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## Trends and Tendencies of the Times

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## Trends and Tendencies of the Times

(Concluded)

### Capitalism or Socialism?

We turn now to a discussion of trends in the social and economic field. It has become almost a habit to refer to our times as a period of crisis or transition. Writers on social subjects invariably predict great changes in the entire structure of our society. An English economist recently summed up the situation in this way: "It is my profound conviction that we are standing today at the turning-point between two civilizations, one of those turning-points in history not unlike the first or second century, the Renaissance, or the 17th century in England. The transition from an individualistic to a collective state of society is at hand." ("Christianity and Social Revolution," p. 177, quoted from *The World Today*, p. 35.)

Mrs. Lindbergh has written a book entitled *The Wave of the Future*, and in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1941, p. 682, she explains her basic thesis in these words: "It is, as I see it, a movement of adjustment to a highly scientific, mechanized, and material era of civilization, with all its attendant complications, and as such it seems to me inevitable. I feel we must 'guide' the Wave of the Future. 'Guiding' a wave—to toss exact literary parallels to the winds—does not mean lying down prostrate on the beach and letting it pound you into the sand. Quite the opposite. It means taking advantage of that wave and controlling it with all the powers at your disposal. It means meeting the changes that are coming in the world before they are forced upon us by cataclysms and violence. That great changes are coming seems to me inescapable—inescapable with or without war, with or without the dictators, for we have set these changes in motion ourselves."

Whether we have arrived at an actual turning point between



two entirely different civilizations at the present time remains to be seen. Certain it is that great changes are in the offing.

Now, if we ask ourselves what is the trend today, there can be no doubt that it may be characterized as a movement *away from capitalism*, as our present system is called, towards some kind of *socialism or collectivism*. This does not mean that capitalism is definitely on the way out and that after this war it will disappear altogether. It may be that the present trend will be arrested and that some modified form halfway between capitalism and socialism will emerge to take its place; for changes come slowly, and there is seldom if ever an abrupt break with the past.

However, to understand all this, it is necessary that we first of all get a clearer idea of what capitalism really is and what distinguishes it from other systems. Capitalism is not easily defined. That is in part due to the word itself, which can be used in different ways. When we hear the word capital, we almost invariably think of money wealth. If a person has \$10,000.00 in the bank drawing interest or if he lends this out on interest, that's his capital, and he is called a "capitalist." However, economists do not use the word capital in that sense only. Actually, any fund of wealth is capital. When we speak of the capital wealth of Canada, we mean everything of value in that country. Whatever you possess is your capital, even the clothes on your back. In the business world the term is usually employed to refer to the stock of wealth with which the business enterprise is carried on. Thus in the case of a manufacturing concern its machinery, buildings, trucks, and everything else the company owns constitutes its capital. This is really *instrumental* capital, because it includes all the tools and instruments which the company uses in the process of production. What we actually use in our daily lives, such as food, clothing, living quarters, pleasure cars, and the like, may be called *consumer's* capital. Besides this economists also speak of *land capital*, which refers to natural wealth. All natural resources and our great land acreage would come into this category.

From this it will be seen that the term "capitalism" is very inapt, for in any kind of system today, these three kinds of capital would exist. To say, then, that "capitalism" is a system in which "capital" plays an important role is beside the mark. There always has been and there always will be *land capital*, *instrumental* capital, and *consumer's* capital.

The unabridged dictionary defines capitalism as a "system that favors the concentration of capital in the hands of the few." Others describe it as a setup that is based upon the profit motive. And still others claim it is an economic machine that makes rich people richer and the poor poorer.



While there is some truth in these statements, none of them really explains the true nature of capitalism and points out its fundamental basis. If we analyze the situation rightly, it will become evident that the real difference between our system and others revolves about the question: Who is to own and control capital? Perhaps we can understand this best if we contrast capitalism with socialism. Under socialism a larger group, almost invariably the state, owns or controls capital, particularly the means of production. Under capitalism ownership and control is in the hands of private people—individuals or groups of individuals. Almost all land, factories, railroads, mines, stores, houses, clothing, food, and so on, are today privately owned. Of course, there is some common property even now, such as roads, parks, waterworks, etc., but that is a very, very small part of the total wealth of the country. The present system might therefore best be called one of *private property* and its concomitant *free enterprise*. Those are really the two characteristics which differentiate it from other possible systems. Anyone who wants rightly to understand our present setup must keep those two features in mind. They also form the principal demands in the agitation of social reformers. They are constantly demanding that this control of capital and enterprise should be taken out of the hands of individual persons and put into the hands of the state or, as they say, into the hands of the people.

But someone might say at this juncture: Has there not always been private property? Was this not the case in ancient times and even in feudal Europe? Indeed, is not the existence of private property implied in the Seventh Commandment? This is true so far as it goes. We here merely assert that private property is a *sine qua non* in modern capitalism.

It would be interesting to trace the history and development of our present system. Roughly speaking, we may say that modern capitalism began with the advent of a money economy in the 13th and 14th centuries. As long as land was the chief source of wealth and the feudal system held sway, one could not speak of capitalism in our sense. But when money came into general use and it became possible to accumulate large private fortunes which in turn could be invested in business enterprises, you had all the elements of modern capitalism. This, of course, was extended tremendously after the industrial revolution and the expansion of trade in the 18th and 19th centuries. Given, then, a *money economy* and the *right of individuals to own and control wealth*, you have what we call modern capitalism.

This basic institution of our society has far-reaching implications:

1. The ownership of property carries with it the right to use that property as one sees fit, to dispose of it by sale or gift, and to



prevent the use of it by others. "Control extends even after the death of the owner, who may by will decree what shall be done with it; and the law will see to it that his wishes are carried out. These rights are not absolute and may be restricted if exercised in a manner injurious to other members of society. For instance, if a man maintains a public nuisance on his property, the courts will restrain him, and he may be prevented from using his wealth for dishonest or immoral purposes. But, in general, there is substantial control by the owner; and within wide limits, he can dispose of his property as he will." (Bye, *Principles of Economics*, p. 493.)

2. Furthermore, as long as the institution of private property exists, it is implied that there will be *freedom of enterprise*. This is in a large measure what the framers of our American Constitution had in mind when they spoke of "liberty" and the "pursuit of happiness." Each individual should be free to engage in any kind of work or line of production he sees fit. He may produce threshing machines, mouse traps, or hatpins. He may be a farmer, manufacturer, or a workman. There is no higher power which says what he must do or what he must produce. Again, this privilege is not absolute, but by and large a person is free to engage in any kind of enterprise.

3. That simply means that a person is left to follow the dictates of *self-interest*. The thing that will guide him in the choice of his occupation will be the market value of his labor or his line of production. He will not continue to work for nothing or make things he cannot sell. He will soon stop producing hatpins if the ladies quit wearing them, because there will be no market for his product and the price will drop to practically nothing. It will be to his own advantage to do the thing for which he is best fitted and which brings him the greatest net income. For that reason it has been said that our economic order is based upon self-interest as the driving force moving the wheels of industry.

4. Closely allied with this is the idea of *profit*. A person engages in this or that type of production because it brings him a profit. If he does not make more than his expenses, he will be forced to close down. Because of this situation our system has also been called the "*profit system*" or the "*price system*." Upon close scrutiny it will be seen that this feature is a direct result of the basic institution of private property and free enterprise.

5. Another natural accompaniment of private property and free enterprise is *competition*. Anyone, for example, who makes plows will try to make his plows as good as possible, so that he can sell them. As soon as he does so, he is in competition with other plow makers and, for that matter, with the makers of implements of all



kinds. And this holds true with regard to any activity that one might name. Competition, therefore, is almost universal in our economic system, and we rely upon it largely to secure industrial efficiency. "In farming, mining, manufacturing, banking, merchandising, and so on, there goes on a continual struggle for existence, in which the less able producers fail and are eliminated. He who is the quickest and surest of judgment, who watches the markets and the cost with the most unerring eye, and who can best foresee coming changes in the demand, the supply, or the conditions of production for a commodity, is most likely to succeed. In each industry there is a battle to maintain the best markets and the lowest costs. The competition of buyers and sellers tends to keep prices down to the level of costs and to keep the costs as low as the existing state of productive technique and the ability of the producers make possible. Within each plant, moreover, there is competition among the employees to win promotion to the best positions. So all along the line there is a continuous rivalry which acts as a powerful incentive to efficiency." (Bye, *op. cit.*, p. 465.) As a consequence our system has also been called the "*competitive system*."

6. Now, competition invariably brings with it *inequality in wealth* and income. This stands to reason, for people themselves are unequal. In the race some are going to move faster, and others will lag far behind. Some are more industrious, some are more intelligent, and some "have more luck." If a person is a laborer and his kind of skill is scarce, he is paid a higher wage. If he is enterprising and has a large amount of business acumen, he can foresee events and make his investments accordingly. The natural result of such a process of income getting is that some will receive more, others less; and if there are no restrictions, yea, even in spite of restrictions, some receive very much and others hardly enough to keep body and soul together. It has been said that in the United States, which today has a higher standard of living than any other nation, about 30 per cent of the people are living on a bare subsistence level and that 4 per cent own 80 per cent of the wealth of the nation.

Because of this fact some have described the capitalistic system as one which operates in the interest of the few and for the exploitation of the masses. But our presentation has shown that such extreme inequality is not of the essence of capitalism, but rather a consequence of the freedom, or rather the misuse of freedom, allowed in an economic order in which private property and free enterprise prevail.

Because of the freedom from government interference our system is also called *laissez faire*. This French term means "let alone" and refers to the idea that the government should let each



individual alone to seek his economic advantage as he sees fit. It is held that a normal person is the best judge of what is good for himself. In general he will find the niche in society for which he is best suited. Furthermore, if his occupation is his own choice, he will feel better about it, will work with greater enthusiasm, and in the end contribute more to the general welfare than if hedged in by all kinds of government regulations. Thus self-interest and the natural law of supply and demand would automatically work out to the good of all, and the sum total of human happiness would be the greater.

These doctrines were eagerly taken up by the utilitarians (Jeremy Bentham, the Mills, etc.), whose leitmotiv was "the greatest good to the greatest number." Originally, however, they were promulgated in opposition to the system called "mercantilism," which held sway before that, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries. Under mercantilism all industry and commerce was to be carried on in the interest of the state. The coffers of the king had to be filled. And the way to do that was to encourage industry so that you could sell more to other countries than you bought from them. The doctrine of a "favorable trade balance" was believed in as gospel truth. Hence there were minute regulations for all businesses. It is said that the rules for the textile industry in France, for example, covered over 2,000 pages. Even the number of threads in every fabric was prescribed, and there was rigid enforcement. 16,000 people are estimated to have lost their lives because of infractions of the rules covering calico alone.

*Laissez faire* was a protest against this system and was in line with the general demand of the times for more freedom in all phases of life. Its chief proponent was *Adam Smith*, who in 1776 produced that epoch-making work called *Wealth of Nations*.

Naturally, Smith's ideas were not adopted at once, but as time went on one government restriction after another was abolished, and *laissez faire* became the guiding principle of the new economic order; although we must keep in mind that at no time, not even in the heyday of 1860, was there complete *laissez faire* in any country.

*Laissez faire*, then, was but another concession to liberalism and individualism; and as we look back, we must say that in the short space of 125 years this system made greater advances in the economic sphere than were made since the time of Abraham, almost 4,000 years earlier. Not only was there a marvelous expansion in the production of goods of all kinds, but, despite a great increase in population, also a great enhancement of the average wealth per person; in other words, the average standard of living has risen far beyond anything ever known before.



However, it soon developed that the new system, which quite generally came to be called capitalism, did not guarantee economic justice and the well-being of society. Economic freedom meant in too many cases freedom for the wealthy but practically slavery for the masses. The employers had all the advantage. Since they also controlled governments, they could have laws passed in their own interests, and low wages and sweatshops were the result for the workers. The lust for profits led to unscrupulous competition and inhuman practices, the race for new markets and raw materials, and even to imperialistic wars between nations.

Because of all this, many people are today condemning capitalism as unchristian. "Self-interest rules supreme," say they. "Rugged individualism leads to a dog-eat-dog policy. It's every-one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost. And even the better element in society is forced to go along with this policy or perish in the mad scramble."

It is well known that the United Church in Canada, in an official pronouncement a few years ago, roundly condemned capitalism as immoral. Recently leading divines and influential laymen of the Anglican Church met at Malvern, England, under the leadership of the Archbishop of York and adopted resolutions such as the following:

1. "Christian doctrine must insist that production exists for consumption . . . to a large extent production is carried on not to supply the consumer with goods, but to bring profits to the producer. . . . This method . . . becomes the source of unemployment at home and dangerous competition for markets abroad. . . . The monetary system must be so administered that what the community can produce is made available to the members of the community, the satisfaction of human needs being accepted as the only true end of production.

2. "The true status of man independent of economic progress must find expression in the managerial framework of industry; the rights of labor must be recognized as in principle equal to those of capital in the control of industry, whatever the means by which this transformation is effected.

3. "In international trade a genuine interchange of materially needed commodities must take the place of a struggle for so-called favorable balance. . . . We must recover reverence for the earth and its resources, treating it no longer as a reservoir of potential wealth to be exploited, but as a storehouse of divine bounty on which we utterly depend.

4. "After the war, our aim must be the unification of Europe as a co-operative commonwealth.



5. "The Church has the duty and the right to speak not only to its members, but to the world, concerning the true principles of human life. . . . The Church, as we know it, does not. . . . We therefore urge that enterprises be initiated whereby that life can be made manifest."

And this was not all. An amendment with far-reaching implications was moved by a Liberal Member of Parliament, Sir Richard Acland: "In the present situation we believe the Church should declare that the maintenance of that part of the structure of our society by which the ownership of the great resources of our community can be vested in *private individuals is a stumbling block*, making it harder for the generality of men to live Christian lives."

A little later the North American Ecumenical Conference, with delegates from almost all Protestant and non-Roman communions from the Caribbean to the Arctic, met in Toronto. "Its consensus: 1) Hitler is fighting the war with an idea; 2) Christianity, to survive, must show the world it has a better idea; 3) this will require a drastically different social order in the postwar world; 4) the Church must offer some leadership toward a more constructive and more lasting peace than Versailles.

"The haves should share with have-nots. Re-asserted was a Federal Council pronouncement of last December, calling for a world where economic opportunity is not the legal monopoly of those national groups which through accident or prior aggression have obtained control of the bounties of nature."

Said one report: "People must be provided with basic shelter, food, fuel, clothing, and health services, even if all the people, including the rich, have to be rationed."

Thus Toronto echoed Malvern. It declared that in North America, as well as in Germany and England, things are in such a mess that a solution to the unemployment problem has been found only in armament programs. "We can well say, with our fellow Christians in England," said one speaker, "that the system under which we have lived has been a predisposing cause of war, even though those who direct and profit by it have desired peace." These solutions were suggested: "State planning; wider use of producers' and consumers' co-operatives."

And Dr. C. C. Morrison, editor of the *Christian Century*, had this to say in a sermon delivered at the University of Chicago: "The housekeeping of mankind is organized as a system of both domestic and imperial greed. This greed is an expression of both human need and human sin. The perennial tragedy to which it leads inheres in the fact that this need and this sin are forced to live together in an *economic system which falsifies human dignity* by



tying up the satisfaction of elemental human needs with the necessity of injuring or oppressing or even killing others. This is why the nations fight. We cannot hope for peace while the nations cherish the unjust privileges upon which their economic life is based." (Quoted from *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY* for September, 1940.)

Also within our own circles similar voices are being heard. In an essay read before the Professors' Conference at River Forest, Dr. Haentzschel writes: "There is evidently an inherent clash of interest between competitive capitalism and labor, between profits and human welfare." And again: "The capitalistic system as it has arisen out of *laissez faire* contains no spiritual values but is hostile to them in its nature. Its heart and soul are profits; it is purely materialistic. As it has grown, it has more and more centered American life and thought about money. The possession of money has become the supreme ambition, the mark of success in life, the badge of honor. Other values have correspondingly been overshadowed and diminished, including the religious and moral values which serve as a check to antisocial tendencies and on which depends the health and preservation of society, not to speak of higher goods. That the modern economic system is *intrinsically the incarnation of selfishness*, without benefit of higher motives, soon became, as we have seen, painfully evident in its workings. It exalted profits and property rights above human rights and generated glaring social injustices and ills." (*Minutes of the Professors' Conference*, p. 56.)

Now, what shall we say to this? Certainly it is a very serious matter; for if Dr. Morrison is right, if our present economic order really forces us "to injure or oppress or even kill others in order to satisfy our elemental human needs," if it is "*intrinsically the incarnation of selfishness*," then, of course, we should all be unalterably opposed to it, and as Christian pastors and citizens we should do all we can to have it abolished and bring in a new order.

But is that really the case? It seems to us that we go too far if we condemn capitalism *per se*. It isn't the system as such, but rather the abuse of such privileges which it permits that is the root of the trouble. After all the capitalistic system merely allows a certain amount of freedom in economic life. If human beings do not have the moral character to use that freedom correctly, if they rather misuse it to exploit the neighbor, then we should not say the system in itself is immoral.

If it be argued that experience shows that man always abuses that freedom to the detriment of his fellow men, the answer is that the same holds with regard to any freedom that man has. It may be necessary to curtail the freedom of the individual in the interest of



the larger group. It may even be found expedient to abolish the whole system and put something better in its place, but the evil doesn't inhere in the system, it inheres in the heart of man.

And this is not intended as an argument in favor of the *status quo*. On the other hand, if we are opposed to capitalism and wish to abolish it, let us make sure of what we want in its place; else the cure may be worse than the disease. Stephen Leacock says there is very much wrong with a system that depends on private buying and private selling, but that it is the only system that ever worked outside the Garden of Eden.

What is obviously being worked out in North America today is a compromise between capitalism and socialism. If this can be accomplished, the two extremes — unregulated capitalism and complete socialism — will be avoided. In our opinion this would be the best solution of the problem with which we are faced today. Unless we believe in the possibility of such a compromise, the only alternative to our present order is socialism or collectivism.

As already stated, there is a definite trend in that direction. Let us now try to analyze this trend and seek to determine what its introduction would imply.

The two terms "socialism" and "collectivism" are practically synonymous today and refer to any system in which the control of property and industry no longer is exercised by private individuals, but inheres in larger groups. Strictly speaking, "collectivism" is the better word, since it has a wider connotation and certain forms of collective ownership are often not called socialism, but for practical purposes the two may be used interchangeably.

There are of course all shades of socialism, from the most radical communism down to the mildest form of democratic management of industry by a community for the benefit of its members. The various forms or types may be conveniently classified as follows:

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. State socialism | 4. Christian socialism     |
| 2. Guild socialism | 5. Consumers' co-operation |
| 3. Syndicalism     |                            |

a. Consumers' co-operation, to begin with the last, would be an organization of all consumers, that is, all people, in societies for the benefit of producing for use and not for profit, e. g., co-operative stores, co-operative insurance societies, etc. This would be a kind of voluntary socialism. The renowned Kagawa of Japan and many other Christian leaders believe this would be the solution of our problems. They call it "Christianizing the economic order."

b. Christian socialism accepts the socialist ideal on ethical rather than on economic grounds and sees in the movement an



effort to realize the teachings of Christ rather than a struggle of classes for material advantages.

c. Syndicalism aims at the federation of workers in all trades into an effective organization, strong enough to enforce the demands of labor. The cry of the syndicalists is "one big union." If the A. F. of L. or the C. I. O. became powerful enough, we should have a form of syndicalism.

d. Guild socialism represents an attempt at a compromise between state ownership and syndicalism. Each industry would organize into a guild, to which all engaged in that industry, both managers and workers, would belong. Italy and Germany before the surrender had a kind of guild system, except, of course, that the state controlled all the units in the organization.

We cannot go into a discussion of all of these at this time. We shall concern ourselves entirely with state socialism, all the more since it seems evident that any kind of successful collectivism would ultimately be state socialism. Any organization which would become strong enough to control industry in this our industrial society would simply be the state. And, besides, practically all socialists today are making every effort to gain political control. They know that without that they will never have a chance to bring in their reforms and carry out a socialistic program.

In a very real sense the movement of socialism represents a pushing upward and a clamoring for recognition on the part of the lower classes. It gained strength in the middle of the last century chiefly through the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marx is the apostle of the proletariat, the workers, and perhaps rightly called the father of modern socialism. Certainly, his influence in the various countries has been greater than that of any other writer. His *Kapital*, published in 1867, is still the Bible for most socialists, and it was his system that Lenin tried to introduce in Russia. It may be well, therefore, that we briefly summarize the Marxian philosophy. It embraces, above all, these five major points:

1. The first and most fundamental is his economic or materialistic interpretation of history. Marx holds that everything always has and always will depend upon economics. Other things are not important. The general social order at any given time is always determined by the manner in which the people produce and exchange goods. The technique of making a living will decide what kind of political setup, what kind of religion, what kind of customs, what kind of anything they will have. It will also determine which classes in a society will be on top and which below. In ancient times there were masters and slaves, in the Middle Ages feudal



lords and serfs, and now we have the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the capitalists and the workers.

2. Because of this there has always been a class struggle. "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles," says the famous *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. The interests of one class always conflict with those of another: it is employers against employees, landlords against renters, capitalists against wage earners. The Church is always found on the side of the privileged classes; "religion is the opium of the people." Political power is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another.

3. The only one who really earns is the laborer. This constitutes Marx' "theory of the value of labor." Under capitalism the capitalist takes most of the profit, while the laborer gets barely enough to eke out an existence. Thus he is constantly exploited.

4. Because of its very nature capitalism cannot grow without at the same time pushing a larger and larger percentage of people into the wage-earner class, for wealth will be concentrated more and more in the hands of a very few by monopolies. This situation cannot last. Finally the masses of the proletariat will rise in their wrath and overwhelm the oppressors, just as the burgher class overwhelmed the feudal lords. Marx believed this revolutionary cataclysm was inevitable. He lived at the time of Darwin and felt that his theory paralleled the biological evolution of Darwin. The social revolution was foreordained in accordance with the materialistic interpretation of history. "It rested upon the relations between the physical constitution of the earth and the mental and physical attributes of man." (Dunning, *Political Theories*, p. 374.)

5. In the inevitable upheaval the proletariat will seize control by force. The "expropriators will be expropriated." In the new order everyone will be a worker. Each will contribute according to ability and receive according to his needs. The classless society will be a reality, for any basis for classes and class antagonism will have been swept away. Society will have become "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

That is, in brief, the doctrine of Marx. His system is usually called communism. It distinguishes itself from other forms of socialism in that it is the most radical. At the same time it is not only anti-Christian, but antireligious. Religion is not merely disregarded, but roundly denounced as harmful. Economic goods are the only things that count; spiritual values are of no avail. Thus the whole view of life of the Marxists is materialistic and hence atheistic and in a very real sense degrading to man.



As stated, Marx's influence has been tremendous, and it has been asserted that all socialism is Marxian and that no active socialist could remain a Christian. Yet we believe this is going too far. In the light of later developments and in view of the fact that there are so many kinds of socialism, we may say that a Christian *can* be a socialist and that all who favor collectivism are not necessarily antireligious in their sentiments. The present government of New Zealand, for example, is largely socialistic without bowing to anti-Christian communism.

Certain strands of communistic thought of course appear in all socialistic camps. Chief among these is the demand for collective ownership and control of industry by society. This, as already pointed out, is the fundamental tenet of socialism. All socialists denounce capitalism with its profit motive as the incarnation of social injustice, leading invariably to exploitation of the masses and enrichment of the few. They demand a planned economy in place of the haphazard system now in vogue. Only then, say they, can the needs of society be satisfied, for property relations will no longer be a restriction on production, and the productive classes will be guaranteed the full use of the products of their labor.

And the demands of the socialists are being heeded. The growing concentration of power in the hands of the central government, the increased interference in industry, the expansion of governmental ownership, the passage of social security acts, the increase in state credit to the people of low income, the immense taxes upon the rich and various other New Deal measures, are all signs of this trend toward a collectivistic order. During the depression there was of course a great amount of agitation for a change in our system, and many were calling for abolishing capitalism altogether.

Now, what shall we say to this? Or do such matters not concern us as pastors and church members? A little thought will reveal that they do. We owe it to ourselves and to the Church to strive for clarity on these issues, for they vitally affect the lives of our people and cannot be divorced from moral implications. Many of our members are being influenced by socialistic propaganda. They rant against capitalism with the best of them. When you ask them: "And what do you want in place of the present system?" they say, "Some form of socialism. That will at least make it impossible for the big guns to get everything and give us little fellows a chance."

In order to evaluate the movement rightly, it is necessary that we keep in mind certain considerations which are always pertinent when socialism is discussed. Our space is limited, and we submit very briefly what we consider the more important items. The



eleven points we first stress are not based on the Bible; they represent what many thinkers have arrived at on the basis of common sense and experience.

1. First and foremost is the consideration that every kind of socialism means a *tremendous increase in the power of government* and that when the state has great power, the individual has less freedom. There is an old saying that if you "*abolish private property, you have dictatorship; and if you have a dictatorship, you no longer have private property.*" Experience has borne out the truth of this statement. Remember that even Hitler called his system National Socialism, and Dictator Stalin, who has succeeded in collectivizing even agriculture in Russia, claims he has the best form of collectivism. It simply remains an axiom that whoever controls the economic life of a people controls that people altogether. The power of the big moneymen over industry is great today, but it is small compared with the power of the government officials in a socialistic state. Since our economic system is so highly complex, no government, even though it were constantly in power, could supervise everything. It would be forced to adopt arbitrary methods, and thus authoritarianism in the economic and political sphere would be inevitable.

2. Also the laboring class would lose its freedom; for since practically everybody would be working for the government, it would be almost treason to go on strike. A worker would have to stay on the job assigned to him. If he didn't, the state as the only employer could easily prevent him from getting another position.

3. By controlling almost all resources a government could easily perpetuate itself. The party in power could readily marshal the necessary votes, for between elections all people would be working for it.

4. In introducing socialism we would merely be taking control from one group and putting it into the hands of another. What guarantee have we that this new group would always work for the best interests of the people? Would the socialistic system guarantee a higher type of government official?

5. Socialists argue that competition would be done away with. This is a fallacy. Competition is a fundamental social process. It exists wherever people live together in larger groups.

6. A socialistic system to be and remain democratic, as its advocates contend it must, would demand a citizenship with a thorough understanding of economic principles, for economics and politics would be interwoven still more than they are now. Experience proves that it is impossible to reach the stage where the



mass of the people actually study such problems and are thus able to make intelligent decision with regard to these matters.

7. The only way the government could gain control of property is by *confiscation*. Some argue the government could buy the property from present owners. This is a contradiction. How can the state gain control of property if it gives the present owners some other property?

8. All collectivism tends to discourage if not to paralyze initiative. Owing to general regimentation, the freedom of choice and action would be seriously restricted. Men would be apt to say, "Why work hard and try something new? We cannot improve our lot anyway."

9. Under socialism the individual would in a large measure be relieved of personal responsibility. Even now we have too many who say, "Why worry? The state will take care of us." This business of depending upon the government for everything is serious.

10. Socialists claim that "planned production" will obviate disorganization and avoid much waste. In this way the amount of goods produced would be increased, and there would be more for each to consume. In other words the standard of living would rise. While it must be admitted that authoritarian governments are "terribly" efficient in this respect, there is grave doubt whether that system is best in the long run. Arbitrary though well-intended interference of government officials would be frequent, and the danger of disturbing the balance of economic forces could hardly be avoided.

11. Socialists insist that the profit motive must be done away with. People would have to work for the welfare of the community and not for their own benefit. That simply means that socialism, to be effective, would require a higher type of citizen morally, or, as some one has put it, "Socialism would work if everybody were a good Christian." True, but the same may be said of capitalism.

These are some of the points we must keep in mind when we are trying to determine whether socialism offers promise and hope for a solution of our social problems. From the more specific view of the church member there are still other considerations which must not be lost sight of. We shall list also these very briefly.

1. The chief problem as far as the Church is concerned is the one inherent in a dictatorship. A dictatorship tends to be extremely nationalistic and hence totalitarian. Would the all-powerful state keep its hands off religion and the Church? We know that separation of Church and State is difficult to maintain even in a democracy. Would not this danger be enhanced under an authoritarian



government? And what would be the status of the Church under socialism? Would we be as free to operate as we are now? Would we, for example, be permitted to raise collections whenever we saw fit and for any cause we desired? Would we be allowed to send moneys out of the country any time we wished? Could we purchase any property we deemed adequate for our needs? Could we gather endowments and make investments of gifts? Could we carry on charitable endeavors, such as hospitals, old people's homes, and the like?

2. Christianity stresses the worth of the individual soul and its relation to God. All collectivism directs attention to the group and group life, and thus the emphasis is on externals. On account of constant regimentation the inner life of the individual is in danger of being more or less neglected.

3. Socialism lays stress upon material things. Economics is the all-important subject matter of thought, and thus the attention of the people is likely to be constantly directed to the here and now, to the neglect of things eternal.

4. Socialists are wont to promise the dawn of a golden age here on earth once their program is adopted. As Christians we should remember that "righteousness exalteth a nation." The welfare of society depends upon the moral fiber of its people. The solution of the problem of man's relation to his fellow man and the use of his earthly goods is real Christian stewardship. Whatever makes men good Christians also makes them good economists and useful members of society. By the preaching of God's Word we are instrumental in engendering a living faith in the hearts of the people, and thus we bring them to a realization that everything they are and have is attributable to God's grace and that all earthly goods should be used to His glory and the welfare of the neighbor.

#### **Totalitarianism with Special Rereference to National Socialism**

"Totalitarianism" as a term is of recent origin. Yet the idea itself is not new. Totalitarianism as we understand it today simply means that the state claims the right to dictate in *all matters* and to *control every phase of the life* of its people. The individual as such does not count. He amounts to something only in as far as he can contribute to the life of the state. In this respect he is like any member of the human body. A hand, for example, would only be harming itself if it refused to obey orders from headquarters. Alone and separate from the body, it really has no existence; it is absolutely worthless. And so with the individual member of the state. His whole being, his very existence as a human entity, is



wrapped up in the life of the body politic. Therefore he has no right over against the state. He cannot rise up and say: "This is something the state cannot do."

Mussolini defined the conception this way: "The Fascist conception of the state is *all-embracing*; outside it no human or spiritual value can exist, much less have value. Thus understood, Fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist state — synthesis and a unit inclusive of all values — interprets, develops, and potentiates the whole life of a people." In his book *The Doctrine of Fascism* he says: "Political doctrines pass, but humanity remains, and it may rather be expected that this will be a century of authority, a century of the left, a century of Fascism; for if the nineteenth century was a century of individualism (liberalism always signifying individualism), it may be expected that this will be the century of collectivism and hence the century of the state. It is a perfectly logical deduction that a new doctrine can utilize all the still vital elements of previous doctrines.

"The foundation of Fascism is the conception of the state, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism conceives of the state as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the state.

"The state, as conceived of and as created by Fascism, is a spiritual and moral fact in itself, since its political, juridical, and economic organization of the nation is a concrete thing; and such an organization must be in its origins and development a manifestation of the spirit. The state is the guarantor of security both internal and external, but it is also the custodian and transmitter of the spirit of the people, as it has grown up through the centuries in language, in customs, and in faith." (Pp. 451, 452.)

Hitler repeatedly spoke of the "Hingabe des personlichen Daseins, des eigenen Lebens fuer die Gemeinschaft." "Alle Faehigkeiten," he said, "muss man in den Dienst der Gemeinschaft stellen, und das eigene Ich der Gesamtheit unterordnen, wenn noetig, auch zum Opfer bringen." (*Mein Kampf*, pp. 326, 327.) Even religion is subordinated to political power. "The state is regarded as the incorporation of the will of the people, centering itself in the responsible leader, and as such it is absolutely supreme in authority. In every field, including that of morals and religion, it speaks with the voice of God; it is God." (Haentzschel, *op. cit.*, p. 60.) From this it will be seen that totalitarian principles are the exact opposite of the ideals of a Christian *Weltanschauung* as well as of individualism and democracy. Perhaps we could say that totalitarianism is love and duty to country gone to the extreme, yea, to such an extreme that it is idolatrous, for to the totalitarian the state comes first at all times. It has usurped the place of God.



In order to make totalitarianism ring true, the leaders of these states insist that all members of the state must be imbued with the same spirit. There must be uniformity of ideals and *Weltanschauung*. If one believes one thing and the other something else, there cannot be a well-integrated organism, but rather strife and disunion. All will then not believe in and work for the same goal, namely, the glory of the state. As Hitler puts it, there must be "eine bestimmte, begrenzte, straff organisierte, geistig und willensmaessig-einheitliche politische Glaubens- und Kampfgemeinschaft." (*Mein Kampf*, p. 419.)

And the implication is that you are really a member of the body politic only if you accept this faith, otherwise you are outside the pale. This ideology must guide everyone in all walks of life, also the artist, for example. In the *Voelkischer Beobachter* (May 21, 1934) we read, "So long as there remains in Germany any unpolitical, neutral, liberal, or individualistic art, our task is not ended. There must no longer be a single artist who creates otherwise than nationally and with a national purpose. Every artist who withdraws from this preoccupation must be hunted as an enemy of the nation until he gives up his intolerable resistance." (Quoted in *Roots of Totalitarianism*, p. 28.)

From this it will be seen that totalitarian principles always imply a dictatorial form of government. This is necessarily so. The will of the State must become audible in some way, and that is only possible through the mouths of its officials; and since a number of the officials could disagree, it finally comes down to the decision of the one, the leader, the Fuehrer. In him the organism has its head. Parliamentarianism militates against the totalitarian idea because it must allow different parties and different opinions. Just for that reason Hitler and Mussolini insisted on one party and were so scornful of democracies. Totalitarianism will not allow "differences to be different."

As stated, the doctrine of totalitarianism is not new. What is modern is not its spirit, its creed, its world outlook, but rather the manner in which it applies ancient social principles to the conditions of a complex modern civilization. Actually the doctrine of the all-competent, all-embracing state is almost as old as human history. We know that in ancient civilizations the ruler was often looked upon as the favorite of the gods and demanded divine homage. Think of the Pharaohs of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, the Roman Caesars. They were all deified. Indeed, the present Japanese emperor is still called the "Son of Heaven." In many instances, even among primitive peoples, there obtained hidebound customs and mores which left the individual



absolutely no freedom. His whole existence as a human being was wrapped up in the life of the tribe or the group or the nation.

In the time allotted we cannot of course trace the history of totalitarian doctrine in all its meanderings down through history, but a few highlights will not be amiss.

Totalitarians like to insist that Plato is one of the chief sources of their doctrines. Though Plato himself would probably object to this, for he did advocate a blending of the monarchal and the democratic form of government, there is much truth in the statement that Plato advocates a totalitarian order. In his *Republic*, for example, he adheres to the *organic view* of the state. He says, "Is not that the best-ordered state which most nearly approaches to the condition of the individual—as in the body, when but a finger of one of us is hurt, the whole frame . . . feels the hurt and sympathizes altogether with the part affected?"

*That simply means that the state is an individual.* As in the individual intellect, or reason, should rule over the emotions and passions, so in Plato's state the wise men, the philosophers, should be the rulers of the others. The state's main duty would be education. The prime minister would be none other than the minister of education, and the aim would be to develop the whole man in mind, body, and soul. The state would regulate the entire education of its citizens from the cradle to the grave. Therefore it would also make provision for religious ceremonies and observances. The rulers or guardians would also assign to each that place for which he is best suited, and he could not change. No group and no individual will then interfere with another. All will co-operate toward the general good, and harmony will reign supreme. That will be the perfect society, the just state; for "justice is the having and doing what is one's own," and a just man is a man in just the right place.

Besides this there would be strict eugenic laws, regulating the procreation of offspring so that the race may be improved. As in the breeding of animals, the best should be selected for mating. The better and braver should have as many sons as possible. Weak and deformed children should be left to die.

Furthermore, there would be laws regulating the economic activities of man. His patrimony could not be taken from him, he could not own more than four times what the poorest had, there would be no dowries at weddings, no lending money at interest. Even the minutest details would be controlled by the state, as for example, the eating of meals, traveling to a foreign country, the picking of fruit, yea, the number of guests that may attend a wedding. Plato expressly says, "I say who gives up the control of their *private* lives and supposes that they will conform to the law



in their common and public life is making a great mistake." (*Laws*, p. 780.)

The same idea of the state as an organism recurs repeatedly in the history of political thought. We find it in Thomas Hobbes in England, Jean Jacques Rousseau in France, and particularly in the writings of the German idealists Fichte and Hegel. Let us pause here for a brief review of the ideas of these two leaders of thought in Germany. We shall quote from a book entitled *Der Kampf der evang. Kirche in Deutschland und seine allgemeine Bedeutung*. (English title: *Cross and Swastika*.) The author is Dr. Arthur Frey, for ten years head of the Swiss Evangelical Press Service in Zurich. In a chapter on the Development of the National Socialist State he has this to say: "The exclusive authority of God, as it was proclaimed and brought to recognition by the Reformation, suffered in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a gradual disintegration. God was anthropomorphized: He was put on a level with the human soul; He was seen in man; man was deified. In proportion as final exclusive authority was taken from God, secular power, particularly the state, assumed absolute authority.

"The German philosopher who evolved an absolutist political science was Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel. It was his belief that with his conception he was keeping strictly to the ground occupied by the Lutheran Reformation. He was grateful to the Reformation and glad that it broke up the unity of the Church and thereby helped the State to its power and dignity. Only by its crystallization in the course of history into a State does a people gather itself together for action and thereby come to consciousness of its freedom. This freedom is man's deepest being and, at the same time, his highest aim; and seeing that man achieves freedom in the State, Hegel can pronounce the remarkable opinion: '*Everything which man is, he owes to the State!*' Not merely is it, as the Reformers emphasize, that the State is an organization willed by God; Hegel expresses in the loftiest strains the deification of the State. 'The existence of the State is the work of God in the world.' The State is absolute purpose, 'the real God,' 'the Divine, existing in and for itself,' 'of absolute authority and majesty.' It is not possible to speak more absolutely of the State. With Hegel we already have the totalitarian State!

"For Hegel the State is in character completely religious. In the same way as the people, the State also has its roots in religion; but the people exist for the sake of the State and not the reverse. There is absolutely nothing which stands over the State. Hegel stresses with the greatest emphasis that the State stands above religion.

"Therefore Church doctrine also falls within the State's domain.



Everything has to subordinate itself to the State; even science and, along with it, theology, stand first of all at the service of the State. Within this limit they enjoy freedom. Thus with Hegel the State comprehends all the elements of life and in this way becomes the sum total of morality. . . .

"If with Hegel the State is the ultimate and the highest existence in the world, there crops up with other thinkers a new conception that is peculiar to the nineteenth century; it is the conception of the Nation. It became popular through Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, which prepared the way for the German National State. 'Among all peoples you (the Germans) are that in which is contained most definitely the germ of human perfection.' He sees the German people as the sole modern people that can boast of a living speech of its own and that possesses a creative literature and science. It is the people of poets and thinkers and is called to be the 'regenerator and restorer of the world.' Fichte's belief in the German nation breathes a religious spirit. German nationality is to him something divine, no less than an organ through which the eternal spirit reveals itself. He sees the Fatherland 'under the image of eternity, and that the visible and sensible eternity.' Fichte founds a national mysticism; with him not the State, but the nation is divine. This national mysticism, or, to put it otherwise, mystical patriotism, has exerted a profound influence on the German people. Fichte recognized that man is willing to make sacrifices only for a religious cause, and therefore he proclaimed nationality as a gift of God, 'for which the man who is noble is happy to sacrifice himself.'" (Pp. 49—53.)

Many other writers could be mentioned here who, in a sense, prepared the way for the totalitarianism of Hitler's Germany. We shall call attention to just one more, namely Friedrich Nietzsche (1844—1900). Nietzsche seized upon the Darwinian doctrine of the "struggle for existence" and the "survival of the fittest" and developed this into a philosophy of the "will to power." "The will to live," he says, "is a will to power." "The rewards of the successful exertion of power are not false and evil, but real and good. Indeed, they are the only human goods." "This 'will to power' colors our thoughts. It gives us moral backbone. It inspires us to live dangerously. It gives us the guts to submit and suffer with gritted teeth when and where we must." "If a will to power beats at the heart of the world, it is natural, and therefore meet, right, and fitting that the race should be to the swift and the battle to the strong. The law of nature is, as Plato makes Callicles remark in the *Gorgias*, that the stronger should rule the weaker. The only morality sanctioned by nature is that *might is right*. [Emphasis our own.] In that case it is right that man should strive to make him-



self continuously more and more mighty and should breed a 'superman' to inherit the earth. This can be accomplished only by freeing the 'few strong,' to use once more the Platonic phrase, from the 'many weak,' and by enabling them to exercise their natural right to dominate and rule the common herd.

"That, as matters stand, the race is not always to the swift or the battle to the strong is the fault of a perverted morality, for which Christianity is largely to blame. Christianity exalts humility, self-abnegation, pity, the sacrifice of the stronger to the weak. Such an ethics is 'Sklavenmoral.' . . . This must be swept away. The only true goods are strength of heart and strength of limb and power and splendor. These we must love and cherish and seek to build up in ourselves and in the race. The strong must take what they can. The weak must go to the wall, and suffer they must. The day of the superman is at hand, and we must prepare his way.

"Nietzsche's doctrines of the will to power and of the natural right of the strong to dominate the weak and his ethical ideal of the superman had a widespread and profound influence." (Fuller, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 562, 563.) — Dr. MacEachran of Alberta University stated some time ago that when he studied in Germany before the last war, he found, particularly among the students, many Nietzsche clubs and that these young people were fanatical adherents of the doctrine of power.

From all this it will be seen that there was a lot of Nazism in Germany long before Hitler ever appeared on the scene. Very few if any of the tenets of Nazi ideology originated with Hitler. What he did was to adopt and join together various ideas, promulgated by others at different times, into a philosophical system which he calls "die neue Weltanschauung der National-Sozialistischen-Deutschen-Arbeiter-Partei." In line with this, Nazism demanded a complete reorientation of one's view of life, a new way of regarding the world, a new interpretation of the meaning of life and the objects of national policy. Hitler emphasized this again and again. In the first chapter of the second part of *Mein Kampf* he says: "Es war selbstverstaendlich, dass die neue Bewegung nur dann hoffen durfte, die noetige Bedeutung und die erforderliche Staerke fuer diesen Riesenkampf zu erhalten, wenn es ihr vom ersten Tage an gelang, in den Herzen ihrer Anhaenger die heilige Ueberzeugung zu erwecken, dass mit ihr dem politischen Leben nicht eine neue Wahlparole oktroyiert, sondern eine neue Weltanschauung von prinzipieller Bedeutung vorangestellt werden solle." (*Mein Kampf*, page 409.)

And we might add that all the essential elements of this *Weltanschauung*, also those which are anti-Christian, are to be found in



*Mein Kampf*. It was often said that Rosenberg was the philosopher of the movement and that if one wanted to understand its philosophy one would have to go to his *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*. But in reality Rosenberg brought nothing new, though he did develop the paganism of the movement more fully.

Hitler emphasized the *theory of race*. This was really the fundamental basis of his whole system; and because he believed in it fanatically, it was the wellspring of all his actions. Many people lost sight of this fact and as a consequence failed to grasp the significance of the movement he inaugurated.

According to the theory there are lower and higher races among people, just as there are lower and higher species of animals. The elite among the races is the Aryan, though in *Mein Kampf* the word *Nordic* is used also, and one gains the impression that *Aryanism* and *Deutschtum* are the same thing. All progress in the history of mankind, all its higher life, whether in the spiritual, artistic, or economic field, are the achievement of the Aryan race. If for some reason the Aryans would disappear, mankind would soon sink back into a state of savagery. The only hope for humanity, therefore, is the propagation and the maintenance of the superior race. It's all in the blood. If a person has that Aryan blood, he belongs to the superior race. It's of the greatest good to the world, therefore, that the blood remain pure, and hence it is the chief duty of the state (and this is a fundamental difference between Hitler's totalitarianism and that of others) to work for that goal. Mixing this elite blood with inferior blood is the greatest sin. Germany failed in the 1914 war fully to realize this race problem, and that accounts for her ultimate tragic defeat.

If we ask for the reason for this superiority, Hitler tells us it's not owing to the Aryan's greater will to live, but to his ability to see beyond his own nose, as it were, and realize the advantage of joining hands for the common good and, if need be, to sacrifice himself for it. This ability the Aryan has by birth. It's in his blood. The Jews are considered inferior, the very opposite of the Aryan, which view sanctioned their persecution. Here we have the explanation of the determined effort to increase the birth rate in Aryan Germany, accompanied by plans to provide sufficient *Lebensraum* for the growing Teutonic population.

Even the blind can see now what the theory of "race and blood and soil" implied. Hitler's constant appeal to nature was a reiteration of the law of the jungle, and a challenge to the whole spiritual structure erected by Hugo Grotius some three hundred years ago. Certainly the doctrine that "might makes right" could not be stated more crassly. At the same time, is it any wonder that the statesmen in other countries refused to take Hitler seriously? By



and large they considered his teachings just the rantings of a political orator, who would cool off if he ever got into power. We know now that they made a big mistake. The whole theory of purity of race is of course so much nonsense when viewed scientifically. Hitler and the members of his party adhered to it fanatically and acted upon it. The war therefore was more than a mere struggle for territory. What concerns us more vitally than the political implications is the fact that Nazi ideology struck at the very heart of Christian teaching. The *voelkische Weltanschauung*, as taught by Hitler and his party, was diametrically opposed to the Christian view of life, as must be evident to anyone who has given the matter even a little thought. It was simply pagan, plainly opposed to the will of God as revealed in His holy Word. Surely, it is not mixing Church and State if we expose the anti-Christian teachings of a powerful organization, no matter who its members are.

Our brief review of the world scene has not been too encouraging. We are living in times of strife and turmoil. As leaders in the Church it behooves us to be alert and to face the future with faith and courage. In a world of confusion we need not be confused. Our task is plainly outlined by the Lord Himself. We must go on preaching, teaching, serving. If we are faithful in that, we need not be dismayed, no matter how dark the clouds that appear on the horizon may seem, for we have the blessed Savior's assurance that He will be with us always and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" His Church.

Edmonton, Alberta, Can.

A. GUEBERT

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### Veit Ludwig von Seckendorf an Orthodox Defender of Pietists

The Thirty Years' War, which had caused the Holy Roman Empire to disintegrate into several hundred little despotic states, virtually destroying the sentiment of national unity and creating a state of chaos in its social and economic life, was equally desolating in its effects upon religion. By way of contrast with this deplorable condition of the empire, France had its day of military and social glory. No wonder that for decades to come German men and women, disgusted with conditions in their homeland, were fascinated by the splendor of their illustrious neighbor across the Rhine. Under such circumstances it was only natural that religion, too, would be exposed to influences emanating from France. "Enlightenment" was the favorite watchword of that period.