

# The Two Souls of Socialism

by Hal Draper

---

## Contents

- [The Two Souls of Socialism](#)
  - [1. Some Socialist "Ancestors"](#)
  - [2. The First Modern Socialists](#)
  - [3. What Marx Did](#)
  - [4. The Myth of Anarchist "Libertarianism"](#)
  - [5. Lassalle and State Socialism](#)
  - [6. The Fabian Model](#)
  - [7. The "Revisionist" Facade](#)
  - [8. The 100% American Scene](#)
  - [9. Six Strains of Socialism-From-Above](#)
  - [10. Which Side Are You On?](#)
  - [Notes](#)
  - [A Few References](#)
- 

**Note from *The Two Souls of Socialism* International Socialists, Highland Park, Michigan, revised edition, fourth printing 1970**

This is a completely rewritten and expanded version of a study which originally appeared in the socialist student magazine *Anvil* (Winter 1960) and was subsequently reprinted two or three times elsewhere. The framework, the general content, and some passages remain, but I have taken advantage of this new edition to make a thorough revision of what was a hasty first draft.

The aim is not to give a history of socialist thought in a nutshell, but simply to illustrate a thesis -- the thesis being a historical interpretation of the meaning of socialism and of how socialism came to mean what it does today. To this end I have selected for discussion a few of the most important socialist currents up to the early 20th century, since the object of the inquiry is the wellsprings of the modern socialist movement. There are a number of tendencies which would have been difficult to treat briefly, and are therefore not discussed here at all, such as syndicalism, DeLeonism, Bolshevism, the IWW, the collectivist liberals, etc.; but I believe that their study leads to the same conclusions.

The chief difficulty in treating the subject briefly is the heavy encrustation of myth over the written history of socialism. At the end I have listed a very few works which are especially useful for some of the figures discussed here; for others the interested reader simply has to go back to the sources. There is no half-decent history of socialist thought extant today: and there probably will not be one until more socialist scholars do the kind of job that E.P. Thompson did for William Morris, whose image had been almost obliterated by the myths.

Speaking of William Morris, I re-read "A Dream of John Ball," and came once again across the oft-quoted passage about -- Well, let us quote it again, as motto for the following pages: "... I pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name..."

H.D.

### **Note on this edition**

"The Two Souls of Socialism" appeared in *New Politics* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1966) pp. 57-84, a pamphlet published by the International Socialists, Highland Park, Michigan, revised edition, fourth printing 1970 and was included in *Socialism From Below* by Hal Draper, essays selected, edited and with an introduction by E. Haberkern Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands 1992 pp. 2-33. That edition is now out of print. The "The Two Souls of Socialism" was scanned and digitized into ASCII text and mounted on the Guelph Socialists Homepage (now defunct). The Guelph version was edited to eliminate some divergences from the *Socialism From Below* text to form the edition below. The paragraph in section "3. WHAT MARX DID" in {curly brackets} appeared in the 1966 pamphlet but not the *Socialism From Below* edition.

## **THE TWO SOULS OF SOCIALISM**

Socialism's crisis today is a crisis in the *meaning* of socialism. For the first time in the history of the world, very likely a majority of its people label themselves "socialist" in one sense or another; but there has never been a time when the label was less informative. The nearest thing to a common content of the various "socialisms" is a negative: anti-capitalism. On the positive side, the range of conflicting and incompatible ideas that call themselves socialist is wider than the spread of ideas within the bourgeois world.

Even anti-capitalism holds less and less as a common factor. In one part of the spectrum, a number of social democratic parties have virtually eliminated any specifically socialist demands from their programs, promising to maintain private enterprise wherever possible. The most prominent example is the German social-democracy. ("As an idea, a philosophy, and a social movement, socialism in Germany is no longer represented by a political party," sums up D.A. Chalmers' recent book *The Social Democratic Party of Germany*.) These parties have defined socialism out of existence, but the tendency which they have formalized is that of the *entire* reformist social democracy. In what sense are these parties still "socialist"?

In another part of the world picture, there are the Communist states, whose claim to being "socialist" is based on a negative: the abolition of the capitalist private-profit system, and the fact that the class which rules does not consist of private owners of property. On the positive side, however, the socio-economic system which has replaced capitalism there would not be recognizable to Karl Marx. The state owns the means of production -- but who "owns" the state? Certainly not the mass of workers, who are exploited, unfree, and alienated from all levers of social and political control. A new class rules, the bureaucratic bosses; it rules over a collectivist system -- a bureaucratic collectivism. Unless statification is mechanically equated with "socialism," in what sense are these societies "socialist"?

These two self-styled socialisms are very different, but they have more in common than they think. The social democracy has typically dreamed of "socializing" capitalism from above. Its principle

has always been that increased state intervention in society and economy is *per se* socialistic. It bears a fatal family resemblance to the Stalinist conception of imposing something called socialism from the top down, and of equating stratification with socialism. Both have their roots in the ambiguous history of the socialist idea.

Back to the roots: the following pages propose to investigate the meaning of socialism historically, in a new way. There have always been different "kinds of socialism," and they have customarily been divided into reformist or revolutionary, peaceful or violent, democratic or authoritarian, etc. These divisions exist, but the underlying division is something else. Throughout the history of socialist movements and ideas, the fundamental divide is between *Socialism-from-Above* and *Socialism-from-Below*.

What unites the many different forms of Socialism-from-Above is the conception that socialism (or a reasonable facsimile thereof) must be *handed down* to the grateful masses in one form or another, by a ruling elite which is not subject to their control in fact. The heart of Socialism-from-Below is its view that socialism can be realized only through the self-emancipation of activated masses in motion, reaching out for freedom with their own hands, mobilized "from below" in a struggle to take charge of their own destiny, as actors (not merely subjects) on the stage of history. "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves": this is the first sentence in the Rules written for the First International by Marx, and this is the First Principle of his lifework.

It is the conception of Socialism-from-Above which accounts for the acceptance of Communist dictatorship as a form of "socialism." It is the conception of Socialism-from-Above which concentrates social-democratic attention on the parliamentary superstructure of society and on the manipulation of the "commanding heights" of the economy, and which makes them hostile to mass action from below. It is Socialism-from-Above which is the dominant tradition in the development of socialism.

Please note that it is not peculiar to socialism. On the contrary, the yearning for emancipation-from-above is the all-pervading principle through centuries of class society and political oppression. It is the permanent promise held out by every ruling power to keep the people looking upward for protection, instead of to themselves for liberation from the need for protection. The people looked to kings to right the injustices done by lords, to messiahs to overthrow the tyranny of kings. Instead of the bold way of mass action from below, it is always safer and more prudent to find the "good" ruler who will Do the People Good. The pattern of emancipation-from-above goes all the way back in the history of civilization, and had to show up in socialism too. But it is only in the framework of the modern socialist movement that liberation from below could become even a realistic aspiration; within socialism it has come to the fore, but only by fits and starts. The history of socialism can be read as a continual but largely unsuccessful effort to free itself from the old tradition, the tradition of emancipation-from-above.

In the conviction that the current crisis of socialism is intelligible only in terms of this Great Divide in the socialist tradition, we turn to a few examples of the two souls of socialism.

## 1. SOME SOCIALIST "ANCESTORS"

Karl Kautsky, the leading theoretician of the Second International, began his book on Thomas More with the observation that the two great figures inaugurating the history of socialism are More and Munzer, and that both of them "follow the long line of Socialists, from Lycurgus and Pythagoras to Plato, the Gracchi, Cataline, Christ..."

This is a very impressive list of early "socialists," and considering his position Kautsky should certainly have been able to recognize a socialist when he saw one. What is most fascinating about this list is the way it falls apart under examination into two quite different groups.

Plutarch's life of Lycurgus led the early socialists to adopt him as the founder of Spartan "communism" -- this is why Kautsky lists him. But as described by Plutarch, the Spartan system was based on equal division of land under private ownership; it was in no way socialistic. The "collectivist" feeling one may get from a description of the Spartan regime comes from a different direction: the way of life of the Spartan ruling class itself, which was organized as a permanent disciplined garrison in a state of siege; and to this add the terroristic regime imposed over the helots (slaves). I do not see how a modern socialist can read of the Lycurgan regime without feeling that he is meeting not an ancestor of socialism but a forerunner of fascism. There is quite a difference! But how is it that it did not impress itself on the leading theoretician of social-democracy?

Pythagoras founded an elite order which acted as the political arm of the landed aristocracy against the plebeian- democratic movement; he and his party were finally overthrown and expelled by a popular revolutionary rising. Kautsky seems to be on the wrong side of the barricades! But besides, inside the Pythagorean order a regime of total authoritarianism and regimentation prevailed. In spite of this, Kautsky chose to regard Pythagoras as a socialist ancestor because of the belief that the organized Pythagoreans practised communal consumption. Even if this were true (and Kautsky found out later it was not) this would have made the Pythagorean order exactly as communistic as any monastery. Chalk up a second ancestor of totalitarianism on Kautsky's list.

The case of Plato's *Republic* is well-enough known. The sole element of "communism" in his ideal state is the prescription of monastic-communal consumption for the small elite of "Guardians" who constitute the bureaucracy and army; but the surrounding social system is assumed to be private-property-holding, not socialistic. And -- here it is again -- Plato's state model is government by an aristocratic elite, and his argument stresses that democracy inevitably means the deterioration and ruin of society. Plato's political aim, in fact, was the rehabilitation and purification of the ruling aristocracy in order to *fight* the tide of democracy. To call him a socialist ancestor is to imply a conception of socialism which makes any kind of democratic control irrelevant.

On the other hand, Catiline and the Gracchi had *no* collectivist side. Their names are associated with mass movements of popular-democratic revolt against the Establishment. They were not socialists, to be sure, but they were on the popular side of the class struggle in the ancient world, the side of the people's movement from below. It seems it was all the same to the theoretician of social-democracy.

Here, in the pre-history of our subject, are two kinds of figures ready-made for adoption into the pantheon of the socialist movement. There were the figures with a tinge of (alleged) collectivism, who were yet thorough elitists, authoritarians and anti-democrats; and there were the figures *without* anything collectivist about them, who were associated with democratic class struggles. There is a

collectivist tendency without democracy, and there is a democratic tendency without collectivism *but nothing yet which merges these two currents.*

Not until Thomas Munzer, the leader of the revolutionary left wing of the German Reformation, do we find a suggestion of such a merger; a social movement with communistic ideas (Munzer's) which was also engaged in a deep-going popular-democratic struggle from below. In contrast is precisely Sir Thomas More: the gulf between these two contemporaries goes to the heart of our subject. More's *Utopia* pictures a thoroughly regimented society, more reminiscent of 1984 than of socialist democracy, elitist through and through, even slaveholding, a typical Socialism-from-Above. It is not surprising that, of these two "socialist ancestors" who stand at the threshold of the modern world, one (More) execrated the other and supported the hangmen who did him and his movement to death.

What then is the meaning of socialism when it first came into the world? From the very beginning, it was divided between the two souls of socialism, and there was war between them.

## 2. THE FIRST MODERN SOCIALISTS

Modern socialism was born in the course of the half century or so that lies between the Great French Revolution and the revolutions of 1848. So was modern democracy. But they were not born linked like Siamese twins. They traveled at first along separate lines. When did the two lines first intersect?

Out of the wreckage of the French Revolution rose different kinds of socialism. We will consider three of the most important in the light of our question.

I. *Babeuf*. -- The first modern socialist movement was that led in the last phase of the French Revolution by Babeuf ("the Conspiracy of the Equals"), conceived as a continuation of revolutionary Jacobinism plus a more consistent social goal: a society of communist equality. This represents the first time in the modern era that the idea of socialism is wedded to the idea of a popular movement -- a momentous combination. [\[1\]](#)

This combination immediately raises a critical question: What exactly in each case is the relationship that is seen between this socialist idea and that popular movement? *this is the key question for socialism for the next 200 years.*

As the Babouvists saw it: The mass movement of the people has failed; the people seem to have turned their backs on the Revolution. But still they suffer, still they need communism: *we* know that. The revolutionary will of the people has been defeated by a conspiracy of the right: what we need is a cabal of the left to re-create the people's movement, to effectuate the revolutionary will. We must therefore seize power. But the people are no longer ready to seize power. Therefore it is necessary for us to seize power in their name, in order to raise the people up to that point. This means a temporary dictatorship, admittedly by a minority; but it will be an Educational Dictatorship, aiming at creating the conditions which will make possible democratic control in the future. (In that sense we are democrats.) This will not be a dictatorship of the people, as was the Commune, let alone of the proletariat; it is frankly a dictatorship *over* the people -- with very good intentions.

For most of the next fifty years, the conception of the Educational Dictatorship over the people remains the program of the revolutionary left -- through the three B's (Babeuf to Buonarroti to

Blanqui) and, with anarchist verbiage added, also Bakunin. The new order will be handed down to the suffering people by the revolutionary band. This typical Socialism-from-Above is the first and most primitive form of revolutionary socialism, but there are still today admirers of Castro and Mao who think it is the last word in revolutionism.

II. *Saint-Simon*. -- Emerging from the revolutionary period, a brilliant mind took an entirely different tack. Saint-Simon was impelled by a revulsion *against* revolution, disorder and disturbances. What fascinated him was the potentialities of industry and science.

His vision had nothing to do with anything resembling equality, justice, freedom, the rights of man or allied passions: it looked only to modernization, industrialization, planning, divorced from such considerations. Planned industrialization was the key to the new world, and obviously the people to achieve this were the oligarchies of financiers and businessmen, scientists, technologists, managers. When not appealing to these, he called on Napoleon or his successor Louis XVIII to implement schemes for a royal dictatorship. His schemes varied, but they were all completely authoritarian to the last planned ordinance. A systematic racist and a militant imperialist, he was the furious enemy of the very idea of equality and liberty, which he hated as offspring of the French Revolution.

It was only in the last phase of his life (1825) that, disappointed in the response of the natural elite to do their duty and impose the new modernizing oligarchy, he made a turn toward appealing to the workers down below. The "New Christianity" would be a popular movement, but its role would be simply to convince the powers-that-be to heed the advice of the Saint-Simonian planners. The workers should organize -- to petition their capitalists and managerial bosses to take over from the "idle classes."

What then was his relationship between the idea of the Planned Society and the popular movement? The people, the movement, could be useful as a battering-ram -- in someone's hands. Saint-Simon's last idea was a movement-from-below *to effectuate a Socialism-from-Above*. But power and control must remain where it has always been -- above.

III. *The Utopians*. -- A third type of socialism that arose in the post-revolutionary generation was that of the utopian socialists proper -- Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, Etienne Cabet, etc. They blueprinted an ideal communal colony, imagined fullblown from the cranium of the Leader, to be financed by the grace of the philanthropic rich under the wing of Benevolent Power.

Owen (in many ways the most sympathetic of the lot) was as categorical as any of them: "This great change ... must and will be accomplished by the rich and powerful. There are no other parties to do it ... it is a waste of time, talent and pecuniary means for the poor to contend in opposition to the rich and powerful..." Naturally he was against "class hate," class struggle. Of the many who believe this, few have written so bluntly that the aim of this "socialism" is "to govern or treat all society as the most advanced physicians govern and treat their patients in the best arranged lunatic hospitals," with "forbearance and kindness" for the unfortunates who have "become so through the irrationality and injustice of the present most irrational system of society."

Cabet's society provided for elections, but there could be no free discussion; and a controlled press, systematic indoctrination, and completely regimented uniformity was insisted on as part of the prescription.

For these utopian socialists, what was the relationship between the socialist idea and the popular movement? The latter was the *flock* to be tended by the good shepherd. It must not be supposed that Socialism-from-Above necessarily implies cruelly despotic intentions.

This side of these Socialisms-from-Above is far from outlived. On the contrary, it is so modern that a modern writer like Martin Buber, in *Paths in Utopia*, can perform the remarkable feat of treating the old utopians as if they were great democrats and "libertarians"! This myth is quite widespread, and it points once again to the extraordinary insensitivity of socialist writers and historians to the deeprooted record of Socialism-from-Above as the dominant component in the two souls of socialism.

### 3. WHAT MARX DID

Utopianism was elitist and anti-democratic to the core because it was utopian -- that is, it looked to the prescription of a prefabricated model, the dreaming-up of a plan to be willed into existence. Above all, it was inherently hostile to the very idea of transforming society from below, by the upsetting intervention of freedom-seeking masses, even where it finally accepted recourse to the instrument of a mass movement for pressure upon the Tops. In the socialist movement as it developed before Marx, nowhere did the line of the Socialist Idea intersect the line of Democracy-from-Below.

This intersection, this synthesis, was the great contribution of Marx: in comparison, the whole content of his *Capital* is secondary. This is the heart of Marxism: "This is the Law; all the rest is commentary." The *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 marked the self-consciousness of the first movement (in Engels' words) "whose notion was from the very beginning that the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself."

The young Marx himself went through the more primitive stage just as the human embryo goes through the gill stage; or to put it differently, one of his first immunizations was achieved by catching the most pervasive disease of all, the illusion of the Savior-Despot. When he was 22, the old kaiser died, and to the hosannahs of the liberals Friedrich Wilhelm IV acceded to the throne amidst expectations of democratic reforms from above. Nothing of the sort happened. Marx never went back to this notion, which has bedeviled all of socialism with its hopes in Savior-Dictators or Savior-Presidents.

Marx entered politics as the crusading editor of a newspaper which was the organ of the extreme left of the liberal democracy of the industrialized Rhineland, and soon became the foremost editorial voice of complete political democracy in Germany. The first article he published was a polemic in favor of the unqualified freedom of the press from all censorship by the state. By the time the imperial government forced his dismissal, he was turning to find out more about the new socialist ideas coming from France. When this leading spokesman of liberal democracy became a socialist, he still regarded the task as the championing of democracy -- except that democracy now had a deeper meaning. Marx was the first socialist thinker and leader who came to socialism *through* the struggle for liberal democracy.

{In manuscript notes made in 1844, he rejected the extant "crude communism" which negates the personality of man, and looked to a communism which would be a "fully developed humanism." In 1845 he and his friend Engels worked out a line of argument against the elitism of a socialist current represented by one Bruno Bauer. In 1846 they were organizing the "German Democratic Communists" in Brussels exile, and Engels was writing: "In our time democracy and communism

are one." "Only the proletarians are able to fraternize really, under the banner of communist democracy."}

In working out the viewpoint which first wedded the new communist idea to the new democratic aspirations, they came into conflict with the existing communist sects such as that of Weitling, who dreamed of a messianic dictatorship. Before they joined the group which became the Communist League (for which they were to write the *Communist Manifesto*), they stipulated that the organization be changed from an elite conspiracy of the old type into an open propaganda group, that "everything conducive to superstitious authoritarianism be struck out of the rules," that the leading committee be elected by the whole membership as against the tradition of "decisions from above." They won the league over to their new approach, and in a journal issued in 1847 only a few months before the *Communist Manifesto*, the group announced:

"We are not among those communists who are out to destroy personal liberty, who wish to turn the world into one huge barrack or into a gigantic workhouse. There certainly are some communists who, with an easy conscience, refuse to countenance personal liberty and would like to shuffle it out of the world because they consider that it is a hindrance to complete harmony. But we have no desire to exchange freedom for equality. We are convinced ... that in no social order will personal freedom be so assured as in a society based upon communal ownership... [Let us put] our hands to work in order to establish a democratic state wherein each party would be able by word or in writing to win a majority over to its ideas..."

The *Communist Manifesto* which issued out of these discussions proclaimed that the first objective of the revolution was "to win the battle of democracy." When, two years later and after the decline of the 1848 revolutions, the Communist League split, it was in conflict once again with the "crude communism" of putschism, which thought to substitute determined bands of revolutionaries for the real mass movement of an enlightened working class. Marx told them:

"The minority ... makes mere will the motive force of the revolution, instead of actual relations. Whereas we say to the workers: 'You will have to go through fifteen or twenty or fifty years of civil wars and international wars, not only in order to change extant conditions, but also in order to change yourselves and to render yourselves fit for political dominion,' you, on the other hand, say to the workers: 'We must attain to power at once, or else we may just as well go to sleep.'"

"*In order to change yourselves and to render yourselves fit for political dominion*": this is Marx's program for the working-class movement, as against both those who say the workers can take power any Sunday, and those who say never. Thus Marxism came into being, in self-conscious struggle against the advocates of the Educational Dictatorship, the Savior-Dictators, the revolutionary elitists, the communist authoritarians, as well as the philanthropic dogooders and bourgeois liberals. This was *Marx's* Marxism, not the caricatured monstrosity which is painted up with that label by both the Establishment's professoriat, who shudder at Marx's uncompromising spirit of revolutionary opposition to the capitalist status quo, and also by the Stalinists and neo-Stalinists, who must conceal the fact that Marx cut his eyeteeth by making war on *their* type.

"It was Marx who finally fettered the two ideas of Socialism and Democracy together"[\[2\]](#) because he developed a theory which made the synthesis possible for the first time. The heart of the theory is this proposition: *that there is a social majority which has the interest and motivation to change the system*, and that the aim of socialism can be the education and mobilization of this mass-majority. This is the exploited class, the working class, from which comes the eventual motive-force of revolution. Hence a socialism-from-below is possible, on the basis of a theory which sees



the revolutionary potentialities in the broad masses, even if they seem backward at a given time and place. *Capital*, after all, is nothing but the demonstration of the economic basis of this proposition.

It is only some such theory of working-class socialism which makes possible the fusion of revolutionary socialism and revolutionary democracy. We are not arguing at this point our conviction that this faith is justified, but only insisting on the alternative: all socialists or would-be reformers who repudiate it *must* go over to some Socialism-from-Above, whether of the reformist, utopian, bureaucratic, Stalinist, Maoist or Castroite variety. And they do.

Five years before the *Communist Manifesto* a freshly converted 23-year-old socialist had still written in the old elitist tradition: "We can recruit our ranks from those classes only which have enjoyed a pretty good education; that is, from the universities and from the commercial class..." The young Engels learned better; but this obsolete wisdom is still with us as ever.

#### **4. THE MYTH OF ANARCHIST "LIBERTARIANISM"**

One of the most thoroughgoing authoritarians in the history of radicalism is none other than the "Father of Anarchism," Proudhon, whose name is periodically revived as a great "libertarian" model, because of his industrious repetition of the word liberty and his invocations to "revolution from below."

Some may be willing to pass over his Hitlerite form of anti-Semitism ("The Jew is the enemy of humankind. It is necessary to send this race back to Asia, or exterminate it..."). Or his principled racism in general (he thought it was right for the South to keep American Negroes in slavery, since they were the lowest of inferior races). Or his glorification of war for its own sake (in the exact manner of Mussolini). Or his view that women had no rights ("I deny her every political right and every initiative. For woman liberty and well-being lie solely in marriage, in motherhood, in domestic duties...") -- that is, the "*Kinder-Kirche-Küche*" of the Nazis.

But it is not possible to gloss over his violent opposition not only to trade-unionism and the right to strike (even supporting police strikebreaking), but to any and every idea of the right to vote, universal suffrage, popular sovereignty, and the very idea of constitutions. ("All this democracy disgusts me... What would I not give to sail into this mob with my clenched fists!") His notes for his ideal society notably include suppression of all other groups, any public meeting by more than 20, any free press, and any elections; in the same notes he looks forward to "a general inquisition" and the condemnation of "several million people" to forced labor -- "once the Revolution is made."

Behind all this was a fierce contempt for the masses of people -- the necessary foundation of Socialism-from-Above, as its opposite was the groundwork of Marxism. The masses are corrupt and hopeless ("I worship humanity, but I spit on men!") They are "only savages ... whom it is our duty to civilize, and without making them our sovereign," he wrote to a friend whom he scornfully chided with: "You still believe in the people." Progress can come only from mastery by an elite who take care to give the people no sovereignty.

At one time or another he looked to some ruling despot as the one-man dictator who would bring the Revolution: Louis Bonaparte (he wrote a whole book in 1852 extolling the Emperor as the bearer of the Revolution); Prince Jerome Bonaparte; finally Czar Alexander II ("Do not forget that the despotism of the czar is necessary to civilization").

There was a candidate for the dictator's job closer to home, of course: himself. He elaborated a detailed scheme for a "mutualist" business, cooperative in form, which would spread to take over all business and then the state. In his notes Proudhon put himself down as the Manager in Chief, naturally not subject to the democratic control he so despised. He took care of details in advance: "Draw up a secret program, for all the managers: irrevocable elimination of royalty, democracy, proprietors, religion [and so on]." -- "The Managers are the natural representatives of the country. Ministers are only superior Managers or General Directors: as I will be one day... When we are masters, Religion will be what we want it to be; ditto Education, philosophy, justice, administration and government."

The reader, who may be full of the usual illusions about anarchist "libertarianism," may ask: Was he then insincere about his great love for liberty?

Not at all: it is only necessary to understand what anarchist "liberty" means. Proudhon wrote: "The principle of liberty is that of the Abbey of Theleme [in Rabelais]: do what you want!" and the principle meant: "any man who cannot do what he wants and anything he wants has the right to revolt, even alone, against the government, even if the government were everybody else. *"the only man who can enjoy this liberty is a despot;* this is the sense of the brilliant insight by Dostoyevsky's Shigalev: "Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism."

The story is similar with the second "Father of Anarchism," Bakunin, whose schemes for dictatorship and suppression of democratic control are better known than Proudhon's.

The basic reason is the same: Anarchism is not concerned with the creation of democratic control from below, but only with the destruction of "authority" over the individual, including the authority of the most extremely democratic regulation of society that it is possible to imagine. This has been made clear by authoritative anarchist expositors time and again; for example, by George Woodcock: "even were democracy possible, the anarchist would still not support it... Anarchists do not advocate political freedom. What they advocate is freedom from politics..." Anarchism is on principle fiercely anti-democratic, since an ideally democratic *authority* is still authority. But since, rejecting democracy, it has no other way of resolving the inevitable disagreements and differences among the inhabitants of Theleme, its unlimited freedom for each uncontrolled individual is indistinguishable from unlimited despotism by such an individual, both in theory and practice.

The great problem of our age is the achievement of *democratic control from below over the vast powers of modern social authority*. Anarchism, which is freest of all with verbiage about something-from-below, rejects this goal. It is the other side of the coin of bureaucratic despotism, with all its values turned inside-out, not the cure or the alternative.

## 5. LASSALLE AND STATE SOCIALISM

That very model of a modern social-democracy, the German Social-Democratic Party, is often represented as having arisen on a Marxist basis. This is a myth, like so much else in extant histories of socialism. The impact of Marx was strong, including on some of the top leaders for a while, but the politics which permeated and finally pervaded the party came mainly from two other sources. One was Lassalle, who founded German socialism as an organized movement (1863); and the other was the British Fabians, who inspired Eduard Bernstein's "revisionism."

Ferdinand Lassalle is the prototype of the *state-socialist* -- which means, one who aims to get socialism handed down by the existing state. He was not the first prominent example (that was Luis Blanc), but for him the existing state was the Kaiser's state under Bismarck.

The state, Lassalle told the workers, is something "that will achieve for each one of us what none of us could achieve for himself." Marx taught the exact opposite: that the working class had to achieve its emancipation itself, and abolish the existing state in the course. E. Bernstein was quite right in saying that Lassalle "made a veritable cult" of the state. "The immemorial vestal fire of all civilization, the State, I defend with you against those modern barbarians [the liberal bourgeoisie]," Lassalle told a Prussian court. This is what made Marx and Lassalle "fundamentally opposed," points out Lassalle's biographer Footman, who lays bare his pro-Prussianism, pro-Prussian nationalism, pro-Prussian imperialism.

Lassalle organized this first German socialist movement as his personal dictatorship. Quite consciously he set about building it as *a mass movement from below to achieve a Socialism-from-Above* (remember Saint-Simon's battering-ram). The aim was to convince Bismarck to hand down concessions -- particularly universal suffrage, on which basis a parliamentary movement under Lassalle could become a mass ally of the Bismarckian state in a coalition against the liberal bourgeoisie. To this end Lassalle actually tried to negotiate with the Iron Chancellor. Sending him the dictatorial statutes of his organization as "the constitution of my kingdom which perhaps you will envy me," Lassalle went on:

"But this miniature will be enough to show how true it is that the working class feels an instinctive inclination towards a dictatorship, if it can first be rightly persuaded that the dictatorship will be exercised in its interests; and how much, despite all republican views -- or rather precisely because of them -- it would therefore be inclined, as I told you only recently, to look upon the Crown, in opposition to the egoism of bourgeois society, as the natural representative of the social dictatorship, if the Crown for its part could ever make up its mind to the -- certainly very improbable -- step of striking out a really revolutionary line and transforming itself from the monarchy of the privileged orders into a social and revolutionary people's monarchy."

Although this secret letter was not known at the time, Marx grasped the nature of Lassalleanism perfectly. He told Lassalle to his face that he was a "Bonapartist," and wrote presciently that "His attitude is that of the future workers' dictator." Lassalle's tendency he called "Royal Prussian Government socialism," denouncing his "alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeoisie."

"Instead of the revolutionary process of transformation of society," wrote Marx, Lassalle sees socialism arising "from the 'state aid' that the state gives to the producers' cooperative societies and which the state, not the worker, 'calls into being.'" Marx derides this. "But as far as the present cooperative societies are concerned, they are of value *only* insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not proteges either of the government or of the bourgeoisie." Here is a classic statement of the meaning of the word *independent* as the keystone of Socialism-from-Below versus state- socialism.

There is an instructive instance of what happens when an American-type academic anti-marxist runs into this aspect of Marx. Mayo's *Democracy and Marxism* (later revised as *Introduction to Marxist Theory*) handily proves that Marxism is anti-democratic mainly by the simple expedient of defining Marxism as "the Moscow orthodoxy." But at least he seems to have read Marx, and realized that nowhere, in acres of writing and a long life, did Marx evince concern about more power for the state but rather the reverse. Marx, it dawned on him, was not a "statist":

"The popular criticism leveled against Marxism is that it tends to degenerate into a form of 'statism.' At first sight [i.e., reading] the criticism appears wide of the mark, for the virtue of Marx's political theory ... is the entire absence from it of any glorification of the state."

This discovery offers a notable challenge to Marx-critics, who of course know in advance that Marxism *must* glorify the state. Mayo solves the difficulty in two statements: (1) "the statism is implicit in the requirements of total planning..." (2) Look at Russia. But Marx made no fetish of "total planning." He has so often been denounced (by other Marx-critics) for failing to draw up a blueprint of socialism precisely because he reacted so violently against his predecessors' utopian "plannism" or planning-from-above. "Plannism" is precisely the conception of socialism that Marxism wished to destroy. Socialism must involve planning, but "total planning" does not equal socialism just as any fool can be a professor but not every professor need be a fool.

## 6. THE FABIAN MODEL

In Germany, behind the figure of Lassalle there shades off a series of "socialisms" moving in an interesting direction.

The so-called Academic Socialists ("Socialists of the chair," *Kathedersozialisten* -- a current of Establishment academics) looked to Bismarck more openly than Lassalle, but their conception of state-socialism was not in principle alien to his. Only, Lassalle embarked on the risky expedient of calling into being a mass movement from below for the purpose -- risky because once in motion it might get out of hand, as indeed it did more than once. Bismarck himself did not hesitate to represent his paternalistic economic policies as a kind of socialism, and books got written about "monarchical socialism," "Bismarckian state-socialism," etc. Following further to the right, one comes to the "socialism" of Friedrich List, a proto-Nazi, and to those circles where an anti-capitalist form of anti-Semitism (Duhring, A. Wagner, etc.) lays part of the basis for the movement that called itself socialism under Adolf Hitler.

The thread that unites this whole spectrum, through all the differences, is the conception of *socialism as equivalent merely to state intervention in economic and social life*. "Staat, greif zu!" Lassalle called. "State, take hold of things!" -- this is the socialism of the whole lot.

This is why Schumpeter is correct in observing that the British equivalent of German state-socialism is -- Fabianism, the socialism of Sidney Webb.

The Fabians (more accurately, the Webbians) are, in the history of the socialist idea, that modern socialist current which developed in more complete divorcement from Marxism, the one most alien to Marxism. It was almost chemically-pure social-democratic reformism unalloyed, particularly before the rise of the mass labor and socialist movement in Britain, which it did not want and did not help to build (despite a common myth to the contrary). It is therefore a very important test, unlike most other reformist currents which paid their tribute to Marxism by adopting some of its language and distorting its substance.

The Fabians, deliberately middle-class in composition and appeal, were not for building any mass movement at all, least of all a Fabian one. They thought of themselves as a small elite of brain-trusters who would permeate the existing institutions of society, influence the real leaders in all spheres Tory or Liberal, and guide social development toward its collectivist goal with the "inevitability of gradualness." Since their conception of socialism was purely in terms of state intervention (national or municipal), and their theory told them that capitalism itself was being

collectivized space every day and had to move in this direction, their function was simply to hasten the process. The Fabian Society was designed in 1884 to be pilot-fish to a shark: at first the shark was the Liberal Party; but when the permeation of Liberalism failed miserably, and labor finally organized its own class party despite the Fabians, the pilot-fish simply reattached itself.

There is perhaps no other socialist tendency which so systematically and even consciously worked out its theory as a Socialism-from-Above. The nature of this movement was early recognized, though it was later obscured by the merging of Fabianism into the body of Labor reformism. The leading Christian socialist inside the Fabian Society once attacked Webb as "a bureaucratic Collectivist" (perhaps the first use of that term.) Hilaire Belloc's once-famous book of 1912 on *The Servile State* was largely triggered by the Webb type whose "collectivist ideal" was basically bureaucratic. G.D.H. Cole reminisced: "The Webb's in those days, used to be fond of saying that everyone who was active in politics was either an 'A' or a 'B' -- an anarchist or a bureaucrat -- and that they were 'B's'..."

These characterizations scarcely convey the full flavor of the Webbian collectivism that was Fabianism. It was through-and-through managerial, technocratic, elitist, authoritarian, "plannist." Webb was fond of the term wirepulling almost as a synonym for politics. A Fabian publication wrote that they wished to be "the Jesuits of Socialism." The gospel was Order and Efficiency. The people, who should be treated kindly, were fit to be run only by competent experts. Class struggle, revolution and popular turbulence were insanity. In *Fabianism and the Empire* imperialism was praised and embraced. If ever the socialist movement developed its own bureaucratic collectivism, this was it.

"It may be thought that Socialism is essentially a movement from below, a class movement," wrote a Fabian spokesman, Sidney Ball, to disabuse the reader of this idea; but now socialists "approach the problem from the scientific rather than the popular view; they are middleclass theorists," he boasted, going on to explain that there is "a distinct rupture between the Socialism of the street and the Socialism of the chair."

The sequel is also known, though often glossed over. While Fabianism as a special tendency petered out into the larger stream of Labor Party reformism by 1918, the leading Fabians themselves went in another direction. Both Sidney and Beatrice Webb as well as Bernard Shaw -- the top trio -- became principled supporters of Stalinist totalitarianism in the 1930s. Even earlier, Shaw, who thought socialism needed a Superman, had found more than one. In turn he embraced Mussolini and Hitler as benevolent despots to hand "socialism" down to the Yahoos, and he was disappointed only that they did not actually abolish capitalism. In 1931 Shaw disclosed, after a visit to Russia, that the Stalin regime was really Fabianism in practice. The Webbs followed to Moscow, and found God. In their *Soviet Communism: a New Civilization*, they proved (right out of Moscow's own documents and Stalin's own claims, industriously researched) that Russia is the greatest democracy in the world; Stalin is no dictator; equality reigns for all; the one-party dictatorship is needed; the Communist Party is a thoroughly democratic elite bringing civilization to the Slavs and Mongols (but not Englishmen); political democracy has failed in the West anyway, and there is no reason why political parties should survive in our age...

They staunchly supported Stalin through the Moscow purge trials and the Hitler-Stalin Pact without a visible qualm, and died more uncritical pro-Stalinists than can now be found on the Politburo. As Shaw has explained, the Webbs had nothing but scorn for the Russian Revolution itself, but "the Webbs waited until the wreckage and ruin of the change was ended, its mistakes remedied, and the Communist State fairly launched." That is, they waited until the revolutionary masses had been straitjacketed, and the leaders of the revolution cashiered, the efficient tranquillity of dictatorship

had settled on the scene, the counter-revolution firmly established; and then they came along to pronounce it the Ideal.

Was this really a gigantic misunderstanding, some incomprehensible blunder? Or were they not right in thinking that this indeed was the "socialism" that matched their ideology, give or take a little blood? The swing of Fabianism from middle-class permeation to Stalinism was the swing of a door that was hinged on Socialism-from-Above.

If we look back at the decades just before the turn of the century that launched Fabianism on the world, another figure looms, the antithesis of Webb: the leading personality of revolutionary socialism in that period, the poet and artist William Morris, who became a socialist and a Marxist in his late forties. Morris' writings on socialism breathe from every pore the spirit of Socialism-from-Below, just as every line of Webb's is the opposite. This is perhaps clearest in his sweeping attacks on Fabianism (for the right reasons); his dislike of the "Marxism" of the British edition of Lassalle, the dictatorial H.M. Hyndman; his denunciations of state-socialism; and his repugnance at the bureaucratic-collectivist utopia of Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. (The last moved him to remark: "If they brigaded *me* into a regiment of workers, I'd just lie on my back and kick.")

Morris' socialist writings are pervaded with his emphasis from every side on class struggle from below, in the present; and as for the socialist future, his *News from Nowhere* was written as the direct antithesis of Bellamy's book. He warned

"that individual men cannot shuffle off the business of life on to the shoulders of an abstraction called the State, but must deal with it in conscious association with each other... Variety of life is as much an aim of true Communism as equality of condition, and ... nothing but an union of these two will bring about real freedom."

"Even some Socialists," he wrote, "are apt to confuse the cooperative machinery towards which modern life is tending with the essence of Socialism itself." This meant "the danger of the community falling into bureaucracy." Therefore he expressed fear of a "collectivist bureaucracy" lying ahead. Reacting violently against state-socialism and reformism, he fell backwards into anti-parliamentarism but he did not fall into the anarchist trap:

"... people will have to associate in administration, and sometimes there will be differences of opinion... What is to be done? Which party is to give way? Our Anarchist friends say that it must not be carried by a majority; in that case, then, it must be carried by a minority. And why? Is there any divine right in a minority?"

This goes to the heart of anarchism far more deeply than the common opinion that the trouble with anarchism is that it is over-idealistic.

William Morris versus Sidney Webb: this is one way of summing up the story.

## **7. THE "REVISIONIST" FACADE**

Eduard Bernstein, the theoretician of social-democratic "revisionism," took his impulsion from Fabianism, by which he was heavily influenced in his London exile. He did not invent the reformist policy in 1896: he merely became its theoretical spokesman. (The head of the party bureaucracy

preferred less theory: "One doesn't say it, one *does* it," he told Bernstein, meaning that the politics of German social-democracy had been gutted of Marxism long before its theoreticians reflected the change.)

But Bernstein did not "revise" Marxism. His role was to uproot it while pretending to prune away withered limbs. The Fabians had not needed to bother with pretense, but in Germany it was not possible to destroy Marxism by a frontal attack. The reversion to Socialism-from-Above ("die alte Scheisse") had to be presented as a "modernization", a "revision".

Essentially, like the Fabians, "revisionism" found its socialism in the inevitable collectivization of capitalism itself; it saw the movement toward socialism as the sum of the collectivist tendencies immanent in capitalism itself; it looked to the "self-socialization" of capitalism from above, through the institutions of the existing state. The equation of *Statification* = *Socialism* is not the invention of Stalinism; it was systematized by the Fabian-Revisionist-State-socialist current of social-democratic reformism.

Most of the contemporary discoveries which announce that socialism is obsolete, because capitalism no longer really exists, can already be found in Bernstein. It was "absurd" to call Weimar Germany capitalist, he declared, because of the controls exercised over the capitalists; it follows from Bernsteinism that the Nazi state was even more anti-capitalist, as advertised...

The transformation of socialism into a bureaucratic collectivism is already implicit in Bernstein's attack on workers' democracy. Denouncing the idea of workers' control of industry, he proceeds to redefine democracy. Is it "government by the people"? He rejects this, in favor of the negative definition "absence of class government." Thus the very notion of workers' democracy as a *sine qua non* of socialism is junked, as effectively as by the clever redefinitions of democracy current in the Communist academies. Even political freedom and representative institutions have been defined out: a theoretical result all the more impressive since Bernstein himself was not personally antidemocratic like Lassalle or Shaw. It is the theory of Socialism-from-Above which requires these formulations. *Bernstein is the leading social-democratic theoretician not only of the equation statification = socialism, but also of the disjunction of socialism from workers' democracy.*

It was fitting, therefore, that Bernstein should come to the conclusion that Marx's hostility to the state was "anarchistic," and that Lassalle was right in looking to the state for the initiation of socialism. "The administrative body of the visible future can be different from the present-day state only in degree," wrote Bernstein; the "withering away of the state" is nothing but utopianism even under socialism. He, on the contrary, was very practical; for example, as the Kaiser's non-withering state launched itself into the imperialist scramble for colonies, Bernstein promptly came out for colonialism and the White Man's Burden: "Only a conditional right of savages to the land occupied by them can be recognized; the higher civilization ultimately can claim a higher right."

Bernstein contrasted his own vision of the road to socialism with that of Marx: Marx's "is the picture of an army. It presses forward, through detours, over sticks and stones... Finally it arrives at a great abyss. Beyond it there stands beckoning the desired goal -- the state of the future, which can be reached only through at sea, a *red* sea as some have said." In contrast, Bernstein's vision was not red but roseate: the class struggle softens into harmony as a beneficent state gently changes the bourgeoisie into good bureaucrats. *It didn't happen that way* -- when the Bernsteinized social-democracy first shot down the revolutionary left in 1919, and then, reinstating the unregenerate bourgeoisie and the military in power, helped to yield Germany into the hands of the fascists.

If Bernstein was the theoretician of the identification of bureaucratic collectivism with socialism, then it was his left-wing opponent in the German movement who became the leading spokesman in the Second International of a revolutionary-democratic Socialism-from-Below. This was Rosa Luxemburg, who so emphatically put her faith and hope in the spontaneous struggle of a free working class that the myth-makers invented for her a "theory of spontaneity" which she never held, a theory in which "spontaneity" is counterposed to "leadership."

In her own movement she fought hard against the "revolutionary" elitists who rediscovered the theory of the Educational Dictatorship over the workers (it is rediscovered in every generation as The Very Latest Thing), and had to write: "Without the conscious will and the conscious action of the majority of the proletariat there can be no socialism.... [We] will never assume governmental authority except through the clear unambiguous will of the vast majority of the German working class..." And her famous aphorism: "Mistakes committed by a genuinely revolutionary labor movement are much more fruitful and worthwhile historically than the infallibility of the very best Central Committee."

Rosa Luxemburg versus Eduard Bernstein: this is the German chapter of the story.

## **8. THE 100% AMERICAN SCENE**

At the Wellsprings of American "native socialism," the picture is the same, only more so. If we overlook the imported "German socialism" (Lassallean with Marxist trimmings) of the early Socialist Labor Party, then the leading figure here is, far and away, Edward Bellamy and his *Looking Backward* (1887). Just before him came the now forgotten Laurence Gronlund, whose *Cooperative Commonwealth* (1884) was extremely influential in its day, selling 100,000 copies.

Gronlund is so up-to-date that he does not say he rejects democracy -- he merely "redefines" it; as "Administration by the Competent," as against "government by majorities," together with a modest proposal to wipe out representative government as such as well as all parties. All the "people" want, he teaches, is "administration -- good administration." They should find "the right leaders," and then be "willing to thrust their whole collective power into their hands." Representative government will be replaced by the plebiscite. He is sure that his scheme will work, he explains, because it works so well for the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Naturally he rejects the horrible idea of class struggle. The workers are incapable of self-emancipation, and he specifically denounces Marx's famous expression of this First Principle. The Yahoos will be emancipated by an elite of the "competent," drawn from the intelligentsia; and at one point he set out to organize a secret conspiratorial American Socialist Fraternity for students.

Bellamy's socialist utopia in *Looking Backward* is expressly modeled on the army as the ideal pattern of society -- regimented, hierarchically ruled by an elite, organized from the top down, with the cozy communion of the beehive as the great end. The story itself pictures the transition as coming through the concentration of society into one big business corporation, a single capitalist: the state. Universal suffrage is abolished; all organizations from below eliminated; decisions are made by administrative technocrats from above. As one of his followers defined this "American socialism": "Its social idea is a perfectly organized industrial system which, by reason of the close interlocking of its wheels, shall work at a minimum of friction with a maximum of wealth and leisure to all."

As in the case of the anarchists, Bellamy's fanciful solution to the basic problem of social organization -- how to resolve differences of ideas and interests among men -- is the *assumption*



that the elite will be superhumanly wise and incapable of injustice (essentially the same as the Stalinist-totalitarian myth of the infallibility of the Party), the point of the assumption being that it makes unnecessary any concern about democratic control from below. The latter is unthinkable for Bellamy because the masses, the workers, are simply a dangerous monster, the barbarian horde. The Bellamyite movement -- which called itself "Nationalism" and originally set out to be both anti-socialist *and* anti-capitalist -- was systematically organized on a middle-class appeal, like the Fabians.

Here were the overwhelmingly popular educators of the "native" wing of American socialism, whose conceptions echoed through the non-Marxist and anti-Marxist sectors of the socialist movement well into the 20th century, with a resurgence of "Bellamy Clubs" even in the 1930s, when John Dewey eulogized *Looking Backward* as expounding the American ideal of democracy." Technocracy, which already reveals fascist features openly, was a lineal descendant of this tradition on one side. If one wants to see how thin the line can be between something called socialism and something like fascism, it is instructive to read the monstrous exposition of "socialism" written by the once famous inventor-scientist and Socialist Party luminary Charles P. Steinmetz. His *America and the New Epoch* (1916) sets down in deadly seriousness exactly the anti-utopia once satirized in a science-fiction novel, in which Congress has been replaced by direct senators from DuPont, General Motors and the other great corporations. Steinmetz, presenting the giant monopolistic corporations (like his own employer, General Electric) as the ultimate in industrial efficiency, proposes to disband the political government in favor of direct rule by the associated corporate monopolists.

Bellamyism started many on the road to socialism, but the road forked. By the turn of the century, American socialism developed the world's most vibrant antithesis to Socialism-from-Above in all its forms: Eugene Debs. In 1897 Debs was still at the point of asking none other than John D. Rockefeller to finance the establishment of a socialist utopian colony in a western state; but Debs, whose socialism was forged in the class struggle of a militant labor movement, soon found his true voice.

The heart of "Debsian socialism" was its appeal to, and faith in, the self-activity of the masses from below. Debs' writings and speeches are impregnated with this theme. He often quoted or paraphrased Marx's "First Principle" in his own words: "The great discovery the modern slaves have made is that they themselves their freedom must achieve. This is the secret of their solidarity; the heart of their hope..." His classic statement is this: "Too long have the workers of the world waited for some Moses to lead them out of bondage. He has not come; he never will come. I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out, you could be led back again. I would have you make up your minds that there is nothing you cannot do for yourselves." He echoed Marx's words of 1850:

"In the struggle of the working class to free itself from wage slavery it cannot be repeated too often that everything depends on the working class itself. The simple question is, Can the workers fit themselves, by education, organization, cooperation and self-imposed discipline, to take control of the productive forces and manage industry in the interest of the people and for the benefit of society? That is all there is to it."

*Can the workers fit themselves?* . . . He was under no starry-eyed illusions about the working class as it was (or is). But he proposed a different goal than the elitists whose sole wisdom consists in pointing a finger at the backwardness of the people now, and in teaching that this must always be so. As against the faith in elite rule from above, Debs counterpoised the directly contrary notion of

the revolutionary *vanguard* (also a minority) whose faith impels them to advocate a harder road for the majority:

"It is the minorities who have made the history of this world [he said in the 1917 anti-war speech for which Wilson's government jailed him]. It is the few who have had the courage to take their places at the front; who have been true enough to themselves to speak the truth that was in them; who have dared oppose the established order of things; who have espoused the cause of the suffering, struggling poor; who have upheld without regard to personal consequences the cause of freedom and righteousness."

This "Debsian socialism" evoked a tremendous response from the heart of the people, but Debs had no successor as a tribune of revolutionary-democratic socialism. After the postwar period of radicalization, the Socialist Party became pinkly respectable on the one hand, and the Communist Party became Stalinized on the other. On its side, American liberalism itself had long been undergoing a process of "statification," culminating in the great New Deal illusion of the '30s. The elite vision of a dispensation-from-above under the aegis of the Savior-President attracted a whole strain of liberals to whom the country gentleman in the White House was as Bismarck to Lassalle.

The type had been heralded by Lincoln Steffens, the collectivist liberal who (like Shaw and Georges Sorel) was as attracted to Mussolini as to Moscow, and for the same reasons. Upton Sinclair, quitting the Socialist Party as too "sectarian," launched his "broad" movement to "End Poverty in California," with a manifesto appropriately called I, *Governor of California, and How I Ended Poverty* (probably the only radical manifesto with two I's in the title) on the theme of "Socialism-from-Up-in-Sacramento. One of the typical figures of the time was Stuart Chase, who wove a zigzag course from the reformism of the League for Industrial Democracy to the semi-fascism of Technocracy. There were the Stalinoid intellectuals who managed to sublimate their joint admiration for Roosevelt and Russia by hailing both the NRA and the Moscow Trials. There were signs of the times like Paul Blanshard, who defected from the Socialist Party to Roosevelt on the ground that the New Deal program of "managed capitalism" had taken the initiative in economic change away from the socialists.

The New Deal, often rightly called America's "social-democratic period," was also the liberals' and social-democrats' big fling at Socialism-from-Above, the utopia of Roosevelt's "people's monarchy." The illusion of the Rooseveltian "revolution from above" united creeping-socialism, bureaucratic liberalism, Stalinoid elitism, and illusions about both Russian collectivism and collectivized capitalism, in one package.

## **9. SIX STRAINS OF SOCIALISM-FROM-ABOVE**

We have seen that there are several different strains or currents running through Socialism-From-Above. They are usually intertwined, but let us separate out some of the more important aspects for a closer look.

1. *Philanthropism*. -- Socialism (or "freedom," or what-have-you) is to be handed down, in order to Do the People Good, by the rich and powerful out of the kindness of their hearts. As the *Communist Manifesto* put it, with the early utopians like Robert Owen in mind, "Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them." In gratitude, the downtrodden poor must above all avoid getting rambunctious, and no nonsense about class struggle or self-emancipation. This aspect may be considered a special case of --

2. *Elitism*. -- We have mentioned several cases of this conviction that socialism is the business of a new ruling minority, non-capitalist in nature and therefore guaranteed pure, imposing its own domination either temporarily (for a mere historical era) or even permanently. In either case, this new ruling class is likely to see its goal as an Educational Dictatorship over the masses -- to Do Them Good, of course -- the dictatorship being exercised by an elite party which suppresses all control from below, or by benevolent despots or Savior-Leaders of some kind, or by Shaw's "Supermen," by eugenic manipulators, by Proudhon's "anarchist" managers or Saint-Simon's technocrats or their more modern equivalents -- with up-to-date terms and new verbal screens which can be hailed as fresh social theory as against "nineteenth-century Marxism."

On the other hand, the revolutionary-democratic advocates of Socialism-from-Below have also always been a minority, but the chasm between the elitist approach and the *vanguard* approach is crucial, as we have seen in the case of Debs. For him as for Marx and Luxemburg, the function of the revolutionary vanguard is to impel the mass-majority *to fit themselves to take power in their own name, through their own struggles*. The point is not to deny the critical importance of minorities, but to establish a different relationship between the advanced minority and the more backward mass.

3. *Plannism*. -- The key words are Efficiency, Order, Planning, System -- and Regimentation. Socialism is reduced to social-engineering, by a Power above society. Here again, the point is not to deny that effective socialism requires over-all planning (and also that efficiency and order are good things); but the *reduction* of socialism to planned production is an entirely different matter; just as effective democracy requires the right to vote, but the *reduction* of democracy merely to the right to vote once in a while makes it a fraud.

As a matter of fact, it would be important to demonstrate that the separation of planning from democratic control-from-below makes a mockery of planning itself; for the immensely complicated industrial societies of today cannot be effectively planned by an all-powerful central committee's ukases, which inhibit and terrorize the free play of initiative and correction from below. This is indeed the basic contradiction of the new type of exploiting social system represented by Soviet bureaucratic collectivism. But we cannot pursue this subject further here.

The substitution of Plannism for socialism has a long history, quite apart from its embodiment in the Soviet myth that *Satification = Socialism*, a tenet which we have already seen to have been first systematized by social-democratic reformism (Bernstein and the Fabians particularly). During the 1930's, the mystique of the "Plan," taken over in part from Soviet propaganda, became prominent in the right wing of the social-democracy, with Henri de Man hailed as its prophet and as successor to Marx. De Man faded from view and is now forgotten because he had the bad judgment to push his Revisionist theories first into corporatism and then into collaboration with the Nazis.

Aside from theoretical construction, Plannism appears in the socialist movement most frequently embodied in a certain psychological type of radical. To give credit due, one of the first sketches of this type came in Belloc's *The Servile State*, with the Fabians in mind. This type, writes Belloc,

"loves the collectivist ideal in itself ... because it is an ordered and regular form of society. He loves to consider the ideal of a State in which land and capital shall be held by public officials who shall order other men about and so preserve them from the consequences of *their* vice, ignorance and folly. [Belloc writes further:] In him the exploitation of man excites no indignation. Indeed, he is not a type to which indignation or any other lively passion is familiar... [Belloc's eye is on Sidney Webb here.] ... the prospect of a vast bureaucracy wherein the whole of life shall be scheduled and appointed to certain simple schemes ... gives his small stomach a final satisfaction."

As far as concerns contemporary examples with a pro-Stalinist coloration, examples-a-go-go can be found in the pages of Paul Sweezy's magazine *Monthly Review*.

In a 1930 article on the "motive patterns of socialism," written when he still thought he was a Leninist, Max Eastman distinguished this type as centered on "efficiency and intelligent organization ... a veritable passion for a plan ... businesslike organization." For such, he commented, Stalin's Russia has a fascination:

"It is a region at least to be apologized for in other lands -- certainly not denounced from the standpoint of a mad dream like emancipation of the workers and therewith all mankind. In those who built the Marxian movement and those who organized its victory in Russia, that mad dream was the central motive. They were, as some are now prone to forget, extreme rebels against oppression. Lenin will perhaps stand out, when the commotion about his ideas subsides, as the greatest rebel in history. His major passion was to set men free ... if a single concept must be chosen to summarize the goal of the class struggle as defined in Marxian writings, and especially the writings of Lenin, *human freedom* is the name for it..."

It might be added that more than once Lenin decried the push for total-planning as a "bureaucratic utopia."

There is a subdivision under Plannism which deserves a name too: let us call it Productionism. Of course, everyone is "for" production just as everyone is for Virtue and the Good Life; but for this type, production is the decisive test and end of a society. Russian bureaucratic collectivism is "progressive" because of the statistics of pig-iron production (the same type usually ignores the impressive statistics of increased production under Nazi or Japanese capitalism). It is all right to smash or prevent free trade-unions under Nasser, Castro, Sukarno or Nkrumah because something known as "economic development" is paramount over human rights. This hardboiled viewpoint was, of course, not invented by these "radicals," but by the callous exploiters of labor in the capitalist Industrial Revolution; and the socialist movement came into existence fighting tooth-and-nail against these theoreticians of "progressive" exploitation. On this score too, apologists for modern "leftist" authoritarian regimes tend to consider this hoary doctrine as the newest revelation of sociology.

4. "*Communism*." -- In his 1930 article Max Eastman called this "the united-brotherhood pattern," of "the gregarious or human-solidarity socialists" -- "those yearning with a mixture of religious mysticism and animal gregariousness for human solidarity." It should not be confused with the notion of solidarity in strikes, etc., and not necessarily identified with what is commonly called comradeship in the socialist movement or a "sense of community" elsewhere. Its specific content, as Eastman says, is a "seeking for submersion in a Totality, seeking to lose himself in the bosom of a substitute for God."

Eastman is here pointing to the Communist Party writer Mike Gold; another excellent case is Harry F. Ward, the CP's hardy clerical fellow-traveler, whose books theorize this kind of "oceanic" yearning for the shucking-off of one's individuality. Bellamy's notebooks reveal him as a classic case: he writes about the longing "for absorption into the grand omnipotency of the universe;" his "Religion of Solidarity" reflects his mistrust of the individualism of the personality, his craving to dissolve the Self into communion with Something Greater.

This strain is very prominent in some of the most authoritarian of the Socialisms-from-Above and is not seldom met in milder cases like the philanthropic elitists with Christian Socialist views.

Naturally, this kind of "communionist" socialism is always hailed as an "ethical socialism" and praised for holding class struggle in horror; for there must be no conflict inside a beehive. It tends to flatly counterpose "collectivism" to "individualism" (a false opposition from a humanist standpoint), but what it really impugns is *individuality*.

5. *Permeationism*. -- Socialism-from-Above appears in many varieties for the simple reason that there are always many alternatives to the self-mobilization of masses from below; but the cases discussed tend to divide into two families.

One has the perspective of *overthrowing* the present, capitalist hierarchical society in order to replace it with a new, non-capitalist type of hierarchical society based on a new kind of elite ruling class. (These varieties are usually ticketed "revolutionary" in histories of socialism.) The other has the perspective of permeating the centers of power in the existing society in order to metamorphose it -- gradually, inevitably -- into a stratified collectivism, perhaps molecule by molecule the way wood petrifies into agate. This is the characteristic stigmata of the reformist, social-democratic varieties of Socialism-from-Above.

The very term permeationism was invented for self-description by what we have already called the "purest" variety of reformism ever seen, Sidney Webb's Fabianism. All social-democratic permeationism is based on a theory of mechanical *inevitability*: the inevitable self-collectivization of capitalism from above, which is equated with socialism. Pressure from below (where considered permissible) can hasten and straighten the process, provided it is kept under control to avoid frightening the self-collectivizers. Hence the social-democratic permeationists are not only willing but anxious to "join the Establishment" rather than to fight it, in whatever capacity they are allowed to join it, whether as cabin boys or cabinet ministers. Typically the function of their movement-from-below is primarily to blackmail the ruling powers into buying them off with such opportunities for permeation.

The tendency toward the collectivization of capitalism is indeed a reality: as we have seen, it means the bureaucratic collectivization of capitalism. As this process has advanced, the contemporary social-democracy has itself gone through a metamorphosis. Today, the leading theoretician of this neo-reformism, C.A.R. Crosland, denounces as "extremist" the mild statement favoring nationalization which was originally written for the British Labor program by none other than Sidney Webb (with Arthur Henderson)! The number of continental social democracies that have now purged their programs of all specifically anti-capitalist content -- a brand new phenomenon in socialist history -- reflects the degree to which the ongoing process of bureaucratic collectivization is accepted as an installment of petrified "socialism."

This is permeationism as grand strategy. It leads, of course, to permeationism as political tactic, a subject we cannot here pursue beyond mentioning its presently most prominent U.S. form: the policy of supporting the Democratic Party and the lib-lab coalition around the "Johnson Consensus," its predecessors and successors.

The distinction between these two "families" of Socialism- from-Above holds for *home-grown* socialism, from Babeuf to Harold Wilson; that is, cases where the social base of the given socialist current is *inside* the national system, be it the labor aristocracy or declassé elements or any other. The case is somewhat different for those "socialisms-from-outside" represented by the contemporary Communist Parties, whose strategy and tactics depend in the last analysis on a power base *outside* any of the domestic social strata; that is, on the bureaucratic collectivist ruling classes in the East.

The Communist Parties have shown themselves uniquely different from any kind of home-grown movement in their capacity to *alternate or combine both* the "revolutionary"-oppositionist and the permeationist tactics to suit their convenience. Thus the American Communist Party could swing from its ultra-left-adventurist "Third Period" of 1928-34 into the ultra-permeationist tactic of the Popular Front period, then back into fire-breathing "revolutionism" during the Hitler-Stalin Pact period, and again, during the ups-and-downs of the Cold War, into various degrees of combination of the two. With the current Communist split along Moscow-Peking line, the "Krushchevites" and the Maoists tend each to embody one of the two tactics which formerly alternated.

Frequently, therefore, in domestic policy the official Communist Party and the social-democrats tend to converge on the policy of permeationism, though from the angle of a different Socialism-from-Above.

6. *Socialism-from-Outside*. -- The preceding varieties of Socialism-from-Above look to power at the tops of society: now we come to the expectation of succor from the outside.

The flying-saucer cult is a pathological form, messianism a more traditional form, when "outside" means out of this world; but for the present purposes, "outside" means *outside the social struggle at home*. For the Communists of East Europe after World War II, the New Order had to be imported on Russian bayonets; for the German Social-Democrats in exile, liberation of their own people could finally be imagined only by grace of foreign military victory.

The peacetime variety is socialism-by-model-example. This, of course, was the method of the old utopians, who built their model colonies in the American backwoods in order to demonstrate the superiority of their system and convert the unbelievers. Today, it is this substitute for social struggle at home which is increasingly the essential hope of the Communist movement in the West.

The model-example is provided by Russia (or China, for the Maoists); and while it is difficult to make the lot of the Russian proletarians half-attractive to Western workers even with a generous dose of lies, there is more success to be expected from two other approaches:

a. The relatively privileged position of managerial, bureaucratic and intellectual-flunky elements in the Russian collectivist system can be pointedly contrasted with the situation in the West, where these same elements are subordinated to the owners of capital and manipulators of wealth. At this point the appeal of the Soviet system of statified economy coincides with the historic appeal of middle-class socialisms, to disgruntled class-elements of intellectuals, technologists, scientists and scientific employees, administrative bureaucrats and organization men of various types, who can most easily identify themselves with a new ruling class based on state power rather than on money power and ownership, and therefore visualize themselves as the new men of power in a noncapitalist but elitist setup.

b. While the official Communist Parties are required to maintain the facade of orthodoxy in something called "Marxism-Leninism," it is more common that serious theoreticians of neo-Stalinism who are not tied to the party do free themselves from the pretense. One development is the open abandonment of any perspective of victory through social struggle inside the capitalist countries. The "world revolution" is equated simply with the demonstration by the Communist states that their system is superior. This has now been put into thesis-form by the two leading theoreticians of neo-Stalinism, Paul Sweezy and Isaac Deutscher.

Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capitalism* (1966) flatly rejects "the answer of traditional Marxist orthodoxy -- that the industrial proletariat must eventually rise in revolution against its capitalist oppressors." Same for all the other "outsider" groups of society -- unemployed, farm workers, ghetto masses, etc.; they cannot constitute a coherent force in society." This leaves no one; capitalism cannot be effectively challenged from within. What then? Some day, the authors explain on their last page, "perhaps not in the present century," the people will be disillusioned with capitalism "as the world revolution spreads and *as the socialist countries show by their example* that it is possible" to build a rational society. That is all. Thus the Marxist phrases filling the other 366 pages of this essay become simply an incantation like the reading of the Sermon on the Mount at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The same perspective is presented less bluntly by a more circumlocutious writer in Deutscher's *The Great Contest*. Deutscher transmits the new Soviet theory "that Western capitalism will succumb not so much -- or not directly -- because of its own crises and contradictions as because of its inability to match the achievements of socialism [i.e. the Communist states]"; and later on: "It may be said that this has to some extent replaced the Marxist prospect of a permanent social revolution." Here we have a theoretical rationale for what has long been the function of the Communist movement in the West: to act as border guard and shill for the competing, rival establishment in the East. Above all, the perspective of Socialism-from-Below becomes as alien to these professors of bureaucratic collectivism as to the apologists for capitalism in the American academies.

This type of neo-Stalinist ideologist is often critical of the actual Soviet regime -- a good example is Deutscher, who remains as far as possible from being an uncritical apologist for Moscow like the official Communists. They must be understood as being *permeationists with respect to bureaucratic-collectivism*. What appears as a "socialism-from-outside" when seen from the capitalist world, becomes a sort of Fabianism when viewed from within the framework of the Communist system. Within this context, change-from-above-only is as firm a principle for these theoreticians as it was for Sidney Webb. This was demonstrated inter alia by Deutscher's hostile reaction to the East German revolt of 1953 and to the Hungarian revolution of 1956, on the classical ground that such upheavals from below would scare the Soviet establishment away from its course of "liberalization" by the Inevitability of Gradualness.

## 10. WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

From the point of view of intellectuals who have a choice of roles to play in the social struggle, the perspective of Socialism-from-Below has historically had little appeal. Even within the framework of the socialist movement it has had few consistent exponents and not many inconsistent ones. Outside the socialist movement, naturally, the standard line is that such ideas are visionary, impractical, unrealistic, "utopian"; idealistic perhaps but quixotic. The mass of people are congenitally stupid, corrupt, apathetic and generally hopeless; and progressive change must come from Superior People rather like (as it happens) the intellectual expressing these sentiments. This is translated theoretically into an Iron Law of Oligarchy or a tinny law of elitism, in one way or another involving a crude theory of inevitability -- the inevitability of change-from-above-only.

Without presuming to review in a few words the arguments pro and con for this pervasive view, we can note the social role it plays, as the self-justificatory rite of the elitist. In "normal" times when the masses are not moving, the theory simply requires pointing with scorn, while the whole history of revolution and social upheaval is simply dismissed as obsolete. But the recurrence of revolutionary upheavals and social disturbances, defined precisely by the intrusion onto the historical stage of previous inactive masses and characteristic of periods when basic social change is

on the agenda, is just as "normal" in history as the intervening periods of conservatism. When the elitist theorist therefore has to abandon the posture of the scientific observer who is merely *predicting* that the mass of people will always continue quiescent, when he is faced with the opposite reality of a revolutionary mass threatening to subvert the structure of power, he is typically not behindhand in switching over to an entirely different track: denouncing mass intervention from below as evil in itself.

The fact is that the choice between Socialism-from-Above and Socialism-from-Below is, for the intellectual, basically a *moral* choice, whereas for the working masses who have no social alternative it is a matter of necessity. The intellectual may have the option of "joining the Establishment" where the worker does not; the same option holds also for labor leaders, who, as they rise out of their class, likewise confront a choice that did not exist before. The pressure of conformity to the mores of the ruling class, the pressure for bourgeoisification, is stronger in proportion as personal and organizational ties with the ranks below become weak. It is not hard for an intellectual or bureaucratized official to convince himself that permeation of and adaptation to the existing power is the smart way to do it, when (as it happens) it also permits sharing in the perquisites of influence and affluence.

It is an ironic fact, therefore, that the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" is iron-clad mainly for the intellectual elements from whom it arises. As a social stratum (i.e., apart from exceptional individuals) intellectuals have never been known to rise against established power in anything like the way that the modern working class has done time and again through its relatively brief history. Functioning typically as the ideological flunkies of the established rulers of society, the brain-worker sector of the non-proprietary middle classes is yet, at the same time, moved to discontent and disgruntlement by the relationship. Like many another servant, this Admirable Crichton thinks, "I am a better man than my master, and if things were different we would see who should bend the knee." More than ever in our day, when the credit of the capitalist system is disintegrating throughout the world, he easily dreams of a form of society in which he can come into his own, in which the Brain and not Hands or Moneybags would dictate; in which he and his similars would be released from the pressure of Property through the elimination of capitalism, and released from the pressure of the more numerous masses through the elimination of democracy.

Nor does he have to dream very far, for existing versions of such a society seem to be before his eyes, in the Eastern collectivisms. Even if he rejects these versions, for various reasons including the Cold War, he can theorize his own version of a "good" kind of bureaucratic collectivism, to be called "Meritocracy" or "managerialism" or "Industrialism" or what-have-you, in the U.S.; or "African Socialism" in Ghana and "Arab Socialism" in Cairo; or various other kinds of socialism in other parts of the world.

The nature of the choice between Socialism-from-Above and Socialism-from-Below stands out most starkly in connection with a question on which there is a considerable measure of agreement among liberal, social-democratic and Stalinoid intellectuals today. This is the alleged inevitability of authoritarian dictatorships (benevolent despotisms) in the newly developing states of Africa and Asia particularly -- e.g. Nkrumah, Nasser, Sukarno, et al. -- dictatorships which crush independent trade unions as well as all political opposition and organize to maximize the exploitation of labor, in order to extract from the hides of the working masses sufficient capital to hasten industrialization at the tempo which the new rulers desire. Thus to an unprecedented degree, "progressive" circles which once would have protested injustice anywhere have become automatic apologists for any authoritarianism which is considered non-capitalist.



Apart from the economic-determinist rationale usually given for this position, there are two aspects of the question which illuminate what is broadly at stake:

1. The economic argument for dictatorship, purporting to prove the necessity of breakneck industrialization, is undoubtedly very weighty for the new bureaucratic rulers -- who meanwhile do not stint their own revenue and aggrandizement -- but it is incapable of persuading the worker at the bottom of the heap that he and his family must bow to super-exploitation and super-sweating for some generations ahead, for the sake of a quick accumulation of capital. (In fact, this is why breakneck industrialization requires dictatorial controls.)

The economic-determinist argument is the rationalization of a ruling class viewpoint; it makes human sense *only* from a ruling-class viewpoint, which of course is always identified with the needs of "society." It makes equally good sense that the workers at the bottom of the heap *must* move to fight this super-exploitation to defend their elementary human dignity and wellbeing. So was it also during the capitalist Industrial Revolution, when the "newly developing states" were in Europe.

It is not a question simply of some technical-economic argument but of sides in a class struggle. The question is: Which side are you on?

2. It is argued that the mass of people in these countries are too backward to control the society and its government; and this is no doubt true, not only there. But what follows? How does a people or a class become fit to rule in their own name?

*Only by fighting to do so.* Only by waging their struggle against oppression -- oppression by those who tell them they are unfit to govern. Only by fighting for democratic power do they educate themselves and raise themselves up to the level of being able to wield that power. There has never been any other way for any class.

Although we have been considering a particular line of apologia, the two points which emerged do in fact apply all over the world, in every country, advanced or developing, capitalist or Stalinist. When the demonstrations and boycotts of the Southern Negroes threatened to embarrass President Johnson as he faced an election, the question was: *which side are you on?* When the Hungarian people erupted in revolt against the Russian occupier, the question was: *which side are you on?* When the Algerian people fought for liberation against the "socialist" government of Guy Mollet, the question was: *which side are you on?* When Cuba was invaded by Washington's puppets, the question was: *which side are you on?* and when the Cuban trade unions are taken over by the commissars of the dictatorship, the question is also: *which side are you on?*

Since the beginning of society, there has been no end of theories "proving" that tyranny is inevitable and that freedom-in-democracy is impossible; there is no more convenient ideology for a ruling class and its intellectual flunkies. These are self-fulfilling predictions, since they remain true only as long as they are taken to be true. In the last analysis, the only way of proving them false is in the struggle itself. That struggle from below has never been stopped by the theories from above, and it has changed the world time and again. To choose any of the forms of Socialism-from-Above is to look back to the old world, to the "old crap." To choose the road of Socialism-from-Below is to affirm the beginning of a new world.

1 Strictly speaking, this combination had been anticipated by Gerrard Winstanley and the "True Levelers," the left wing of the English Revolution; but it was forgotten and led to nothing, historically speaking.

2 The quotation is from H.G. Wells' autobiography. Inventor of some of the grimmest Socialism-from-Above utopias in all literature, Wells is here *denouncing* Marx for this historic step

## A FEW REFERENCES

As mentioned in the Note, following are a few useful titles, but for most of the questions dealt with, one must go back to the sources.

For Section 1, one book worth reading is A. D. Winspear's *The Genesis of Plato's Thought*, which discusses Pythagoras somewhat too. For Proudhon, see the chapter in J. S. Schapiro's *Liberalism and the Challenge of Fascism*, and Proudhon's *Carnets*. For Bakunin, see E. Pyzuir's *The Doctrine of Anarchism of M. A. Bakunin*, with E. H. Carr's biography for background. For Lassalle, see E. Bernstein's *F. Lassalle as a Social Reformer*, and D. Footman's biography. For Fabianism, there is only one half-decent published study, A. N. McBriar's *Fabian Socialism and English Politics*, and E. J. Hobsbawm's unpublished thesis, *Fabianism and the Fabians*, neither adequate for our purpose. For Rosa Luxemburg, see Paul Frolich's biography, and Tony Cliff's thin book both titled with her name. For Bellamy and Gronlund, see Arthur Lipow's unpublished thesis, *Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement* (Berkeley, Univ. of Calif., 1965).

Two articles by me in *New Politics* bear on some aspects of the subject: "Neo-Corporatists and Neo-Reformists" (I, 1, Winter 1962) and "The New Social-Democratic Reformism" (II, 2, Winter 1963). Also relevant are parts of the following two publications of the Independent Socialist Committee: *Independent Socialism: a Perspective for the Left* (pamphlet), and *Introduction to Independent Socialism* (a "clippingbook"). [H.D.]