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# THREE SOCIALIST FALLACIES

BY  
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by POPE LEO XIII.

WITH PREFACE BY C. S. DEVAS, M.A.

## CONTENTS.

- THE CONDITION OF THE WORKING CLASSES.  
*"Revue Neoscholæ,"* May 15, 1891.
- THE EVILS AFFECTING MODERN SOCIETY.  
*"L'Incorruptibile,"* April 21, 1878.
- THE CHRISTIAN CONSTITUTION OF STATES.  
*"Immaculata Dicit,"* November 1, 1884.
- THE CHIEF DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS AS CITIZENS.  
*"Sapientia Christiana,"* January 10, 1890.
- HUMAN LIBERTY.  
*"Liberal Protestantism,"* June 30, 1883.
- CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.  
*"Arcanum Divinæ,"* February 10, 1880.
- THE RIGHT ORDERING OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.  
*"Exspecto iam Anno,"* December 25, 1888.
- CONCERNING MODERN ERRORS, SOCIALISM, &c.  
*"Quæ Apostolici Moneant,"* December 28, 1878.
- WORKING MEN'S CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS.  
*"C'est avec lui fortifier Satisfaction,"* February 24, 1884.
- THE REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM.  
*"Proclama Gratulationis Publicæ,"* June 20, 1894.
- CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY.  
*"Cours de Communisme,"* January 18, 1901.

## THREE SOCIALIST FALLACIES

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By JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

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### I. The Surplus Value Fallacy

I HAVE to deal with three main fallacies on which Socialists found their system. I will give them names respectively as the Surplus Value Fallacy, the People Fallacy, and, *honoris causa*, the G.P.F., or Great Post Office Fallacy. First, then, of Surplus Value.

I will suppose a man, Conon, to have become the owner, legally and honestly, of a vast accumulation of material, capable of being worked up into besoms and brushes. Still he wants ground, buildings, machinery, workmen : all that, however, he will get, if he can only find capital. He meets another man, Callias, legally and honestly rich, and looking for an investment for his money. They combine into a firm : *Conon and Callias, Besom and Brush Manufacturers*. A site is purchased, buildings erected, machinery put in, and a number of workmen are hired. We must suppose that these workmen are treated with that justice which Leo XIII insists upon in his Encyclical of May 15, 1891, on the Condition of the Working Classes. That is, they

receive a living wage sufficient to support them in frugal comfort. This is just: for whoever engrosses a man's labour is bound to feed and keep that man up to a decent standard of human life. A just slave-owner of old did as much for his slaves; and surely the labour of a free man should not command less remuneration than slave labour. It is an element of human life to marry and have a family. Conon and Callias, faithful to Leo XIII's teaching, pay their men wages high enough for them to marry on, not indeed in the first month of their employment, but within a reasonable time, long before the grey hairs come. Every week their workman, being a single man, has money over from his wages, without pinching himself, if he does not gamble, nor drink like a sot: he can put that money in the savings-bank, and marry on it ere long. It is necessary to presuppose all this, because otherwise the problem of surplus value, which we wish to come to, will be complicated by an extraneous and irrelevant problem, which we must avoid—the problem of a fair wage.

The firm goes on steadily, and in time does well. In the fifth year we find that they have cleared off all incumbrances, and their besoms and brushes are all over the country. Their gross receipts in the course of that year are quite a handsome sum, which we will call X. X has flowed out again in three streams,  $x$ ,  $y$ ,  $z$ . Of these,  $x$  has gone in channels manifold, to pay for raw material, cost of machinery, rates and taxes, and working expenses generally, perhaps including the luxury of a little law;  $y$  has gone into the workmen's

pockets as wages;  $z$  remains. This  $z$  is the "surplus value," as Karl Marx calls it. Bolingbroke used to say of the Members of the House of Commons: "They follow the man who shows them the game." Surplus value is the game that Karl Marx has shown the Socialists; and for that they follow him. Messrs. Conon and Callias put this quantity  $z$ , this surplus value, into their own pockets. They call it "capitalist's profit"; it was in view of that  $z$ , and for the sake of obtaining it, that they set up as manufacturers of brushes and besoms. Marx and the Socialists after him call this a process of "exploiting the workman"; they denounce it as un-Christian and unjust: they will have it that this "surplus value" is simply the creation of the workman's labour, and should all be thrown in, at the top of the wages, to complete the workman's share of the proceeds. But Messrs. Conon and Callias would never have put their capital into the business on those terms. Marx and his followers reply that they want no Conon and Callias, nor any other private capitalist, great or small: the State is to be sole capitalist,—a difficult arrangement, as my Moral Philosophy shows. But even on the score of personal labour, and increase of value thence resulting, Messrs. Conon and Callias have a large claim to what we may call *wages* for the management of their own capital. They organized the labour of the workmen. Workmen without an organizer are as inefficient as an army without a general. The organizer is a master-workman, and must be paid accordingly. Part of that quantity  $z$ , therefore, must be paid over to Messrs.

Conon and Callias, because they, more potently than any other two individuals, have laboured to produce it. When that part has been deducted, and paid over, we will call the remainder  $z'$ . This is all the surplus value that becomes matter of debate. And the question is not such an easy one to answer: By what right or title do Messrs. Conon and Callias appropriate to themselves that  $z'$ ?

We will construct an argument on behalf of the firm; and, better to appreciate the worth of the argument, we will put it in the form of a syllogism, thus: *The fruit of capital belongs to the owner of the capital: but the quantity  $z'$  (the final surplus value) is the fruit of capital: therefore it belongs to the owners of the capital, i.e., to Messrs. Conon and Callias.* The major premise is only an application of the received maxim, *res fructificat domino* (a thing fructifies to its owner). The flank of an opposing syllogism is best turned by a distinction. So we may out-manœuvre the above syllogism by thus distinguishing the axiom upon which it is founded. *A thing fructifies to its owner—natural fruit, granted; artificial fruit, if the owner himself is sole cause of it, granted again; if he is only the joint cause along with another man, again I distinguish, it fructifies to the exclusive benefit of the owner, denied; it fructifies to the owner to the benefit of the other man, granted.* Then it may be pointed out that the firm is not the sole cause of the fructification of their capital, but only the joint cause along with their workmen. Hence would follow two consequences, one against Marx's assignment of the whole quantity  $z'$  to the workmen; the other

against the owners of the capital taking the whole of the  $z'$  to themselves, and considering that they have no further duties to the workmen on that account—I do not mean of adding to their wages, but of so administering the profit as that their enjoyment of it may be a benefit to their working people. It is not a duty of *strict justice*: that the firm has discharged in paying the stipulated wage, provided that it be an ample life-wage: it is a *moral* duty, not easily definable. We may call it a nucleus of duty with a large envelope of counsel. A moral counsel is not a thing to scoff at, and it may be enforced by law. To scoff at “counsels” is one of the old-fooleries of Protestantism. It would thus appear that capital which has fructified through another’s labour should fructify to the common good—both the good of the owner of the capital and the good of the labourer; that neither the firm should shut out the workmen, nor the workmen the firm, from the enjoyment of that residual quantity  $z'$ : that it should turn to the good and the profit of them both. And this conclusion, rightly understood, is I believe correct; and in the honest acceptance of it on both sides lies the hope of pacification and conciliation of Labour with Capital.

St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*,<sup>1</sup> following Aristotle, has an inquiry into property, which at first sight seems out of date, but on further study appears just what is wanted for modern times. It was not written in face of a capitalist *régime*, but the principles are eternal and for all time. He discusses

<sup>1</sup> 2a 2æ, q. 66; *Aquinas Ethicus*, ii. l.c. pp. 53-58.

first ownership of property in general, and shows that man has such ownership, under God. Then coming to private ownership he draws these very remarkable conclusions: that as to power of administration and management it is lawful for man to have private possessions; nay, that it is necessary to human society, because every man is more careful in looking after his own than in looking after common property, because, again, social order is better preserved by this system of private management, and because the interests of peace are best consulted, every one being contented to look after his own; that at the same time a man ought not to hold exterior goods for his own, but for common goods, to the extent of readily allowing others to share them in their need; that a man sins by indiscriminately excluding all others from the use and benefit of the things that he calls his own; finally, that it is left to the discretion of each possessor to manage his possessions so that the needy may have their relief out of them.

This is an impartial award between capital and labour, between socialism and private property. On the one hand, it is pronounced that there is to be private property, which in our days means private capital; and that the administration of capital for the public good is better done by individuals than by the State. This I think is a legitimate development of St. Thomas's doctrine. On the other hand, it appears that the rich are not authorized to bear away the good things of life for their own mere private delectation and glorification, simply as so much matter of self-



indulgence to gratify their every whim and caprice ; that whoever is rich, is, or ought to be, rich for the common good ; that the needs of the poor, not their folly and improvidence, but their unavoidable and necessary needs, are chargeable upon the rich.

All this is particularly true of that bone of contention, *z'*, that surplus value which remains over, after working expenses have been met and all wages paid, including the wage of the capitalist himself as manager. This residual surplus value has labour for its father and capital for its mother. The capital is all of the capitalist ; the labour is part master-labour, which is of the capitalist, and part executive labour, which is of the workmen.<sup>1</sup> Which of the two parents is to have the offspring ? Naturally, both of them. No, says Socialism, take it away from them both ; let it be brought up and managed as the offspring of the State. That plan is unnatural, and, with men as they are, quite unworkable. It would mean the starving and ultimate extinction of the offspring in question. There is nothing for it to leave it in private management. If both its parents, Capital and Labour, manage it together, we have a Co-operative Society. A very excellent thing that, but, so far as we have hitherto

<sup>1</sup> *πόνος ἀρχιτεκτονικός* and *τεκτονικός*, Aristotle (*Ethics*, i. 1) might have called them respectively. Hence the saying of Leo XIII (Encyclical on the Condition of the Working Classes): *It is most true that from no other source than from the labour of working men does the wealth of nations take its rise*: has its truth in the same sense as if we were to say that not otherwise than of woman is man born. The working man, as philosophers would put it, is total cause in his own order, but not sole cause: there are other orders of causation besides his.

had experience of it, not the most efficient instrument of production. It would be extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to entrust the whole production of commodities to co-operative societies. It would be also hard to make the man who has brought all the capital into the society a mere manager, dependent on the votes of the rest. Somehow the management of that much-disputed quantity *z'* must still be left, usually at least, to the discretion and conscience of the capitalists our old friends Messrs. Conon and Callias.

And finely these capitalists have administered their trust! There is a grim humour and a sad pleasantry in the thing. We may construct in imagination a street, or for that matter a whole city—the juxtaposition only is imaginary, the materials are real enough: put on the one side of the street the houses of the capitalists, and on the other side the houses of the poor who have only their labour to live on; and then tell me, in the name of St. Thomas and living justice, that all the wealth that you see on the one side is held and administered for the benefit of the poor workers across the way! There is room for rhetoric and indignation here, still we must not exaggerate.

In large measure, even as things stand, the profits of capital do go to the common good. Great part of them is capitalized, that is, spent upon productive enterprises, enlarged and improved machinery, and the like, affording more wages and more wealth. Socialists often speak as though the capitalist spent all his profits in enjoying himself. In that case his enemies would also have their enjoyment, in seeing him never becoming

any richer. This is not his cue at all. He spends half his profits, and often a good deal more, in extending his business, if markets are open and workmen numerous and willing.<sup>1</sup> If the Government owned the capital, they would apply, let us hope, as large a proportion of the profits in the same way. Else the Government would never grow richer ; but Government will need to be very rich indeed to do all that Socialists expect of it.

Then again we must consider in a large city the number of good things that are called "free," and yet cost money. They are paid for out of the rates and taxes, that is, principally from the pockets of the rich ; yet rich and poor alike have the use of them, and they use them more who contribute less towards them. If surplus value were distributed in the form of increased wages, the Government and the municipality would find it necessary to lay the burden of taxation and rates heavier upon the labouring classes.<sup>2</sup> The money must be forthcoming somehow, if these public benefits are to be kept up. When there are no rich men to draw upon, the labourer must find the money. Besides taxation, we may mention hospitals and other works of charity and utility, voluntarily paid for and supported by the recipients of surplus profit. It is all very well to say that they ought to do more ; let them at least have the credit of their not inconsiderable actual per-

<sup>1</sup> This important point is well urged in Mr. Egmont Hake's *The Coming Individualism*, pp. 266, 267.

<sup>2</sup> Or to withhold wages in proportion, which comes to the same thing.

formances. Would a nation of Government clerk scrambling for salaries do as much?

The conclusions we have arrived at, then, are these :

(a) The Socialist argument on surplus value does evince thus much, that the said surplus ought not to be turned merely to the private emolument and gratification of the capitalist.

(b) But it should be administered by the capitalist for the common good of himself and of his working people.

(c) To some extent already working people do share in the benefits that spring from surplus value.

(d) It cannot be contended that the people's share in these benefits is so full as it ought to be. This is proved by inspecting the poorer quarters of any large town and comparing them, indoors and out of doors, with the houses of the wealthy. Most certainly this disproportion is not to be all put down to industry, and thrift, and public services rendered by the wealthy, and to idleness, wastefulness, and crime on the part of the poor.

(e) State interference to rectify this wrongful inequality is of the nature of a surgical operation, to be dispensed with where not necessary. It exhausts and weakens the commonwealth ; and, recklessly applied, the remedy may hinder a recovery which would have gradually taken place without it.<sup>1</sup> *Ne magistratus inferat se importunius*, which we may translate, "let not the magistrate interfere where he is not wanted," says

<sup>1</sup> See this argued in *The Coming Individualism*, by A. Egmont Hake, the first six chapters.

Leo XIII, and he says again : " Let not the State interfere with the inner management and daily routine of associations of workmen : for the life of a living organism depends on an inward principle, and is easily crushed out of it by pressure from without." <sup>1</sup>

(f) There is no heroic remedy to ensure the right application of riches. There is no constitution of society that can guarantee the abolition either of poverty or of oppression of the poor. The utmost that can be done is to make men moral and religious, and then, in the main, surplus value will be rightly employed.

## II. The People Fallacy

" By no one was it suggested that the democracy could possibly, after having secured the power, put it to any other use than one beneficial to the masses. . . . Our Collectivist opponents . . . draw no distinction between the Government, the ruling officials, and the collectors and consumers of the taxes on the one hand, and the governed, working, and tax-paying people on the other. . . . By assuming that the people and the Government are one . . . by not distinguishing between the nation and the Government . . . they suppose that what is given to the Government is given to the individual." <sup>2</sup>

We cannot follow Mr. Egmont Hake in all that he says, but his book, on the whole, yields much profitable

<sup>1</sup> Encyclical on the Condition of the Working Classes.

<sup>2</sup> *The Coming Individualism*, pp. 52, 254-255. By A. Egmont Hake.

thought. In particular his chapter on "The Haven of Socialism" is a production that we may safely defy any man to read, and understand, and remain a Socialist in conviction. We quote one passage :

"If we condense all the far-fetched and roundabout ideas of the Socialists, we find that, according to them, Socialism elevates and improves the character of the people to such an extent that they will be both able and willing to establish a perfect Government, a perfect bureaucracy, and a perfect police. On the other hand, that the perfect Government, the perfect bureaucracy, and the perfect police will render the people perfect. No reason is ever supplied to prove that either the Government or the people would be perfect under a Socialistic system, but these desiderata are taken for granted and are made the premises for long dissertations on the advantages that would result to a country thus favoured."<sup>1</sup>

I am not, however, now concerned with the difficulties that would beset Socialism in practice, but with the fallacies that prop up the theory, and notably with what I call the "People Fallacy," referred to by Mr. Hake in the first passage I have quoted. It was my fortune some time ago, at the end of a public lecture on Socialism, to be asked some difficulties by a working man. He was no profound or clear-sighted questioner, but I really felt grateful to him, because he fired upon me, one after the other, what I may call the two big guns of Socialism. He began with a discharge of small arms, asking me how it was consistent with our Lord's precept, *Do as ye*

<sup>1</sup> P. 106

would be done by, to defend private capital, which meant the exploitation of the workman. The reply was a denial that private capital necessarily did mean the exploitation of the workman. Then the first big gun, *surplus value*, was brought up and fired. The objector said that of course the private capitalist exploited the workman by putting into his own pocket the surplus value, the product of the workman's toil. Now inasmuch as this matter of surplus value needs a deal of discussion, I thought it simpler to turn the flank of my opponent by pointing out that his dear Socialist State would also exploit the workman by putting the surplus value into the public purse. This drew the fire of the second big gun, *the people*, and I was told that whatever went to the people was the workman's own. I replied by calling attention to a pamphlet I held in my hand (*Socialism*, Catholic Truth Society), and a heading in that pamphlet, *Political Difficulties of Socialism*: there the discussion dropped. I propose to follow up that issue now.

A great philosopher was once unwise enough to propose that wives and children should be in common, and that no man should have a wife of his own. The benefit that he anticipated from such promiscuity was that every individual of the elder generation would regard every individual of the younger generation as a son or daughter, and love and cherish the person accordingly. Aristotle's criticism of the arrangement was this: that the elder man would think on seeing the younger, *There goes my son, or So-and-So's, or So-and-So's*, to ten thousand terms; and the interest he would take in him and the affection

he would bear him would be represented by the fraction  $\frac{1}{10000}$ . Then said Professor Aristotle to his class, and the saying has come down to us: "Better have one cousin all to yourself than ten thousand such sons."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, if you with 9,999 others are joint owner of all the capital in a commune, the value and significance of your ownership will also be represented by  $\frac{1}{10000}$ . This is your share of property from an individualistic point of view. But, it will be contended, this is a wrong point of view from which to consider the matter: we should consider it in a collectivist spirit: the individual no longer thinks of himself: he has no mind but the public mind, no interest but the common interest, no desire but that the will of the majority be accomplished. In other words, he has changed his nature: man under Socialism is not man as we have known him in history for twenty-five centuries. That suppression of the individual, that disappearance of the private person in the common body, which is supposed, not very kindly, to be characteristic of the Society of Jesus, has now taken place in all mankind, or at least all over Great Britain, or the United States, or whatever the land be in which the Earthly Paradise of Socialism is located. That unfixing of the individual, and concentration of all affections and desires upon one common good, is brought about without any novitiate, or any of those long years of training in which the young Jesuit is slowly disciplined and fashioned to the ideal of his Order. The Socialist "People" is certainly a peculiar people, very unlike the selfish peoples who

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle's *Ethics*, b. ii. ch. ii.



figure in history. In face of such magnificent assumptions of unanimity it is impossible to argue. The sight of the ten thousand citizen proprietors all with one accord investing their capital and disposing of their profits, is sublime, in fact quite unlike anything on earth. It reminds one of a game of war that two civilians out walking in the country used to play, defending imaginary fortified positions against one another. Any proposed attack on what seemed a weak point was met by the rejoinder : "Oh, I forgot to tell you, that's just where I had posted three regiments and a big battery." With power of creating regiments and batteries just as they happened to be wanted, it might not be impossible for an amateur commander to hold his ground against Lord Roberts of Kandahar.

There is no use in Socialists pointing to the unanimity, such as it is, with which the government of the country is at present carried on, or the affairs of a great mercantile company are managed. The individual does not depend on either the Government or the company, as he would depend upon the Socialist State for all he had. To increase dependence is to awaken a keener interest ; and keen interest in the breast of each of a multitude of individuals about the same concern is a strong incentive to dissension, if not about the end, at least about the means to be employed. Besides, no Government and no company is under popular control such as Socialists anticipate.

We may then confidently expect that the ten thousand co-proprietors will be of anything but one mind about the disposal of their patrimony. If we reckon

the gross income of Great Britain at twelve hundred millions, with twenty-five million adults to own it in common, it is clear how far every individual will be from having his own way in the disposal of this mighty inheritance. All that can be done is to effect a compromise, which will quite please no man, and will be regarded by not a few with mighty discontent. This, unless Rousseau's transformation of the individual into the general will is really to come about : " Each of us puts into a common stock his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will ; and we receive in our turn the offering of the rest, each member as an inseparable part of the whole. Instantly, instead of the private person of each contracting party, this act of association produces a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly has voices, which body receives by this same act its unity, its common Ego, its life and its will." <sup>1</sup> And again : " The citizen consents to all the laws, even to those which are passed in spite of him." <sup>2</sup> All which we take to be true only in a Pickwickian sense. In no ordinary sense of language is it true that an overborne and discontented minority willingly consents to the action of the majority, and that the individual cannot but will what the community wills. We shall be told again that in the Socialist State the minority never will be discontented, and the individual will have his every wish fulfilled in achieving the good pleasure of the majority. Such is the wonderful perfection of the Socialist People. But before the People are quite

<sup>1</sup> *Contrat Social*, i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 2.

turned Socialist, it would be well to let them know, as novices in a Religious Order are told, what perfection is expected of them, that they may not engage in their new state otherwise than with their eyes open.

This much of theory, but in sad and sober fact parties would run high in the Socialist Utopia. The Government would be democratic to the last degree : nothing being further from the Socialist purpose than the entrusting of political power and control of all capital to the hands of a few, or of any number short of the whole multitude, who will decide all things in the last resort by a direct vote of manhood suffrage, and apparently woman suffrage also. There are here potent elements of dissension and party intrigue. Democracy is not always a harmonious Government—we know it in history to have been very much the reverse : not always a kind and indulgent Government—it has frequently been cruel, stern, and even sanguinary. There is a lamentable want of historical knowledge in the Socialist school. Now, social science without history is very much like chemistry without experiments. The facts of past history are a check upon theories of government and economics. I have been myself struck, in lecturing on social and political science to a class of young men, how little such words as *democracy*, *revolution*, *oligarchy*, meant to them, because they had not examples vividly before their mind, supplied by any intimate acquaintance with past times. Socialists of late have taken to adorning their pages with Greek learning, but it is rather artistic and poetical than historical. I cannot but think that an acquaintance with the democracies

of Athens and Corcyra, as they appear in the pages of Thucydides, would raise in a Socialist mind grave fears for his Popular Assembly—a more democratic body than ever sat on the Pnyx hill at Athens, and with a grasp upon the wealth and industries of its citizens which the Athenian Demos never dreamt of, and, had he dreamt of it, would have put aside as a bad dream and evil infringement of liberty. Still, the Athenian Demos was an unruly body, and lost the empire of the world by its very unruliness. There is every reason to expect the Socialist Demos to be still more unruly, and very much less capable.

### III. The Great Post Office Fallacy

I do not know that Socialists are great admirers of our public buildings. They may be blind to the splendours of the Law Courts, where the Law of Property is administered. They may regard the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, and the Horse Guards as emblems of the waste of the People's money. The King and the Royal Family, they think, might be economically stowed away in St. James's Palace, leaving his other residences to the People. Westminster to them is the home of *bourgeoisie* counsels, of a falling aristocracy, and an effete Church. On the other hand, the Lions in Trafalgar Square have for Socialists a strange fascination. Thither their thin processions stream on Sunday afternoons, much as Charles Edward in 1745 marched to Derby, "neither joined by friends nor opposed by enemies." But the building that they do really love,

and centre their predilections upon, is the General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand. The Post Office is to them the one model Government institution, a sort of earnest and first instalment of Socialism to come. Listening to their organs, one hears, not *toujours perdrix*, but *toujours Post Office*. They can never have enough of the Post Office, and fancy that the rest of mankind can never have too much of it. All our misgivings about the working of Socialism are met with the cry, "Look at the Post Office." Because letters, in the interval between posting and delivery, are the property of the Postmaster-General, they argue that all capital should be the property of the State. Because the State has the monopoly of all letter-carrying, they consider that it should have the monopoly of all capitalistic production. Because it distributes letters, it should receive rents. Because it does one thing well, it can do all things well. This line of argument I have ventured to call the G.P.F. (Great Post Office Fallacy).

There are two things about letters, the writing of them and the sending of them, or production and distribution. There is also a third thing, not always unattended with labour and annoyance, and that is the reading of them : but that, perhaps, is the office of the consumer. It will be enough if the State bakes our bread, without eating it for us, even though it be hard of digestion. But to justify the eulogies of Socialists, the State certainly ought to write our letters. It ought to produce the commodity as well as distribute it : just as it will dig our coals and boil our soap, besides carrying and retailing those commodities. Then

certainly, if it can keep up its present efficiency, the Post Office will be a prodigious boon to the nation, and may go far towards reconciling us to the general establishment of Socialism. Then we shall buy a letter, as we buy a newspaper—in the Socialist Commonwealth. There all the newspapers will be written by the Government scribes, who will tell the people what Government think they ought to be told. A private paper could not possibly be allowed: for a paper, if it is a success, is a paying concern, one form of capitalistic enterprise, which of course could not be permitted in private hands. As the Socialist Government, it is hoped, will not contradict itself, in the manner that private papers now deny one another's statements, or pronounce them "premature," or "crude," or "blank nonsense," one public paper, the *Moniteur*, will be enough in each Socialist commune, and every citizen will be expected to buy a copy out of his wages. As the paper will be sold for a good deal more than it is worth, that will be one form of State taxation. But to return to the manufacture and distribution of letters.

Here my Socialist friend steps in to inform me that his Government will not undertake the manufacture, or production, of letters, but only the distribution of them, which is all that the department does at present whose head office is at St. Martin's-le-Grand. This makes a change in the argument, and much shakes our confidence in the conclusion. To argue from successful distribution to successful production is to over-leap a chasm. It is, for wholesale purposes, a greater transition than from tailoring to ironwork. The need never

ceases for reminding Socialists that the question between them and their opponents is, not whether certain enterprises are not better left in State hands, or in municipal hands, but whether all private enterprise is to be forbidden.

Let us go into the matter seriously, considering what the Post Office really does : what evidence is thence forthcoming for the advisability of converting the whole carrying and distributing trade into a State monopoly ; and whether the success of the Post Office in distributing our letters is any valid encouragement to us to commit to Government the sole manufacture of all our commodities. What the Post Office really does is this : it gets private companies to carry the letters for it : the letters which it thus gets carried are written, great part of them, on the business of private capitalists ; and the said letters are paid for with the money made by private capitalists. The conclusion that really follows from these facts is, that it would be a hazardous experiment to abolish the private company and the private capitalist—hardly the conclusion that Socialists are looking for. We see thousands of mail-carts and letter-vans driving about, the property of the Postmaster-General : but I do not know that he owns a single locomotive, certainly not a line of railway, nor a fleet of steamships. He makes contracts with the great railway and steamboat companies to carry his letters for him. These private corporations compete for his favour, and he reaps the benefit of their enterprise and ingenuity. They all vie with one another to get his custom, and try who can execute his business

best. If they were all his servants, and their capital part of his administration, I fear the cry would reach him : " You send too many letters by the London and North-Western." At present the word goes from him to them : " If you gentlemen cannot expedite my letters quicker, I shall not renew your contract, and will send the letters another way." Which of these arrangements is better ? In a general way, we are proud of the English Government : but we should be the last people to wish to see the dead hand of Government everywhere. For a dead hand it would be, did it not continually receive life on all sides from the abounding vitality of private enterprise. To this private enterprise the Post Office at present ministers, carrying the mandate of private enterprise all over the earth, and receiving in payment for service rendered some portion of the wealth which private enterprise produces.

Whatever be the success of the Post Office, it is not enough to warrant our establishing a Railway Office with supreme command of all our railways, and a Shipping Office supreme over all our ships. This would be nationalizing the carrying trade. But, as we have seen, the Post Office does not supply universally the means of carrying even letters : it arranges with private companies for carrying them. There is no evidence therefore, so far, of the competence of the State to build all locomotives and steamers, lay down new railways, keep old ones in repair, and do the work of all the great companies to which the Post Office at present gives its contracts. As a piece of logic this argument from unlike to unlike, and from one term to



a series of dissimilar terms, is an outrage upon the laws of thought.

Still less does the Post Office supply any argument for the nationalizing of our means of production. The simple fact should be borne in mind that the Post Office does not produce letters; it distributes them, and that is all. If letters longed for are not written, you don't blame the postman. The postman is not answerable for the quality of the letters that he delivers, whether they are well or ill written, contain good or bad news, are kind or harsh. In this the Post Office is unlike the gas company, which not only distributes gas, but likewise manufactures it, and is responsible for its quality. Still more is the postman unlike the soap-boiler, whose soap, if it is a poor article for its price, may be set aside by foreign competition. The distributive function of the Post Office bears no analogy to the work of production; nor does the successful nationalizing of the one afford any valid expectation of success to attend the nationalizing of the other.

One thing we have learned from the Post Office, and are thankful to know, that a strike is possible in a Government department. The advent of Socialism, therefore, and of Government departments everywhere, will not deliver us from that blight of our present social economy, strikes. Or will a strike be treated as a mutiny, and the hands marched to their work, if necessary, under the prickings of fixed bayonets? Socialist leaders should let the workman know that, before he votes for a Socialist representative in Parliament.

Truly, Mr. Socialist, this is a sad world : there is no joy for you under the dome of St. Paul's and small consolation at St. Martin's-le-Grand.

One should read Socialist works and listen to Socialist speeches rather in sorrow than in anger. The bulk of Socialists are poor, half-educated, simple-minded people, able to take but a narrow view of life, which view includes much misery and small hope. It is not for a man of education, comfortably fed and well-housed, to get indignant at these poor people. They know of no heaven beyond the grave : they see around them some image of hell upon earth : they have no breadth of mind, no amplitude of knowledge, to furnish tests for distinguishing visionary new worlds from practicable improvements of their condition : they are miserable, and see their comrades in misery, needy in the midst of plenty : what wonder if they readily believe that their misery is all of the rich man's making, that their submersion has been his elevation, and that they can only rise by bringing him down to their level? We must teach them otherwise, and at the same time labour on their behalf, in the conviction that all the glories of our Empire are incomplete, and even insecure, till we can establish justice and equity, sympathy and a common interest, between workman and employer.

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