

C.L.P.:20



Turn Over Mr. Socialist, You're Sleeping on Your Back!

THE
Chancellor's Dream

A brief examination of the "Socialism" of Mr. Philip Snowden, the first Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer.

By **X.**



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Author's Note.

This little pamphlet does not pretend to deal fully with "Socialism" in all its phases.

It is merely a brief examination, containing much repetition, of what has been said by one who calls himself a Socialist, and has no objection to being known as one.

Mr. Snowden is an idealist and his dream of the New World Order is described in his book, "Labour and the New World."

Dreams have occasionally been interesting, and many believe they have sometimes foretold the future.

Dreams go by contraries is an old saying which may prove to be the case with Mr. Snowden's excursions into the realms of imagination.

No one can object because Mr. Snowden dreams, but dreams are but flimsy material for the foundations of political edifices. He means well by the world, but before the dream develops into something uncomfortable, someone should advise a change of position.

X.

THE CHANCELLOR'S DREAM

By X.

Those who are sincerely desirous of understanding what is loosely termed "Socialism" would do well to read Mr. Snowden's book, re-issued since his appointment to the high position of Chancellor of the Exchequer in the first Labour Government to hold office in Great Britain. In that work Mr. Snowden refers at length to the various problems which politicians undertake to deal with, but, unfortunately, the Chancellor is not ready with any definite plan. Indeed, he says it is not his business, as the social reformer he claims to be, to draw detailed plans of the Ideal State, nor to lay down rigid lines of development. Readers will not be surprised, therefore, to find that Mr. Snowden's book is an indefinite blurred picture of what may be called Mr. Snowden's dream of the New Social Order, which will be, or might be, built on the ruins of the old world order which has been brought to ruin by the continued existence of what is called The Capitalist System.

Mr. Snowden considers the old world order has broken down the world over, but predicts that the growth of a new and better Socialist order will be slow and not particularly noticeable or different from the old order, until there is a general agreement between the minds of all people, or a majority of them, to organise the State and all industry on the basis of the Socialistic formula, which is never clearly stated.

No apology is made for the quotations which follow from "*Labour and the New World*." They are necessary if the inquirer is to see the dream as it has presented itself to Mr. Snowden.

The downfall of the Capitalist System is assumed, but "*It need cause no regrets other than those of a natural sympathy with the temporary suffering that must be endured during the period of transition to the next stage of economic and social organisation*" (page 2). The breakdown of the Capitalist System, which "*Has never had in it any more of the elements of permanency than the systems of feudalism, slavery and*

tribal communism from which it has been evolved" (page 2), is not wholly due to the War; it was being challenged everywhere before the War commencing in 1914.

According to Mr. Snowden, the failure and breakdown of the system, which on page 3 is called the economic system and is synonymous in the dream with the Capitalist System, is not a failure in the production of wealth, but in its equitable distribution. However, it is both in reality. Wealth production has not nearly reached its maximum, and the cause of any failure in the system to satisfy men's desires and to produce a condition of peace must be looked for not only in the conditions under which whatever wealth is produced is distributed, and/or exchanged, but particularly in the conditions which surround the production of the wealth which is now so faultily distributed.

Mr. Snowden would have us believe that the extremes of riches and poverty are due to the Capitalist System, and points to the United States, "*A country where Capitalism has reached its highest stage of development.*"

The problem is precisely the same, therefore, in the United States and in England; the faulty distribution of wealth, according to Mr. Snowden, is caused by the Capitalist System. This is a statement which few students will accept. The extremes of riches and poverty everywhere are the result of a common economic law which operates and produces always the same results. The real cause, as has been shown conclusively in *Progress and Poverty*, is the denial of the right of man everywhere, first to produce in freedom from interference, and secondly to the universal denial of his right to what he has produced, and consequently of his right to dispose of it. This denial Mr. Snowden makes again and again without any suspicion that this is the real cause of the economic difficulties of all time—everywhere.

The statement that our troubles are caused by a Capitalist System which has now broken down is not in accordance with the facts. It is only partly true that the Capitalist System leads to a faulty distribution. The real cause must be looked for a little further, and the real reason why capital itself tends to get into a few hands out of the hands of those who produce it, discovered. It will easily be found by any unprejudiced seeker after truth.

Mr. Snowden proceeds with his indictment, which is a strong one, against present conditions but not against the so-called "*Capitalist System.*" "*We speak of the economic and social order, but its chief feature is the absence of order and organisation.*" "*Production and distribution are not organised to supply the needs of the community, but to afford profit for those engaged in the work*" (page 15).

Production and distribution, niggardly and faulty though they be, do partly supply the needs of the people, who are, of course, with few exceptions, both producers and consumers.

They are *not* organised in the sense of being united in one organisation under a central direction, as in Mr. Snowden's dream.

So far from being organised in the sense intended by Mr. Snowden, as parts of one machine to be set in motion and controlled by one of the parts, Society is much more like a living organism, the units or parts of which are intended to work harmoniously under an underlying principle which Socialists do not seem to have discovered.

"No social organisation which aimed at promoting the general well-being would permit the employment of labour and capital in the production of luxuries" (page 17). This one quotation will show the unsubstantial nature of the Socialist dream—"Organisation!" "Prohibition!" the subjection of the individual to a central organisation controlling and directing in detail every activity of all human beings, all of which is an impossible and undesirable consummation.

Mr. Snowden dreams that all this is possible and probable in the far-off future, a State to which mankind is very slowly, but very certainly, "*evolving*." Possible and probable because there exists a large measure of control already.

"The unbridled ruthlessness of Capitalism had been curbed by innumerable laws regulating the freedom with which it had previously exploited the community" (page 20). But, says Mr. Snowden inconsequently, "*The regulation of Capitalism and public administration directed to mitigating its evil effects had given Capitalism a longer lease of life than it could have enjoyed had it been left to work out its will without restriction and control*" (page 20).

If this were correct, which it is not, if Capitalism would have died without some regulation and control, it would seem a fair inference that complete restriction and control would render it immortal! The dream certainly appears to get a little confused here. "*The problem is, how can a better distribution of wealth be effected?*" (page 23).

Surely the problem only arises after the wealth has been produced, and it can only be solved by the owners of wealth, who can consume it, exchange it for other wealth, or give it away to those who did not produce it, or have it taken away from them against their wish by force or fraud, or both. Therefore, ownership of wealth *should* be clearly understood and confirmed as vested in those who produce the wealth. Wealth is not produced "*collectively*," as Mr. Snowden appears to imagine, but *co-operatively*. The individual is the producer, and to him belongs the product. The problem is, therefore, not as stated by Mr. Snowden, but rather how to secure to the producer the result of his labour. When this is accomplished, the distribution must inevitably be at the will of the producer and will need no regulation by any authority or power outside himself.

Mr. Snowden sees in the possession of the instruments of production the power to take from the producer a larger share of the product than is just, and defines these instruments as "*Labour, Land, and Capital*" (page 23). "*Capital*" is defined as "*the result of Labour applied to land and the raw materials of Nature*" (page 23). The definition is not a good one, because it confuses capital and wealth. A better definition is that Capital is that portion of the result of labour on land (the raw materials of Nature are included) which may be, or is, used for the production of more wealth.

"*This monopoly of ownership (of land and raw materials) enables the possessor to dictate the terms on which labour shall be permitted to have access to them*" (page 24). Mr. Snowden here sees clearly that this private ownership of land is the root cause of the trouble, but allows his mind to be diverted until it fails to make the necessary distinction between land and the things which are produced by labour from land. Through not keeping the distinction clearly in mind, he is led eventually to a flat denial of the property rights of labour in the results of labour, and makes the claim very distinctly later on that all property rights must be claimed by the State.

Mr. Snowden is apparently clear enough at times on the question of private ownership of land, but will insist upon dealing with the things produced from the land as if they were in the same category. So he contends that Capital is a monopoly, which it is not, nor ever could be unless it were taken from its producers forcibly by the State, a proceeding which Mr. Snowden contemplates with satisfaction.

"*The rent of land is wholly a social product, but private ownership enables the landlord to appropriate this social product, thereby depriving the community of their own property*" (page 24).

This is clear enough, and indicates the true settlement of the land question, and the destruction of land monopoly, by the simple method of collecting the rent of "*their own property*" instead of allowing the owners (the whole people) to be deprived of it. With this clear enunciation in view, how can Mr. Snowden be in earnest in suggesting that "*their own property*" should be purchased from those who are now depriving the community of the rent of it? It can only be explained in one of three ways. Either Mr. Snowden is not sincere, or he is so mentally confused that he is unable to appreciate the full strength of his own argument. Another possible explanation is that he is not in possession of enough courage to propose anything so fundamental because of the bitter opposition of the monopolist.

As Mr. Snowden classes land and capital together as instruments of production, wrongly saying they are both monopolised, he advocates the purchase of both, and shows how it might be done by substituting stock certificates issued

by the Government for those now in existence representing the ownership of existing capital in large Joint Stock concerns. Could any suggestion be more absurd than the purchase by the people of the land which is "*now their property*" and the purchase of capital by the payment to the present owners of capital of the value of their capital? It is a suggestion as practical as that one should lift himself from the earth by pulling on his boot-straps. Why not leave the just owners of capital in possession of "*their own property*" and by the imposition of a rent charge for exclusive possession of any portion of the common property restore to the people by this simple method "*their own property*"? (page 24).

The Dream is becoming a Nightmare.

Mr. Snowden makes no suggestions as to the new capital which labour is always creating, nor for the disposal of the large amount of capital, in the hands of individuals, which is not represented by Stock certificates at all.

All that he has to say about the Capitalist System is as vague and unsatisfactory as his definition of Capital, nor has he any idea that co-operation is a Law of Nature governing the production of wealth. On the contrary, he insists that the Capitalist System is better described as the "*Competitive*" System. This is to take a very superficial view. "*Reconstruction must be governed by definite ideas and principles. No plans will be effective unless they are based upon a knowledge of the causes of the failure of the old order*" (page 28). But Mr. Snowden nowhere shows that he has that knowledge. He has some part of it, but will mix it up with other facts which he falsely believes are causes of the faulty distribution of wealth of which he rightly complains. Although Mr. Snowden lays down: "*The function of the social reformer is not to dogmatise about the final goal of human progress, nor to draw a detailed and complete plan of the Ideal State, nor to lay down rigid lines of social development*" (page 29), he proceeds to do those very things on a certain definite denial of the right of the individual to what he produces, and the claiming for the State of the land, capital, all the instruments of production and the product.

This would be logical enough if the right claimed for the State is admitted, but how does it square with the following estimate of the causes of social unrest? "*The social discontent is a revolt against an economic system where the will of another can deny or limit individual freedom. It is a revolt against a system where one individual can control the living of another and thereby control his liberty. It is a revolt against the Servile State*" (page 37). This is all true, but it would seem probable that against the establishment of a State, the officials of which controlled the land, capital, instruments of production and the product, as proposed by real Socialists, the revolt would be more vigorous and effective than against the

present semi-Socialistic State against which Mr. Snowden says the revolt is directed. It is really difficult to understand in what respect "*The new world order will change all this*" (page 37).

To deepen and tighten the control is not to confer freedom, and, on the principle adopted by Mr. Snowden—higher wages, shorter working hours, improved working conditions, participation of workers in the control of industry—would do little or nothing to allay social unrest, caused, as he says, by control of the individual. Mr. Snowden has not realised that the reforms indicated, so long as the principle referred to is the guiding principle of politicians governing the State, leave the main cause, to which he makes reference, operating as powerfully as ever. The reforms referred to as calculated to change the old order, however beneficial they might appear, would only be the patchwork against which labour leaders have warned us. In fact, they would be effects only—partial modifications of the results of the main cause.

"*The new order will be democratic, and based on the realisation of the fact that all the nations of the world are members of one body . . . no nation can to-day solve all its social problems*" (page 39). Artificial frontiers must be eliminated, world-wide free trade adopted, and it is to be supposed that the Economic World will be controlled by an authority of some sort, democratic it must be, functioning from Leningrad, London, Paris or New York.

"*Such in the briefest outline is the ideal of the New World Order. It may be dismissed with a sneer by the cynic as a vain delusion.*" It will be so dismissed; nevertheless, poets have dreamed of such a state, and there can hardly be a doubt that mankind will some day acquire sufficient knowledge very materially to improve on the present lack of system.

In a chapter on "Evolution or Revolution," Mr. Snowden expresses a definite opinion that the overthrow of the Capitalist system, which he has been contending has already failed, will not be brought about by revolution. The failure of the Russian Communists or Socialists is due to the fact "*that they attempted the impossible*" (page 45).

The impossible, according to Mr. Snowden, will be possible only when Socialism is completely international. The failure of the Russian Socialists is no argument against International Socialism, "*but it is conclusive proof of the futility of attempting to completely overthrow the Capitalist System in one country while Capitalism is still in control in the rest of the world*" (page 47).

Mr. Snowden is no futile politician, and will wait until the whole world is agreed that the broken-down Capitalist System must be overthrown, and when that happens, revolution, as commonly understood, will be unnecessary. This is the attitude of a philosophical spectator interested in guessing at the results

of evolutionary processes, and at the same time is a revelation of complete impotence to suggest any practical method of substituting for the broken-down Capitalist System any new Social Order.

The Prime Minister, who is apparently the same kind of Socialist as Mr. Snowden, in a recent speech has made it plain that he considers the conditions, of which both he and his Chancellor complain, can be set right only by the Creator. It is an imperfect world, says Mr. MacDonald, and if I were the Creator of it I could solve the problem. Which is to say, "I cannot solve the problem." A frank admission of impotence is not calculated to get many votes at the next Election, in which Mr. MacDonald has said the Socialists will sweep the country.

It is difficult to believe that any large majority could be obtained in support of those who confess that the social problems are insolvable by anyone but the Creator, and yet at the same time propose to interfere in the matter themselves.

Referring to the Russian Bolsheviks, Mr. Snowden says the Russian Revolution was a Land Revolution, but the land was not nationalised. "*Because any attempt to insist upon State ownership and control of the land would have led to a revolt of the peasantry, which would quickly have brought the Bolshevik Government to its doom*" (page 54).

This is not a strictly accurate statement. The revolution was a land revolution, and the Bolsheviks, after securing control of the political machine, made an attempt also to nationalise the results of the labour of the peasants on the land. "At the point of the bayonet, if necessary," declared the Bolsheviks. Mr. Snowden knows that they signally failed. When it became evident that the peasants would not produce crops to be taken away from them at the point of the bayonet or any other way, the attempt was abandoned. "Russia is not ready for Socialism yet," said Lenin. The peasants did revolt successfully, and compelled the Bolsheviks to recognise the individual right of property in things produced by labour and to return to a "Capitalist" System, which it was the Bolsheviks' avowed intention to destroy and replace by the Socialist System.

If the attempt to insist upon State ownership and control would have produced the quick fall of the Bolshevik Government in Russia, what will it do in England when Mr. Snowden proceeds to nationalise, or State-control, the wealth and land of England? Yet, says Mr. Snowden, "*Land nationalisation is the fundamental economic and social question*" (page 132).

All such attempts to socialise the results of labour must and should fail. Instead of making any such attempt, politicians, whether called Bolsheviks or Socialists, would be better occupied, and with more chances of success, if they would apply themselves to securing to labour, instead of denying, the natural right of the producer to the product of his labour. It

is this denial of real property rights by the assertion of the State's right to own and control which hinders the establishment of justice and the peaceful evolution to a voluntary co-operative state of Society, in which the distribution of wealth would be made naturally by the will of the producers, and made equitably.

That Mr. Snowden is an advocate of this wrong philosophy of ownership can be seen by the following quotations :—

“ For centuries the accepted theory of taxation has been that the State and Local Authorities were entitled to tax an individual up to the extent of his means to meet the necessities of the State and Local Authorities.” “ The principle upon which public taxation is based is that private property is a public trust and must be surrendered at the demands of the State.” “ Socialists do not quarrel with the accepted theory or the right of the State to impose taxation up to the limit of an individual's capacity to pay.” “ Though the old theory of taxation that the State had the right to tax according to ability and that there was no limit to its power except the extent of the resources of revenue and the needs of the State was unimpeachable, in practice this principle was not applied in a fair and impartial way.”

This is the wrong theory which Russian Socialists attempted to apply to all alike, fairly and impartially. It is decidedly *“ impeachable,”* because no denial of the right of the individual to himself and therefore to the results of his labour can be devised which would be fair and impartial, or which would not have the effect of curtailing the production of wealth. It is not the Labour Party only that holds this theory, the Conservatives and Liberals hold it just as strongly and proceed upon it when in office. It has yet to be impeached, but until it is impeached and declared a barrier to progress towards the co-operative condition which the Socialists so earnestly desire to reach, no progress worth while can be made. In the chapter on *“ The instrument of taxation ”* we have the old heresy that taxation should be based on *“ ability to pay ”* repeated. Small wonder that the chapter shows so little understanding of the nature of the problem the Chancellor of the Exchequer is called upon to deal with, and small wonder that the system continues to be unjust, unequal and unsatisfactory. It will continue to be all these things until the correct theory of taxation is applied and the heresy abandoned. The State cannot have the *“ right,”* even though it exercises the power, to take private property for public purposes, nor can this *right* be conferred upon any Government by a majority, however large. It is not a right and cannot be made into a right. It is distinctly a wrong, and can never grow into anything else. The individuals have always the right to themselves and the results of their labour. It is an inalienable right of which the individuals cannot be divested, even with their own consent.

The instrument of taxation is indeed a powerful one, and the misuse of it has been the cause of almost all the wars recorded in history, as it is the cause of most of the ills of Society. In the hands of the Socialists it is intended to be used to bring about a more equal distribution of wealth, but as it involves a denial of the real right of the individual to himself and his labour, it will fail as it always has failed for that special purpose.

Mr. Snowden says: "*Taxation should be employed to equalise shares of the National product*" (page 136). All production is individual, not national, under a system of co-operation. True, the division of product by means of wages, interest, rent and profit, is not what it should be, or what it would be if the hindrances to freedom of production and exchange were removed, as they might and could be by a Chancellor who knew his business, and knew how to secure to everybody the only "national" product, the rent of "*their own property.*" Without intending it, Mr. Snowden exhibits that he holds a very poor opinion of the producers of wealth. "*What is needed is that these people should be educated to spend their money wisely*" (page 137). Not that their opportunity to get what they want should be enlarged. Mr. Snowden is unable to get away from the paternalistic theory that human beings need some superior beings to order their lives, to provide them with incomes, and to teach them to spend wisely.

The workers produce all the wealth and are in a state of chronic poverty. All the public revenue is produced by the workers and taken by the Government from those who have received it from the workers. "*Labour puts forward no claim for the complete exemption of the working classes from taxation. No doubt some of the better paid workers are in a position to make some small contribution to the National revenue, and it is desirable from many points of view that where such ability exists, it should be taxed*" (page 137).

No weaker championship of the workers can be imagined. All taxes are unjust, and what revenue is collected is taken from the product of the workers. How can a citizen who is not a producer have any of his product taken from him? What is taken from him is wealth in his possession which has been withheld from the producers of it. Such a phenomenon is inevitable under the present system in which the property rights of the producers are deliberately denied and that value which is the creation and the property of all allowed to pass into the hands of the few.

Although the actual wealth transferred from the individual to the State in the payment of rent is produced by the individual, it must be remembered that a rent charge is a just equivalent for the privilege of possession of a valuable and exclusive opportunity to use the common property. So long as the earth presents opportunities of a varying value,

rent must arise and be taken into consideration in any attempt to bring about "equality of opportunity," which is the right of all living human beings, which no Socialist surely will deny. But no one individual can create a rental value for land. All individuals collectively, as the State, cause rental value to arise. The collection of such rental value as does arise as the result of the presence of people and the expenditure of public money in desirable improvements for the greater convenience and happiness of the citizens, is not the operation of a tax. It would take only what cannot belong to the individual, and when so taken would provide public revenue enough to permit of the abolition of the foolish system of taxation based upon ability to pay, and the assumed right of the State to take what does not and cannot belong to it.

Mr. Snowden sees that: "*All the useful services of the State and local authorities are to-day being starved for lack of funds*" (page 138). From one point of view, Mr. Snowden sees also that the rental value of the land belongs to the people, although as Chancellor he has lacked courage even to attempt to collect it for its owners. What he does not see apparently, is that failure to collect the rent as an act of simple justice is the real cause of the niggardly production of wealth. There is only one source of wealth—i.e., the Earth—and so long as this is privately owned, willing workers cannot employ themselves, and are forced to produce under unfavourable conditions for those who are wrongly, and without payment to the State, allowed to control wealth production at the source, and under conditions which they are able to impose. Mr. Snowden sees this undoubtedly, but prefers to leave the fundamental injustice undisturbed, while he advocates State collection of *all* wealth, and some mechanical division of it by selected officials under some system which he terms "democratic." This is essentially Toryism, the reverse of Radicalism, and reveals how closely allied in principle are all the political parties at present seeking the votes of the people. In fact, the Prime Minister has contended that the Conservatives act on "good old Socialistic doctrine," and that he is a "Conservative of Conservatives." He is right. Hence it is that the people will not get any leadership towards freedom from either Conservative or Socialist ranks. Nothing in Mr. Snowden's book shows that he is ready to adopt any theory or practice differing in the slightest degree from the theory and practice of the last few centuries of both Tories and Liberals. That it is a wrong theory and practice is seen by the state of the world to-day. Mr. Snowden is right when he says that the conditions of the world to-day are not wholly due to the war. They are due entirely to the denial of the right of property in things produced by man from the earth, coupled with the acquiescence in the private ownership and collection of rent of the common heritage of all—the Earth

itself—the source of all wealth. With the wrong thinking current, the wrong theory being tested and proved wrong, how can any improvement be looked for until the wrong is abandoned for the right theory? It is hopeless to expect it.

“The income tax will be the source of revenue upon which a Chancellor of the Exchequer must mainly rely,” says Mr. Snowden on page 147. Income Tax was first imposed as a necessity, and was seen at once to be merely a method of taking for the State what did not belong to it. It was duly apologised for. Politicians have always promised to reform in this matter, just as bandits and burglars, “forced” to take other people’s belongings, always know they are bandits and burglars, due to reform when the necessity no longer exists for wrong-doing.

What is it that makes politicians of all stripes act like bandits? Necessity, they all say, but it is fairer to them to say that it is due almost entirely to ignorance of the Natural Law, which is not allowed to operate, owing to the substitution of man-made statutes which are, for the most part, contradictions of the Natural or Moral Law. The conditions that produced life are still favourable to its further production and maintenance. Why should it be difficult to live? Why should Mr. Snowden or any other feeble interferer with the Natural Law talk like this: *“Allowances for wives and children and dependents are steps in the right direction”*? (page 147).

Allowances! For able-bodied men and women! Not natural rights as decreed by Nature or Nature’s God. Not an equalised opportunity to labour in full and free partnership with Nature, not a chance to develop self-reliance, independence and other desirable characteristics of human beings, but to be reduced to mere cogs in a machine, controlled and directed by a few fallible human beings selected by some “democratic” method. It shows a lamentable lack of both understanding and faith, a superficial and limited vision, the blind attempting to lead the blind and heading straight for the inevitable ditch.

The whole system leads to the reduction of mankind to helplessness and slavery, and not until mankind’s true relationship to the Earth has been made clear will they be able to avoid the ditch. And so, instead of leading the blind people to economic freedom, peace and plenty, the blind politician seems intent upon driving the people towards what he imagines is a co-operative commonwealth, forcibly imposed upon them; the principle instrument, the sharp goad, which is to be applied to keep the mass moving is the “Instrument of taxation” (chap. vi). It will land all concerned in the ditch of common poverty and greater unrest. The instrument is now being used strenuously, without any regard being paid to the fundamental impulse to economic individual liberty.

The conflict between the idea of State supervision, direction, control, and the alleged right of the State to “tax”

the belongings of the individual, and the cosmic urge to freedom in the heart and mind of every individual, will wax hottest over the use of the "Instrument of taxation." Revolutions, civil commotions, war and strife are traceable to the use of this "instrument," and it is time to declare that it is an instrument of evil only, even in the hands of a pious and well-meaning Government. It is an instrument of unjust oppression, does not lead to a more equitable distribution of wealth, and considerably hampers its production. It is time that it was abandoned for a just method of providing the National Revenue, which would stimulate instead of paralyse, and which would, by doing exact justice, leave the individual in possession and enjoyment of himself and his labour product, would maintain the sacred rights of property in things produced by labour, and the equally sacred rights of all in the earth itself and bring about inevitably and naturally a proper distribution of wealth, in accordance, not with ability to pay, but with the ability and diligence with which free men applied themselves to the performance of their part of the partnership with Nature which it is the natural right of every individual to enjoy.

The denial of the right of the individual to himself and his labour, the claim that the State has the right to appropriate what the Government at any given time sees fit, leads naturally and logically to advocacy of the abolition of the law of inheritance. Once the principle has been admitted that the Government may and should act as bandits do, the argument is unanswerable. If it has the right to take by force all that the living individual produces or possesses, it follows that even without the abolition of the laws of inheritance the Government need not wait for the decease of any individual before perpetrating its act of injustice. It is no more unjust to "*appropriate*" (the word Mr. Snowden uses on page 153) the worldly possessions of an individual who is no longer able to use or possess them, than it is to do the same thing while he is alive—no more unjust—but as unjust and more pusillanimous.

This particular device as part of the instrument of taxation was adopted by Socialists who didn't appreciate the fact that they were Socialists. It is another example of the blindness to, or ignorance of, the basis of freedom on the part of the world's leaders in a land in which "politics," or the adjustment of the relations between the individuals comprising the State, are supposed to have reached a high level of intelligence.

If, contrary to the claim of those calling themselves Socialists, the individual has a right to himself and his labour, he has also a right to dispose of what he has without any interference from the Government. The claim of the Government to appropriate is not made more valid by the death of any individual than it would be by his absence in another part of the globe. Mr. Snowden contends that the appropriation by

the State of the estates of deceased citizens, after a reasonable provision for immediate descendants has been made, is not confiscation.

It is exactly that, and nothing else, and is, moreover, thoroughly unjustifiable and immoral, unless it could be proved conclusively that the estates about to be appropriated were illegally, wrongfully or dishonestly acquired. It is true that many large estates have been so acquired under the present very faulty arrangements of Society. What the Socialists do not appear to see is that under a system founded on justice with regard to the Earth and its rent, with the rights of all individuals secured, no individual could possibly acquire more than his rightful share of the wealth produced and the law of inheritance would need no attention except to dismiss it to the "limbo of exploded economic fallacies."

If great estates have been acquired by questionable methods, the claim that the State has the right to appropriate them must be admitted. If some few persons can be shown to be in possession of wealth earned by others and taken from them, the State should resume possession at once, and not wait until the wrongful possessor is dead. But to recommend appropriation by taxation of what the individual has while alive or dead without regard to the manner of acquisition, is surely another example of blind leadership or dream consciousness.

The conclusion of Mr. Snowden's chapter on finance and the "Instrument of Taxation" leads to the following: "*That the new Social Order will lead to a better distribution of wealth by the taxation to extinction of unearned incomes*" (page 154). This means that any surplus production remaining in the hands of the producer which now is usually invested in income-producing enterprises will be taken away from him.

There will be no such surplus; wealth will either be consumed or hidden. No such law could be enforced; and, if it could, everyone would at once be reduced to the same level and private enterprise would languish and die, its place being taken by the Government which would control all the sources of wealth and all the instruments of production. It would be a state of complete slavery. It will not appeal to anyone who is not asleep and dreaming of a co-operative Commonwealth brought about by compulsion and the complete denial of the rights of the individual. As a strange contradiction to the complete denial of individual rights involved in such a scheme of finance, it is further stated that a liberal minimum income will be free from taxation. This does not agree with the claim of the Socialist that all income belongs to the State and is held by the individual as a public trust. Such an income will be an allowance or dole made to a slave. It is merely another evidence of confused thought.

Mr. Snowden favours the abolition of all taxation on the

necessaries of life, and will relegate tariffs for revenue to "the limbo of rejected economic fallacies" (page 155). When our Chancellors make the necessary distinction between what is private property and what is public property, there will be other fallacies relegated to limbo, to the great advantage of the State as a collection of individuals. The right of the State through the Government to tax any of the results of industry will go the way of the fallacy of tariffs for revenue.

"The right of inheritance will be strictly limited" (page 155) in the New World Order. This is to confuse the rights of property, and is not a reform, but a retrograde step to a Communism that has been abandoned after a trial in Russia. "The great financial corporations, like Banking and Insurance, will be nationalised, thereby giving the State (that abstract thing) complete control over National finance" (page 155). While no objection can be urged against any voluntary co-operative movement, on the part of the citizens composing the State, in the direction of Banking and Insurance companies on a contributory basis, it must be evident that complete control brought about by compulsory nationalisation cannot succeed without a complete denial of the liberty of individuals to engage in such enterprises in competition with the nationalised industries. To secure complete control it would be necessary to acquire all private enterprises, and this must mean a complete denial of the right of any individual to do anything whatever excepting under State direction and supervision.

The Bolsheviks tried it, but failed, recognised their failure, and adopted the New Economic Policy, with the result that private enterprise demonstrated completely that results more satisfactory not only to the individual but to the general welfare are obtained where there is freedom and equality of opportunity for man to apply himself to the production and distribution of the things he needs and must have, and which are only to be had by the application of his labour to the common property—the Earth.

The organisation of a Social Order, the organisation of Industry on the lines of Socialism as explained by Mr. Snowden, is "attempting the impossible." The strange thing is that he can see this in Russia, but seems to advocate it in Britain. Mr. Snowden, before he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, believed that the New Social Order would pay off the National Debt by a Capital Levy. It is probable that he has changed his views on this point before any harm has been done. If the State has the right claimed for it by Mr. Snowden, it has the right to levy on Capital. It has the power also, up to the point of very burdensome taxation, which, as a Conservative Socialist, Mr. Baldwin pointed out, is in the nature of a levy on capital. There is a point, however, at which the people will revolt and the Socialists will some day see that forced taxation is, as Mr. Baldwin said, "stupid." Mr. Baldwin did

not mean what the word he used implies, nevertheless he was right. Although it is "stupid," the Conservative Socialists do not mean to abandon the use of the instrument of taxation any more than Mr. Snowden and the Labour Party do. Without any cynicism whatever, Mr. Snowden's dream of the New Social Order is of the nature of dreams, corresponding only in part to actual realities on the plane of physical life. It is more or less confused, as dreams usually are, and emergence from the dream state into the reality of the Chancellorship, whilst it may not destroy the dream, will doubtless make its realisation seem a considerable distance away as regards time.

From the point of view of practical politics the dream calls for the sound advice—if it could be made to reach the consciousness of the dreamer—"Turn, over, you're sleeping on your back!" a bodily position considered to be favourable for the production of dreams and even nightmares.

In chapter 8, on unemployment, the author, wide awake in the first few lines, refers to the Natural Law as follows: "*The obligation to labour to produce the necessaries of life which is imposed by Nature is one which a fluctuating percentage of people in every industrial country are prevented from fulfilling.*" Prevented by what? By whom? By the Capitalist System, says Mr. Snowden, beginning to dream again. He has forgotten that Capitalists hire as many people as they can to employ their capital.

It is not true that the Capitalist System, as Mr. Snowden will persist in calling it, prevents anybody from fulfilling the obligation to labour. What is true is that the system of privately owned earth prevents men from employing themselves. Capitalists *have* to ally themselves with the monopoly of land, and get blamed quite unjustly.

Mr. Snowden in his dream state accepts as inevitable some unemployment even under fully developed Socialism, and indicates merely that "*Any privation resulting from unemployment can be abolished by organisation of work and by special provision*" (presumably an Insurance Scheme) (page 181).

Under a fully developed Socialism, so the dream runs, the regulations and restrictions preventing employment, which are now imposed by Trades Unions and which are necessary under the Capitalist System, would no longer exist. There would, of course, be only one Trade Union—the State—and the regulations would logically and necessarily include the obedience of all workers to the direction of State officials. The obligation to find work would be assumed by the officials, and the obligation to obey them would have to be recognised by everybody able to labour. Thus the dream includes a compulsory work law, to procure wealth under common ownership of the land, capital, the instruments or means of production, and the product.

Turn over, you're sleeping on your back, Mr. Socialist!

Who would want to labour under a Socialist State which promised to guarantee the living of every individual, whether employed or unemployed? Who will work with the knowledge that the results of his labour will be taken from him to be given, perhaps, to someone who hasn't laboured at all? If the dream could be realised, the world would descend rapidly into a condition of extreme poverty until the individual, deprived of his natural right to work and enjoy the results, would shatter the flimsy structure. The baseless fabric of a dream would quickly pass into chaotic disorderly struggle for things to eat, wear and shelter, more intense even than under the present unjust system.

The reconciliation between the position of the Individualist and the Socialist is to be brought about only by the socialisation of the Earth, by the socialisation of its economic rent, and by the recognition of the sacred right of the individual to his labour after he has fulfilled his obligation to his fellow human beings (the State) by the payment of the rent of any portion of the common property he holds. If the individual holds no part of the earth he still contributes to the production of economic rent by the fact of his being alive and working in co-operation with others who do hold the common property.

This socialisation of the only thing that can be socialised effectively does not bar the voluntary association of individuals in any legitimate enterprise, rather it leads to an enormous extension of the principle, and a much desired change in the character of Trades Unions from that of associations for the collective bargaining for wages to that of associations for the co-operative production of wealth. "Render unto Cæsar (the State) the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's." There is evidently a distinction to be drawn between what is Cæsar's and what is God's, and because this distinction has not been drawn, because Cæsar has been allowed to appropriate God's property by unjust, unscientific and foolish taxation, dreamers dream the Socialist dream, and will continue to dream it, until the reality, if ever achieved (which may be said without cynicism to be impossible), brings them back to the awakened consciousness of the facts of physical life. The problem is, not how can mankind be organised into a mechanical thing and made to work, but how shall all those willing to work always find opportunity to produce what they require to sustain their lives and give them whatever satisfaction Nature is willing to yield to them in return for their labour.

In the chapter on "Unemployment" the author sees dimly that the demand for British manufacture is diminishing, and likely to go on diminishing, and he catches sight of a time when "*We are unable to pay for our imported commodities with the commodities by which we have done in the past,*" and then "*our National position will become extremely serious.*" To counteract this by no means "fantastic"

probability "It behoves Great Britain to set to work energetically to develop to the utmost the possibilities of its own soil." Then follows a list of things which must be done, but which cannot be done by any Governmental action of the kind suggested. "If we are successfully to maintain our position in trade, the burdens of landlordism, of mining rents and royalties, of onerous railway rates, will have to be removed, together with every charge upon production which is not directly or indirectly remunerative." All of which is true, but it means the abolition of all taxation, and the collection of the rent of Great Britain as the only public or Socialistic revenue, and neither Mr. Snowden nor any other politicians are prepared to renounce the system which now hinders and burdens production and exchange. Instead of such renunciation, all parties defend the exercise of the power of the Government to impose the very burdens which Mr. Snowden declares must be removed.

Not seeing the way of salvation, our politicians cannot walk therein, and will dream of organisation, unjust taxation, and anything but freedom of the individual to gain access to natural resources through the establishment of a just relationship between man and the earth. Control, supervision, organisation, socialisation, doles, heavier taxation than necessary, anything, everything but freedom to produce and enjoy.

Follow the path which has led to the present lamentable position, and do it more vigorously and completely, is the burden of the Socialist song, but do it with "inevitable gradualness" until everybody is willing to remain a unit in a State in which his right to himself is denied, in which his right to his labour results is completely denied, in which his private property in his house, his clothes, his life even, is a public trust—the Servile State—which Mr. Snowden professes in one short paragraph to dislike. He probably would dislike it, but that it should happen is not amongst the probabilities either amongst Anglo-Saxons or Slavs.

Turn over, Mr. Socialist, you're sleeping on your back!

Instead of dreaming of the complete solution of the unemployment problem by the international organisation of trade, etc. (page 208), recognise that the real solution is "employment," which ought to be possible, and which would be possible, for every normal human being willing to work, to find for himself. Work to establish a State in which the "owners" pay rent for possession instead of being allowed to charge and receive rent in exchange for permission to "fulfil the obligation laid upon all by Nature," work to secure to everyone that which he produces or his fair share of that which is produced in free co-operation with his fellows, and some day you will wake up to the fact that the mass of mankind are quite able to satisfy their differing desires without very much assistance, if any at all, from Governors, Rulers,

and others, who up to now have done nothing but stand in the way of mankind in their search for justice, plenty and peace.

The last few chapters of the book need no further comment. They are permeated by the same idea, the fundamentally wrong idea that man can be made into some kind of machine and made to run smoothly by the aid of the instrument of taxation. Those who believe that this can and will be done will call themselves Socialists, or will act according to the Socialistic principle without donning the label; those who do not believe it will call themselves by some other name, and will be found with those who regard humanity as a living organism, the health of which depends upon the units of consciousness comprised in the organism finding the law of life and health for the body politic—*i.e.*, the association in equality prescribed by Nature as the law of progress, and in being guided thereby.

Association in equality can be a fact only if the Earth itself, on which all depend for life, is made effectively the common property of all as it is theoretically both in law and morals, and this can be done, and done quickly, by one method only—*viz.*, the collection of the rent of the bare earth for the benefit of all.

To dream of perfecting an unnatural "World Order" on the lines laid down by Mr. Snowden and other Socialists is to dream only, and therefore the advice:

Turn over, Mr. Socialist, you're sleeping on your back!

THE END.

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