

## Industry Under Socialism by Annie Besant

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[Page 1] THERE are two ways in which a scheme for a future organization of industry may be constructed. Of these, by far the easier and less useful is the sketching of Utopia, an intellectual gymnastic in which a power of coherent and vivid imagination is the one desideratum. The Utopist needs no knowledge of facts: indeed such a knowledge is a hindrance: for him the laws of social evolution do not exist. He is a law unto himself; and his men and women are not the wayward spasmodic irregular organisms of daily life, but automata, obeying the strings he pulls. In a word, he creates, he does not construct: he makes alike his materials and the laws within which they work, adapting them all to an ideal end. In describing a new Jerusalem, the only limits to its perfection are the limits of the writer's imagination.

The second way is less attractive, less easy, but more useful. Starting from the present state of society, it seeks to discover the tendencies underlying it; to trace those tendencies to their natural [Page 2] outworking in institutions; and so to forecast, not the far-off future, but the next social stage. It fixes its gaze on the vast changes wrought by evolution, not the petty variations made by catastrophes, on the Revolutions which transform society, not the transient riots which merely upset thrones and behead kings. This second way I elect to follow; and this paper on Industry under Socialism therefore starts from William Clarke's exposition of the industrial evolution which has been in progress during the last hundred and fifty years. In thus building forward — in thus forecasting the transitions through which society will probably pass — I shall scarcely touch on the ideal Social State that will one day exist; and my sketch must lay itself open to all the criticisms which may be leveled against a society not ideally perfect. It is therefore necessary to, bear in mind that I am only trying to work out changes practicable among men and women as we know them; always seeking to lay down, not what is ideally best, but what is possible always choosing among the possible changes that which is on the line towards the ideal, and will render further approach easier. In fact this paper is an attempt to answer the "How?" so often heard when Socialism is discussed. Large numbers of people accept, wholly or in part, the Socialist theory: they are intellectually convinced of its soundness or emotionally attracted by its beauty; but they hesitate to join in [Page 3] its propaganda, because they "don't see where you are going to begin", or "don't see where you are going to stop". Both difficulties are disposed of by the fact that we are not "going to begin". There will never be a point at which a society crosses from Individualism to Socialism. The change is ever going forward; and our society is well on the way to Socialism. All we can do is to consciously co-operate with the forces at work, and thus render the transition more rapid than it would otherwise be.

The third Fabian essay shows us the success of capitalism bringing about a position which is at once intolerable to the majority, and easy of capture by them. At this point the destruction of the small industries has broken down most of the gradations which used to exist between the large employer and the hired laborer, and has left in their place a gulf across which a few capitalists and a huge and hungry proletariat face each other. The denial of human sympathy by the employer in his business relations with his *hands* has taught the *hands* to regard the employer as outside the pale of their sympathy. The "respect of the public conscience for the right of property", which was at bottom the private interest of

each in his own little property, has diminished since the many lost their individual possessions, and saw property accumulate in the hands of the few: it is now [Page 4] little more than a tradition inherited from a former social state. The *public conscience* will soon condone, nay, it will first approve, and then demand, the expropriation of capital which is used anti-socially instead of socially, and which belongs to that impersonal abstraction, a company, instead of to our next door neighbor. To the average person it is one thing for the State to seize the little shop of James Smith who married our sister, or the thriving business of our Sam who works early and late for his living; and quite another when James and Sam, ruined by a big Company made up of shareholders of whom nobody knows anything but that they pay low wages and take high dividends, have been obliged to become hired servants of the Company, instead of owning their own shops and machinery. Whose interest will it be to protest against the State taking over the capital, and transforming James and Sam from wage-slaves at the mercy of a foreman, into shareholders and public functionaries, with a voice in the management of the business in which they are employed ?

Let us suppose, then, that the evolution of the capitalist system has proceeded but a little further along the present lines, concentrating the control of industry, and increasingly substituting labor-saving machinery for human beings. It is being accompanied, and must continue to be accompanied, by a growth of the numbers of the unemployed. These numbers may ebb and flow, as some of the waves of [Page 5] a rising tide run forward some feet and then a few touch a lower level; but as the tide rises despite the fluctuations of the ripples, so the numbers of the unemployed will increase despite transient mountings and fallings. With these, probably, will begin the tentative organization of industry by the State; but this organization will soon be followed by the taking over by the community of some of the great Trusts.

The division of the country into clearly defined areas, each with its elected authority, is essential to any effective scheme of organization. It is one of the symptoms of the coming change, that, in perfect unconsciousness of the nature of his act, Mr. Ritchie has established the Commune. He has divided England into districts ruled by County Councils, and has thus created the machinery without which Socialism was impracticable. True, he has only made an outline which needs to be filled in; but Socialists can fill in, whereas they had no power to outline. It remains to give every adult a vote in the election of Councillors; to shorten their term of office to a year; to pay the Councillors, so that the public may have a right to the whole of their working time; to give the Councils power to take and hold land — a reform already asked for by the Liberal and Radical Union, a body not consciously Socialist; and to remove all legal restrictions, so as to leave them as free to act corporately as an individual is to act individually. [Page 6]

These measures accomplished, the rapidity with which our institutions are socialized depends on the growth of Socialism among the people. It is essential to the stability of the changed forms of industry that they shall be made by the people, not imposed upon them: hence the value of Mr. Ritchie's gift of Local Government, enabling each locality to move swiftly or slowly, to experiment on a comparatively small scale, even to blunder without widespread disaster. The *mot d'ordre* for Socialists now is, "Convert the electors; and capture the County Councils". These Councils, administering local affairs, with the national Executive, administering national affairs, are all destined to be turned into effective industrial organizers; and the unit of administration must depend on the nature of the industry. The post, the telegraph, the railways, the canals, and the great industries capable of being organized into Trusts, will, so far as we can see now, be best administered each from a single center for the whole kingdom, Tramways, gas-works, waterworks, and many of the smaller productive industries, will be best managed locally. In marking the lines of division, convenience, and experience must be our guides. The demarcations are of

expediency, not of principle.

The first great problem that will press on the County Council for solution will be that of the unemployed. Wisely or unwisely, it will have to [Page 7] deal with them: wisely, if it organizes them for productive industry; unwisely if it opens *relief works*, and tries like an enlarged Bumble, to shirk the difficulty by enforcing barren and oppressive toil upon outlawed wretches at the expense of the rest of the community. Many of the unemployed unskilled laborers: a minority are skilled. They must first be registered as skilled and unskilled, and the former enrolled under their several trades. Then can begin the rural organization of labor on County Farms, held by the County Councils. The Council will have its agricultural committee, charged with the administrative details; and this committee will choose well-trained, practical agriculturists, as directors of the farm business. To the County Farm will be drafted from the unemployed in the towns the agricultural laborers who have wandered townwards in search of work, and many of the unskilled laborers. On these farms every advantage of machinery, and every discovery in agricultural science, should be utilized to the utmost. The crops should be carefully chosen with reference to soil and aspect — cereals, fruit, vegetables — and the culture adapted to the crop, the one aim being to obtain the largest amount of produce with the least expenditure of human labor. Whether land is most profitably cultivated in large or small parcels depends on the crop; and in the great area of the County Farm, *la grande et la petite culture* might each have its [Page 8] place. Economy would also gain by the large number of laborers under the direction of the head farmer, since they could be concentrated when required at any given spot, as in harvest time, and dispersed to work at the more continuous kinds of tillage when the seasonal task was over.

To these farms must also be sent some skilled laborers from among the unemployed, shoemakers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, etc so that the County Farm may be self-supporting as far as it can be without waste of productive power. All the small industries necessary in daily life should be carried on in it, and an industrial commune thus built up. The democracy might be trusted to ordain that an eight hours day, and a comfortable home, should be part of the life-conditions on the County Farm. Probably each large farm would soon have its central store, with its adjacent railway station, in addition to the ordinary farm buildings; its public hall in the center of the farm village to be used for lectures, concerts, and entertainments of all sorts; its public schools, elementary and technical; and soon, possibly from the outset, its public meal-room, saving time and trouble to housewives, and, while economizing fuel and food, giving a far greater choice and variety of dishes. Large dwellings, with suites of rooms, might perhaps replace old-fashioned cottages; for it is worth noting, as showing the tendency already existing among ourselves to turn from isolated self-dependence to [Page 9] the advantages of associated living, that many modern flats are being built without servants' rooms, the house-cleaning, etc., being done by persons engaged for the whole block, and the important meals being taken at restaurants, so as to avoid the trouble and expense of private cooking. It will surely be well in initiating new organizations of industry to start on the most advanced lines, and take advantage of every modern tendency towards less isolated modes of living. Socialists must work hard to make municipal dealings with the unemployed avenues to the higher life, not grudging utilization of pauper labor. And as they know their aim, and the other political parties live but from hand to mouth, they ought to be able to exercise a steady and uniform pressure, which, just because it is steady and uniform, will impress its direction on the general movement.

The note of urban industrial organization, as of all other, must be that each person shall be employed to do what he can do best, not what he does worst. It may be desirable for a man to have two trades; but watch-making and stone-breaking are not convenient alternative occupations. Where the skilled

unemployed belong to trades carried on everywhere, such as baking, shoemaking, tailoring, etc., they should be employed at their own trades in municipal workshops, and their products garnered in municipal stores. These workshops will be under the direction of foremen, thoroughly [Page 10] skilled workmen, able to superintend and direct as though in private employment. The working-day must be of eight hours, and the wages, for the present, the Trades Union minimum. Then, instead of tailors and shoemakers tramping the streets ragged and barefoot, the tailors will be making clothes and the shoemakers boots and shoes; and the shoemaker with the wages he earns will buy the tailor's products, and the tailor the shoemaker's. Then, instead of supporting the unemployed by rates levied on the employed, they will be set to work to supply their own necessities, and be producers of the wealth they consume instead of consuming, in enforced idleness or barren penal exercises in the stoneyard, the wealth produced by others. Masons, bricklayers, plumbers, carpenters, etc., might be set to work in building decent and pleasant dwellings — in the style of the blocks of flats, not of the barracks called model dwellings — for the housing of the municipal industrial army. I lay stress on the pleasantness of the dwellings. These places are to be dwellings for citizens, not prisons for paupers; and there is no possible reason why they should not be made attractive. Under Socialism the workers are to be the nation, and all that is best is for their service; for, be it remembered, our faces are set towards Socialism, and our organization of labor is to be on Socialist lines.

It is very likely that among the unemployed some will be found, whose trade can only be carried [Page 11] on by large numbers, and is not one of the industries of the town into which their unlucky fate has drifted them. These should be sent into municipal service in the towns where their trade is the staple industry, there to be employed in the municipal factory.

Concurrently with this rural and urban organization of non-centralized industries will proceed the taking over of the great centralized industries, centralized for us by capitalists, who thus unconsciously pave the way for their own supercession. Everything which has been organized into a Trust, and has been worked for a time in the Trust fashion, is ripe for appropriation by the community. All minerals would be most properly worked in this centralized way; and it will probably be found most convenient to work all the big productive industries — such as the textile — in similar fashion. It is idle to say that it cannot be done by the State when it is being done by a ring of capitalists; a Local Board, an Iron Board, a Tin Board, can be as easily responsible to the nation as to a casual crowd of shareholders. There need be no dislocation of production in making the transference: the active organizers and directors of a Trust do not necessarily, or even usually, own the capital invested in it. If the State finds it convenient to hire these organizers and directors, there is nothing to prevent its doing so for as long or as short a period as it chooses. The temporary arrangements made [Page 12] with them during the transition period must be governed by expediency.

Let us pause for a moment to estimate the position so far. The unemployed have been transformed into communal workers — in the country on great farms, improvements of the Bonanza farms in America — in the towns in various trades. Public stores for agricultural and industrial products are open in all convenient places, and filled with the goods thus communally produced. The great industries, worked as Trusts, are controlled by the State instead of by capitalist rings. The private capitalist, however, will still be in business, producing and distributing on his own account in competition with the communal organizations, which at present will have occupied only part of the industrial field. But apart from a pressure which will be recognized when we come to deal with the remuneration of labor, these private enterprises will be carried on under circumstances of ever-increasing difficulty. In the face of the orderly

communal arrays, playing into each other's hands, with the credit of the country behind them, the ventures of the private capitalist will be at as great a disadvantage as the cottage industries of the last century in face of the factory industries of our own period. The Trusts have taught us how to drive competing capitals out of the market by associated capitals. The Central Boards or County Councils will be able to utilize this power of association further than any private [Page 13] capitalists. Thus the economic forces which replaced the workshop by the factory, will replace the private shop by the municipal store and the private factory by the municipal one. And the advantages of greater concentration of capital and of association of labor will not be the only ones enjoyed by the communal workers. All waste will be checked, every labor-saving appliance utilized to the utmost, where the object is the production of general wealth and not the production of profit to be appropriated by a class for in the one case it is the interest of the producers to produce — inasmuch as their enjoyment depends on the productivity of their labor — whereas in the other it is their interest to sterilize their labor as far as they dare in order to render more of it necessary and so keep up its price. As the organization of the public industry extends, and supplants more and more the individualist producer, the probable demand will be more easily estimated, and the supply regulated to meet it. The Municipalities and Central Boards will take the place of the competing small capitalists and the rings of large ones; and production will become ordered and rational instead of anarchical and reckless as it is today. After a while the private producers will disappear, not because there will be any law against individualist production, but because it will not pay. No one will care to face the worries, the harassments, the anxieties, of individual struggling for livelihood, when ease, [Page 14] freedom, and security can be enjoyed in the communal service.

The best form of management during the transition period, and possibly for a long time to come, will be through the Communal Councils, which will appoint committees to superintend the various branches of industry. These committees will engage the necessary manager and foreman for each shop, factory, etc., and will hold the power of dismissal as of appointment. I do not believe that the direct election of the manager and foreman by the employees would be found to work well in practice, or to be consistent with the discipline necessary in carrying on any large business undertaking. It seems to me better that the Commune should elect its Council — thus keeping under its own control the general authority — but should empower the Council to select the officials, so that the power of selection and dismissal within the various sub-divisions should lie with the nominees of the whole Commune instead of with the particular group immediately concerned.

There is no practical difficulty in the way of the management of the ordinary productive industries large or small. The Trusts and Co-operation have, between them, solved, or put us in the way of solving, all problems connected with these. But there are difficulties in connection with the industries concerned in the production of such [Page 15] commodities as books and newspapers. During the transitional stage these difficulties will not arise; but when all industries are carried on by the Commune or the Nation, how will books and newspapers be produced? I only throw out the following suggestions. Printing, like baking, tailoring, shoemaking, is a communal rather than a national industry. Suppose we had printing offices controlled by the Communal Council. The printing committee might be left free to accept any publication it thought valuable, as a private firm today may take the risk of publication, the arrangement with the author being purchased outright, or royalty on copies sold, in each case so much to be put to his credit at the Communal Bank. But there are many authors whose goods are desired by no one: it would be absurd to force the community to publish all minor poetry. Why not accept the principle that in every case where the printing committee declines to print at the communal risk, the author may have his work printed by transferring from his credit at the Communal Bank to the account of the printing committee sufficient to cover the cost of printing. The committee should have no power to refuse to print, where the

cost was covered. Thus liberty of expression would be guarded as a constitutional right, while the community would not be charged with the cost of printing every stupid effusion that its fond composer might deem worthy of publicity. [Page 16]

Newspapers might be issued on similar terms; and it would always be open to individuals, or to groups of individuals, to publish anything they pleased on covering the cost of publication. With the comparative affluence which would be enjoyed by each member of the community, anyone who really cared to reach the public ear would be able to do so by diminishing his expenditure in other directions.

Another difficulty which will meet us, although not immediately, is the competition for employment in certain pleasanter branches of industry. At present an unemployed person would catch eagerly at the chance of any well-paid work he was able to perform. If he were able both to set type and to stitch coats, he would not dream of grumbling if he were by chance offered the job he liked the less of the two: he would be only too glad to get either. But it is quite possible that as the vast *amelioration* of life-conditions proceeds, Jeshurun will wax fat and kick if, when he prefers to make microscope lenses, he is desired to make mirrors. Under these circumstances, Jeshurun will, I fear, have to accommodate himself to the demand. If the number of people engaged in making lenses suffices to meet the demand for lenses, Jeshurun must consent to turn his talents for the time to mirror-making. After all, his state will not be very pitiable, though Socialism will have failed, it is true, to make  $2+2=5$ . [Page 17]

This, however, hardly solves the general question as to the apportioning of laborers to the various forms of labor. But a solution has been found by the ingenious author of *Looking Backward, from A.D. 2000*. Leaving young men and women free to choose their employments, he would equalise the rates of volunteering by equalising the attractions of the trades. In many cases natural bent, left free to develop itself during a lengthened educational term, will determine the choice of avocation. Human beings are fortunately very varied in their capacities and tastes: that which attracts one repels another. But there are unpleasant and indispensable forms of labor which, one would imagine, can attract none — mining, sewer-cleaning, etc. These might be rendered attractive by making the hours of labor in them much shorter than the normal working day of pleasanter occupations. Many a strong, vigorous man would greatly prefer a short spell of disagreeable work to a long one at a desk. As it is well to leave the greatest possible freedom to the individual, this equalising of advantages in all trades would be far better than any attempt to perform the impossible task of choosing an employment for each. A person would be sure to hate any work into which he was directly forced, even though it were the very one he would have chosen had he been left to himself.

Further, much of the most disagreeable and laborious work might be done by machinery, as it [Page 18] would be now if it were not cheaper to exploit a helot class. When it became illegal to send small boys up chimneys, chimneys did not cease to be swept: a machine was invented for sweeping them. Coal-cutting might now be done by machinery, instead of by a man lying on his back, picking away over his head at the imminent risk of his own life: but the machine is much dearer than men, so the miners continue to have their chests crushed in by the falling coal. Under Socialism, men's lives and limbs will be more valuable than machinery; and science will be tasked to substitute the one for the other.

In truth the extension of machinery is very likely to solve many of the problems connected with differential advantages in employment; and it seems certain that, in the very near future, the skilled worker will not

be the man who is able to perform a particular set of operations, but the man who has been trained in the use of machinery. The difference of trade will be in the machine rather than in the man: whether the produce is nails or screws, boots or coats, cloth or silk, paper-folding or type-setting, will depend on the internal arrangements of the mechanism and not on the method of applying the force. What we shall probably do will be to instruct all our youth in the principles of mechanics and in the handling of the machines; the machines will be constructed so as to turn the force into the various channels required to [Page 19] produce the various articles; and the skilled workman will be the skilled *mechanic*, not the skilled printer or bootmaker. At the present time a few hours', or a few days', study will make the trained mechanic master of any machine you can place before him. The line of progress is to substitute machines for men in every department of production: let the brain plan, guide, control; but let iron and steel, steam and electricity, that do not tire and cannot be brutalized, do the whole of the heavy toil that exhausts human frames of today. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that we are at the end of an inventive era. Rather are we only just beginning to grope after the uses of electricity; and machinery has before it possibilities almost undreamed of now, the men produced by our system being too rough-handed for the manipulation of delicate and complicated contrivances. I suggest this only as a probable simplification of balancing the supply and demand in various forms of labor in the future: our immediate method of regulation must be the equalizing of advantages in them.

One may guess that in each nation all the Boards and communal authorities will ultimately be represented in some central Executive, or Industrial Ministry; that the Minister of Agriculture, of Mineral Industries, of Textile Industries, and so on, will have relations with similar officers in other lands; and that thus internationally as well as [Page 20] nationally, co-operation will replace competition. But that end is not yet.

We now approach a yet more thorny subject than the organization of the workers. What should be the remuneration of labor — what the share of the product taken respectively by the individual, the municipality, and the State

The answer depends on the answer to a previous question. Is the organization of the unemployed to be undertaken in order to transform them into self-supporting, self-respecting citizens; or is it to be carried on as a form of exploitation, utilizing pauper labor for the production of profit for non-paupers? The whole matter turns on this point; and unless we know our own minds, and fight for the right method and against the wrong from the very beginning, the organization of the unemployed will be a buttress for the present system instead of a step towards a better. Already there is talk of establishing labor colonies in connection with workhouses; and there is no time to be lost if we are to take advantage of the good in the proposal and exclude the bad. The County Councils also will lead to an increase of municipal employment; and the method of that employment is vital.

The ordinary vestryman, driven by the force of circumstances into organizing the unemployed, will try to extract a profit to the ratepayers from pauper farms by paying the lowest rates of wages. He would find this way of proceeding very congenial, [Page 21] and would soon, if permitted, simply municipalise slave-driving. In this way the municipal and rural organization of labor, even when its necessity and its advantages are realized, can do nothing but change the form of exploitation of labor if the workers in public employ are to be paid a wage fixed by the competition of the market, and the profits of their labor used only for the relief of the rates. Under such circumstances we should have the whole of the rates paid by the communal workers, while the private employers would go free. This would not be a transition

to Socialism, but only a new way of creating a class of municipal serfs, which would make our towns burlesques of the ancient Greek slaveholding *democracies*. We shall find surer ground by recalling and applying the principle of Socialism that the laborers shall enjoy the full product of their toil. It seems to me that this might be worked out somewhat in the following way:

Out of the value of the communal produce must come rent of land payable to the local authority, rent of plant needed for working the industries, wages advanced and fixed in the usual way, taxes, reserve fund, accumulation fund, and the other charges necessary for the carrying on of the communal business. All these deducted, the remaining value should be divided among the communal workers as a *bonus*. It would be obviously inconvenient, if not impossible, for the [Page 22] district authority to sub-divide this value and allot so much to each of its separate undertakings — so much left over from gas works for the men employed there, so much from the tramways for the men employed on them, and so on. It would be far simpler and easier for the municipal employees to be regarded as a single body, in the service of a single employer, the local authority; and that the surplus from the whole of the businesses carried on by the communal council should be divided without distinction among the whole of the communal employees. Controversy will probably arise as to the division: shall all the shares be equal; or shall the workers receive in proportion to the supposed dignity or indignity of their work? Inequality, however, would be odious; and I have already suggested (p. 17) a means of adjusting different kinds of labor to a system of equal division of net product. This meets the difficulty of the varying degrees of irksomeness without invidiously setting up any kind of socially useful labor as more honorable than any other—a distinction essentially unsocial and pernicious. But since in public affairs ethics are apt to go to the wall, and appeals to social justice too often fall on deaf ears, it is lucky that in this case ethics and convenience coincide. The impossibility of estimating the separate value of each man's labor with any really valid result, the friction which would arise, the jealousies which would be provoked, the inevitable [Page 23] discontent, favoritism and jobbery that would prevail: all these things will drive the Communal Council into the right path, equal remuneration of all workers. That path once entered on, the principle of simplification will spread; and presently it will probably be found convenient that all the Communal Councils shall send in their reports to a Central Board, stating the number of their employees, the amount of the values produced, the deductions for rent and other charges, and their available surplus. All these surpluses added together would then be divided by the total number of communal employees, and the sum thus reached would be the share of each worker. The national trusts would at first be worked separately on lines analogous to those sketched for the Communes; but later these would be lumped in with the rest, and still further equalize the reward of labor. As private enterprises dwindle, more and more of the workers will pass into communal employ, until at last the Socialist ideal is touched of a nation in which all adults are workers, and all share the national product. But be it noted that all this grows out of the first organization of industry by Municipalities and County Councils, and will evolve just as fast or just as slowly as the community and its sections choose. The values dealt with, and the numbers, employed at first, would not imply as much complexity of detail as is involved, in many of the great businesses now [Page 24] carried on by individuals and by companies. The same brains will be available for the work as are now hired by individuals; and it is rather the novelty of the idea than the difficulty of its realization which will stand in the way of its acceptance.

It is probable, however, that for some time to come, the captains of industry will be more highly paid than the rank and file of the industrial army, not because it is just that they should receive higher remuneration, but because they, having still the alternative of private enterprise, will be able to demand their ordinary terms, at which it will pay the community better to engage them than to do without them — which would be indeed impossible. But their remuneration will fall as education spreads; their present



value is a scarcity value, largely dependent on their monopoly of the higher education; and as the wider training is thrown open to all, an ever-increasing number will become qualified to act as organizers and directors.

The form in which the worker's share is paid to him is not a matter of primary importance. It would probably be convenient to have Communal Banks, issuing cheques like those of the Cheque Bank; and these banks could open credits to the workers to the amount of their remuneration. The way in which each worker expended his wealth would of course be his own business.[Page 25]

The above method of dealing with the surplus remaining from communal labor after rent and other charges had been paid to the Municipality would prove the most potent factor in the supercession of private enterprises. The amounts produced by the communal organizations would exceed those produced under individualist control; but even if this were not so, yet the shares of the communal workers, as they would include the produce now consumed by idlers, would be higher than any wage which could be paid by the private employer. Hence competition to enter the communal service, and a constant pressure on the Communal Councils to enlarge their undertakings.

It should be added that children and workers incapacitated by age or sickness should receive an equal share with the communal employees. As all have been children, are at times sick, and hope to live to old age, all in turn would share the advantage; and, it is only just that those who have labored honestly in health and through maturity should enjoy the reward of labor in sickness and through old age.

The share of individuals and of Municipalities being thus apportioned, there remains only a word to say as to the Central National Council — the *State par excellence*. This would derive the revenues necessary for the discharge of its functions, from contributions levied on the Communal Councils. It is evident that in the adjustment of these [Page 26] contributions could be effected the *nationalization* of any special natural resources, such as mines, harbors, etc., enjoyed by exceptionally well situated Communes. The levy would be, in fact, of the nature of an income tax.

Such a plan of Distribution — especially that part of it which equalizes the shares in the product—is likely to provoke the question: "What will be the stimulus to labor under the proposed system ? Will not the idle evade their fair share of labor, and live in clover on the industry of their neighbors ?"

The general stimulus to labor will be, in the first place, then as now, the starvation which would follow the cessation of labor. Until we discover the country in which jam-rolls grow on bushes, and roasted sucking-pigs run about crying "Come eat me!" we are under an imperious necessity to produce. We shall work because, on the whole, we prefer work to starvation. In the transition to Socialism, when the organization of labor by the Communal Councils begins, the performance of work will be the condition of employment; and as non-employment will mean starvation — for when work is offered, no relief of any kind need be given to the healthy adult who refuses to perform it — the strongest possible stimulus will force men to work. In fact "work or starve" will be the alternative set before each communal employee; and as men now prefer long-continued and ill-paid work to starvation, they will certainly, unless human nature be entirely [Page 27] changed, prefer short and well-paid work to starvation. The individual shirker will be dealt with much as he is today: he will be warned, and, if he prove incorrigibly idle, discharged from the communal employ. The vast majority of men now seek to retain their employment by a reasonable

discharge of their duty: why should they not do the same when the employment is on easier conditions ? At first, discharge would mean being flung back into the whirlpool of competition, a fate not lightly to be challenged. Later, as the private enterprises succumbed to the competition of the Commune, it would mean almost hopelessness of obtaining a livelihood. When social reorganization is complete, it would mean absolute starvation. And as the starvation would be deliberately incurred and voluntarily undergone, it would meet with no sympathy and no relief.

The next stimulus would be the appetite of the worker for the result of the communal toil, and the determination of his fellow-workers to make him take his fair share of the work of producing it. It is found at the present time that a very small share of the profits arising from associated labor acts as a tremendous stimulus to each individual producer. Firms which allot a part of their profits for division among their employees find the plan profitable to themselves. The men work eagerly to increase the common product knowing that each will have a [Page 28] larger bonus as the common product is larger: they become vigilant as to waste in production; they take care of the machinery; they save gas, etc. In a word, they lessen the cost as much as they can, because each saving means gain to them. We see from the experiments of Leclair and Godin that inventiveness also is stimulated by a share in the common produce. The workers in these businesses are ever trying to discover better methods, to improve their machinery, in a word to progress, since each step forward brings improvement of their lot. Inventions come from a desire to save trouble, as well as from the impulse of inventive genius, the joy in accomplishing an intellectual triumph, and the delight of serving the race. Small inventions are continually being made by clever workmen to facilitate their operations, even when they are not themselves personally gainers by them; and there is no reason to fear that this spontaneous exercise of inventiveness will cease when the added productivity of labor lightens the task or increases the harvest of the laborer. Is it to be argued that men will be industrious, careful, and inventive when they get only a fraction of the result of their associated labor, but will plunge into sloth, recklessness, and stagnation when they get the whole ? that a little gain stimulates, but any gain short of complete satisfaction would paralyze ? If there is one vice more certain than another to be unpopular in a Socialist community, it is laziness. [Page 29] The man who shirked would find his mates making his position intolerable, even before he suffered the doom of expulsion.

But while these compelling motives will be potent in their action on man as he now is, there are others, already acting on some men, which will one day act on all men. Human beings are not the simple and one-sided organisms they appear to the superficial glance of the Individualist — moved only by a single motive, the desire for pecuniary gain — by one longing, the longing for wealth. Under our present social system, the struggle for riches assumes an abnormal and artificial development: riches mean nearly all that makes life worth having — security against starvation, gratification of taste, enjoyment of pleasant and cultured society, superiority to many temptations, self-respect, consideration, comfort, knowledge, freedom, as far as these things are attainable under existing conditions. In a society where poverty means social discredit, where misfortune is treated as a crime, where the prison of the workhouse is the guerdon of failure, and the bitter carking harassment of daily wants unmet by daily supply is ever hanging over the head of each worker, what wonder that money seems the one thing needful, and that every other thought is lost in the frenzied rush to escape all that is summed up in the one word Poverty ?

But this abnormal development of the gold-hunger would disappear upon the certainty for [Page 30] each of the means of subsistence. Let each individual feel absolutely secure of subsistence — let every anxiety as to the material wants of his future be swept away; and the longing for wealth will lose its leverage. The

daily bread being certain, the tyranny of pecuniary gain will be broken; and life will begin to be used in living and not in struggling for the chance to live. Then will come to the front all those multifarious motives which are at work in the complex human organism even now, and which will assume their proper importance when the basis of physical life is assured. The desire to excel, the joy in creative work, the longing to improve, the eagerness to win social approval, the instinct of benevolence; all these will start into full life, and will serve at once as the stimulus to labor and the reward of excellence. It is instructive to notice that these very forces may already be seen at work in every case in which subsistence is secured, and they alone supply the stimulus to action. The soldier's subsistence is certain, and does not depend on his exertions. At once he becomes susceptible to appeals to his patriotism, to his *esprit de corps*, to the honor of his flag: he will dare anything for glory, and value a bit of bronze, which is the "reward of valor", far more than a hundred times its weight in gold. Yet many of the private soldiers come from the worst of the population; and military glory and success in murder are but poor objects to aim at. If so much can be done [Page 31] under circumstances so unpromising, what may we not hope from nobler aspirations? Or take the eagerness, self-denial, and strenuous effort, thrown by young men into their mere games! The desire to be captain of the Oxford eleven, stroke of the Cambridge boat, victor in the foot-race or the leaping — in a word, the desire to excel — is strong enough to impel to exertions which often ruin physical health. Everywhere we see the multiform desires of humanity assert themselves when once livelihood is secure. It is on the devotion of these to the service of Society, as the development of the social instincts teaches men to identify their interests with those of the community, that Socialism must ultimately rely for progress; but in saying this we are only saying that Socialism relies for progress on human nature as a whole, instead of on that mere fragment of it known as the desire for gain. If human nature should break down, then Socialism will break down; but at least we have a hundred strings to our Socialist bow, while the Individualist has only one.

But Humanity will not break down. The faith which is built on it is faith founded on a rock. Under healthier and happier conditions, Humanity will rise to heights undreamed of now; and the most exquisite Utopias, as sung by the poet and idealist, shall, to our children, seem but dim and broken lights compared with their perfect day. All that we need are courage, prudence, and faith. [Page 32] Faith, above all, which dares to believe that justice and love are not impossible; and that more than the best that man can dream of shall one day be realized by men.