). Others of merit are: A.-B. Zévaès, *Auguste Blanqui* (1920); M. Dommanget, *Auguste Blanqui* (1924) and the same author's *Auguste Blanqui à Belle-Isle* (1935); and, in English, Neil Stewart, *Blanqui* (1939). See also R. W. Postgate's essay in *Out of the Past* (1922).

For the Blanquist movement, see also: C. Du Costa, *Les Blanquistes* (1912); S. Wassermann, *Les Clubs de Barbès et de Blanqui en 1848* (1913); C. Schmidt, *Les Journées de juin, 1848*; and O. Festy, *Le Mouvement ouvrier au début de la monarchie de juillet* (1908).

For Barbès, see Jules Claretie, *Armand Barbès* (1870); J.-F. Jeanjean, *Armand Barbès* (1909); and V. Hunger, *Barbès au Mont-Saint-Michel* (1909).

## CHAPTER XV

Louis Blanc was a most assiduous journalist, as well as a writer of books. His first book, *Organisation du travail*, appeared in 1839 (English translation, 1848). The first of his historical books, *Histoire de dix ans*, appeared in parts from 1841 to 1844 (English translation, 1844-5). His *Histoire de la Révolution française* was published between 1847 and 1862; his *Pages de l'histoire de la révolution de février, 1848*, in 1850 and his *Histoire de la révolution de 1848* in 1870. His

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other main works are: *Le Socialisme : droit au travail* (1849); *La Révolution de février au Luxembourg* (1849); *Catéchisme des socialistes* (1849); *Plus de Girondins* (1851); *L'État et la commune* (1866); *Dix Ans de l'histoire de l'Angleterre* (1874-8). The earlier part of this last appeared in English as *Letters on England* (1866).

The best book on Blanc, small though it is, is J. Tchernoff, *Louis Blanc* (1904). Others are: C. Robins, *Louis Blanc* (1851); C. Edmond, *Louis Blanc* (1882); L. Fiaux, *Louis Blanc* (1882); E. Courmeaux, *Louis Blanc* (1884); E. Renard, *La Vie et l'œuvre de Louis Blanc*, (1922); and G. Cahen, *Louis Blanc et la Commission du Luxembourg* (1897). See also: Georges Renard, *La République de 1848* (1905) — being vol. ix of Jaurès's *Histoire socialiste*; Octave Festy, *Les Associations ouvrières encouragées par la deuxième République* (1915); and the hostile *Histoire des ateliers nationaux* (1848), by Émile Thomas.

## CHAPTER XVI

The chief writings of Buchez are: *Introduction à la science de l'histoire* (1833); *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française* (1834-8) — an immense collection of documents; *Essai d'un traité complet de philosophie* (1838-40); *Traité de la politique et de la science sociale* (1866) — with short Life; and his contributions to his paper, *L'Européen*. His influence is seen in the workers' periodical, *L'Atelier* (1840-8). There is a study of him by G. Castillon, *Buchez historien* (1909).

Pecqueur's chief works are: *Économie sociale* (1839); *Des améliorations matérielles* (1839); *De la législation et du mode d'exécution des chemins de fer* (1840); *Théorie nouvelle d'économie sociale et politique* (1842) — his most comprehensive book; *De la paix* (1842); *De la république de Dieu* (1844); and *Le Salut du peuple* (1849-50).

The best books on Pecqueur are Léon Maisonneuve, *Pecqueur et Vidal* (1898); J. Marié, *Le Socialisme de Pecqueur* (1906); and Benoît Malon, *Constantin Pecqueur, doyen du collectivisme français* (1887).

## CHAPTER XVII

Flora Tristan's *L'Union ouvrière* appeared in 1843. She had previously published, besides a few pamphlets, her autobiography, *Pérégrinations d'une paria* (1838); a novel, *Méphis* (1838); and her *Promenades dans Londres* (1840).

The best Life of her is J. L. Puech, *La Vie et l'œuvre de Flora Tristan* (1925). See also Éléonore Blanc, *Biographie de Flora Tristan* (1845).

For *compagnonnage*, see Martin Saint-Léon, *Le Compagnonnage* (1901). The chief writings of Pierre Moreau are: *Un Mot aux ouvriers*

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*de toutes les professions* (1841); and *De la réforme des abus du compagnonnage* (1843). See also Agricole Perdriguier, *Histoire d'une scission dans le compagnonnage* (1846); and *Le Livre du compagnonnage* (1841); and George Sand's novel, *Le Compagnon du Tour de France* (1840).

## CHAPTER XVIII

Lamennais's most famous work is *Paroles d'un croyant* (1834). This was followed by: *Les Affaires de Rome, des maux de l'Église et de la société* (1837); *Le Livre du peuple* (1837); *Le Pays et le gouvernement* (1840); *Une Voix de prison* (1841); *Du passé et de l'avenir du peuple* (1841); *Politique à l'usage du peuple* (1839); and *De l'esclavage moderne* (1839). His first mainly social writing appeared in his paper, *L'Avenir* (1831-2). Collections of his *Œuvres* appeared in 1836-7 and in 1844 — both very incomplete. A collection of *Œuvres inédites* was published in 1866, and his *Correspondance* in 1863 and in later editions.

The most relevant books about him are Paul Janet, *La Philosophie de Lamennais* (1890); A Roussel, *Lamennais, d'après des documents inédits* (1892); and C. Bastard, *Lamennais, sa vie et ses doctrines* (1905-13).

## CHAPTER XIX

Proudhon was a very voluminous writer. His *Œuvres* were first collected in 1875. The best edition is that of Charles Bouglé and Moysset, *Œuvres complètes* (1923- ). Not many of his books are available in English. The most important of his works include: *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (1840); *Avertissement aux propriétaires* (1842); *De la création de l'ordre dans l'humanité* (1843); *Système de contradictions économiques, ou, philosophie de la misère* (1846); *Solution du problème social* (1848); *Les Confessions d'un révolutionnaire* (1849); *Idée générale de la révolution au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1851); *La Révolution sociale* (1852); *Manuel du spéculateur à la bourse* (1853); *De la justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église* (1858, revised 1860); *La Guerre et la paix* (1861); *Théorie de l'impôt* (1861); *Du principe fédératif* (1863); *De la capacité politique des classes ouvrières* (1865); *France et Rhin* (1868); *Théorie de la propriété* (posthumous); *Contradictions politiques* (posthumous); *La Bible annotée* (posthumous).

The chief works translated into English are: *What is Property?* (1876); *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1888); *The General Idea of the Revolution* (1923); *Solution of the Social Problem* (1927).

Proudhon's *Correspondance* has been published, in 14 volumes (1875). Parts of the *Carnets* were published in 1908.

There is a small book in English on Proudhon by D. W. Brogan, *Proudhon* (1934), and also a longer work, *The UnMarxian Socialist: A Study of Proudhon*, by H. de Lubac (1948).

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See also Shi Yung Lu, *The Political Theories of P.-J. Proudhon* (1922).

In French the most useful books are: E. Dolléans, *P.-J. Proudhon* (1950); E.-J. Droz, *Proudhon* (1909); G. Pirou, *Proudhonisme et syndicalisme révolutionnaire* (1910); C. Bouglé, *La Sociologie de Proudhon* (1911); Jeanne Dupont, *Proudhon, sociologue et moraliste* (1929); Sainte-Beuve, *P.-J. Proudhon, sa vie et sa correspondance* (1875).

The American version of *Solution of the Social Problem* (1927) also contains a useful essay by C. H. Dana, with a discussion of Proudhon's banking projects.

## CHAPTER XX

Fichte's most relevant writings include *Zurückforderung der Denkfreiheit von den Fürsten Europas* (1793); *Beiträge zur Berichtigung der Urtheile des Publicums über die französische Revolution* (1793); *Grundlage des Naturrechts* (1796); *System der Sittenlehre* (1798); *Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800); *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat* (1800); *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (1804); *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1807-8); *Rechtslehre* (1812); *Sittenlehre* (1812). His *Addresses to the German Nation* (1922), *The Science of Rights* (1889); *The Science of Ethics* (1897); *The Character of the Present Age* (1847); *The Destination of Man* (1846); and his *Popular Works*, translated with a Memoir by William Smith (1889), are available in English.

On Fichte's thought, see M. Weber, *Fichtes Sozialismus* (1900); N. Wallner, *Fichte als politischer Denker* (1926); G. Gurvitch, *Fichtes System der concreten Ethik* (1924).

Weitling's chief works are *Die Menschheit, wie sie ist und wie sie sein sollte* (1838); and *Die Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* (1842). See also F. Mehring's Introduction to the reprint of the *Garantien* (1908); and E. Barnikol, *Wilhelm Weitling* (1929).

For the German exiles in Paris, Brussels and London see: F. Mehring, *Life of Karl Marx: the Correspondence of Marx and Engels* (in German or French: only a selection in English. See note to Chapter XXIII); D. Riazonov's Introduction to the *Communist Manifesto* (see Note to Chapter XXII), and other works listed in the notes on the chapters dealing with early Marxism.

## CHAPTER XXI

It will be obvious that in this chapter I owe much to Mr. Sidney Hook's *From Hegel to Marx* (1936). The criticisms of Marx and Engels on the 'True Socialists' and other German schools are in *Die Heilige Familie* (1845), and in *Die deutsche Ideologie*, written in 1845-6, but not published in full until 1932. An English translation

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appeared in 1936. Much of the relevant controversy appeared in the various Yearbooks of the 1840s and in journals, such as the *Rheinische Zeitung*. For Bruno Bauer, see his *Die gute Sache der Freiheit* (1842). For Hess see *Gesellschafts-Spiegel* (1845); his most important writings are reprinted in *Sozialistische Aufsätze* (1920). See also Zlocisti's *Moses Hess* (1921) — in German; and Cornu's *Moses Hess et la gauche hégélienne* (1934). For Feuerbach, see his *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841; English translation, *The Essence of Christianity*, 1854); and his *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (1842).

For Karl Grün, see especially his book, *Die soziale Bewegung im Frankreich und Belgien* (1845).

For the general historical background, see F. Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (1930).

## CHAPTER XXII

The *Communist Manifesto* was first published in London early in 1848, in the German language. The first English translation, by Helen Macfarlane, appeared in Harney's *Red Republican* in 1850. A new authorised English translation, by Samuel Moore, with an introduction and notes by Engels, appeared in 1888. (A different English version seems to have appeared in 1886.) In German, the edition of 1872 had a new preface by the author, and those of 1883 and 1890 further prefaces by Engels alone. Marx wrote a preface to the Russian translation of 1882, which was published in Switzerland. A further English translation, by Lily G. Aitken and Frank Budgen, was issued in Glasgow in 1919 by the Socialist Labour Party. In 1930 a further translation, by Eden and Cedar Paul, appeared with D. Riazonov's important *Historical Introduction*, first published in Russian. In 1901 Charles Adler produced an annotated French edition, which he subsequently enlarged. The best modern edition is also in French (1934). It contains both Riazonov's *Historical Introduction* and a further Introduction by Bracke and gives the earlier drafts of the *Manifesto* by Engels and others and the only number issued (September 1847) of *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, the projected organ of the Communist League. This has important anticipations of the *Manifesto*. The Statutes of the Communist League are also given, and 'The Demands of the Communist Party in Germany', prepared by Marx, Engels, Schapper, Moll, H. Bauer, and W. Wolff for circulation in Germany during the 1848 Revolution.

There is also an English edition, published by the Labour Party in 1949 with a long Introduction by H. J. Laski, to mark the centenary of the *Manifesto*.

Marx's 1850 'Address to the Communist League', together with the *Communist Manifesto*, is reproduced in Émile Burns's *Handbook of Marxism* (1935).

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

### CHAPTER XXIII

Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, with the Preface explaining the evolution of his thought, first appeared in German in 1859. The unfinished Introduction which Marx intended to include, but discarded, was first published in Kautsky's edition of 1907. An English translation, with both Preface and Introduction, appeared in the United States in 1909. Much of the early work of Marx and Engels is to be found in the four volumes of *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, edited by Frank Mehring (1902). Some of Marx's early essays have been translated — but with omissions — by H. J. Stenning in *Karl Marx: Selected Essays* (1929). Marx's *Misère de la philosophie* (1847) first appeared in French: an English translation by Henry Quelch was published in 1900. *Loharbeit und Kapital*, first published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1849, was first translated into English, as *Wage-Labour and Capital*, by J. L. Joynes in 1885. There have been several subsequent versions.

The important commentaries of Marx and Engels on the Revolutions of 1848 and on the events which followed them are to be found in *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich, 1848-50* (edited by Engels, 1895. English translation, *The Class-Struggles in France, 1848-50*, 1924); *Die achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Napoleon* (1852; English translation, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte*, by Daniel de Leon, 1898); and *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* (mainly by Engels, written in English, reprinted 1896). A later edition, with additional documents, appeared in 1933.

Only a selection from the *Correspondence* of Marx and Engels is available in English (translated and edited by Dona Torr, 1934). The full series, edited by D. Riazonov and V. Adoratski, is in the Collected Edition of the Works of Marx and Engels (1929-31). The letters up to 1867 are available in French, translated by J. Molitor (1931) — the first and second volumes cover the period up to 1853.

### CHAPTER XXIV

The most relevant work of Mazzini is his *Dovere dell' uomo* (1840-3). It appeared in English as *The Duties of Man* in 1862. There is a collected English edition of Mazzini's works (1891). For his life and thought, see: Bolton King, *Life of Mazzini* (1902); G. O. Griffith, *Mazzini, Prophet of Modern Europe* (1932); and V. Zanotti-Bianco, *Mazzini* (1925) — in Italian.

A good, general book on the Revolutions of 1848 is G. Bourgin and M. Terrier, *1848* (1949). Félix Ponteil, *1848* (1947) is also a useful short study. They are both in French. For France, see Georges Renard, *La République de 1848* (1906) and his supplementary

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volume of *Notes et références* (1906). See also: H. A. L. Fisher, *The Republican Tradition in Europe* (1911); and vol. xi of the *Cambridge Modern History* (1909). Other references have been given in the notes on earlier chapters.

### CHAPTER XXV

The most useful general book on English Christian Socialism is *Christian Socialism, 1848-1854*, by C. E. Raven (1920). See also G. C. Binyon, *The Christian Socialist Movement in England* (1931); E. R. A. Seligman, *Robert Owen and the Christian Socialists* (1886); F. Maurice, *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice* (1884); H. Pitman, *Memorial of E. V. Neale*, published by the Co-operative Union (1894); *Christian Social Reformers of the Nineteenth Century* (1927), edited by Hugh Martin; A. V. Woodward, *Christian Socialism in England* (1903); Guy Kendall's *Charles Kingsley and his Ideas* (1947); *Charles Kingsley, by his Wife* (1877-80); W. H. Brown, *Charles Kingsley* (1924); J. J. Dent, *John Malcolm Forbes Ludlow* (pamphlet, 1921).

*Politics for the People*, edited by Ludlow and Maurice, appeared in 1848; *Tracts on Christian Socialism* in 1850; *Tracts by Christian Socialists* in 1851; *The Christian Socialist* from 1850 to 1852; Neale's *Transactions of the Co-operative League* from 1851 to 1852; *The Journal of Association* in 1852; and Neale's *Co-operative Commercial Circular* from 1852 to 1855.



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