

Socialism and Motherhood,

HX by John Spargo

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SOCIALISM AND MOTHERHOOD

BY
JOHN SPARGO



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TO
MY WIFE AND COMRADE
MARY SPARGO

FOREWORD

BECAUSE I have written somewhat extensively upon various phases of maternity and child welfare, many Socialist comrades, in various cities, asked me to lecture upon the relation of Socialism to Motherhood.

In response to these invitations I delivered a lecture entitled "Socialism and Motherhood" in many cities. The substance of the lecture somewhat amplified is contained in the following pages. It is my hope that the little book will make clear the promise of Socialism to many mothers and drive the fear of Socialism from their hearts and minds.

J. S.

"Nestledown,"
Old Bennington, Vt.,
End of October, 1913.

PROLOGUE

OVER the Garden of Life dark clouds hang like a funeral pall. The sun is darkened.

Through the garden sounds a moaning cry — the cry of children hungry of body and soul. They cry for Bread and Beauty, for Life and Love.

Poor little flowers of the garden! They droop and fade for the blight of Poverty is upon them.

A mother, broken-hearted, weeps because of the desolation of the garden. The beauty and pride of the flowers that glow like flaming torches amid the gloom of the garden do not comfort her. She sees only the drooping and fading flowers.

.
But lo! a Voice is heard in the garden. It speaks from the heart of a sunbeam:

“I, Socialism, Spirit of Life and Progress, come bringing priceless gifts.

"Bread and Beauty I bring to the children. Life and Love to all the blossoms.

"Freedom and Hope I bring to thee, O Mother of Men, and to thy children Opportunity." . . .

.
But the mother does not believe. Fear holds her in bondage to her grief. She weeps and will not be comforted.

The Voice speaks again:

"Fear not, O Mother of Men. I, too, am a mother.

"I have borne all. I have mothered — I have nourished Life with Hope. I have endured the Great Agony.

"Fear me not: I am thy Sister." . . .

Now the sun dispels the clouds and the Garden of Life is filled with rosy light.

The drooping flowers lift their heads.

The moaning cry is turned to laughter and song.

The mother rises. The light of Hope is in her eyes. She walks blithely, like one in whose heart Faith is reborn.

I.

THE ANGEL'S GIFTS

I

ONE of the great masterpieces of modern sculpture is *The Captive Mother*, by Stephan Sinding, the Norwegian sculptor whose art unites to the weird witchery of Grieg's music the profound psychological insight of Ibsen's dramas. In *The Captive Mother* Sinding symbolizes the supreme tragedy of modern society, the Bondage of Motherhood. With her hands tied behind her back a young mother bends to the ground in agony of body in order that her baby may draw nourishment from her copious breasts. Despite her torturous posture, her face wears an expression of patient tenderness and resignation.

Curiously enough, some have seen in Sinding's master-work nothing more than a glorification of maternal love and devotion. For them, the marble represents Motherhood Triumphant, the strong love of the

mother overcoming all obstacles and bearing the fountain of life to her child.

What a narrow and restricted interpretation! That Sinding intended thus to exalt and glorify motherhood may be freely granted, but he had another, larger purpose. With fine insight and inspiration he has carved in marble the gravest indictment of modern civilization, the bondage of the mother. Woman, mother and nourisher of the race is bound and hampered in the performance of her sublime function. She is bound to the débris of all the ages by political, social and economic disabilities, by false conventions, useless duties and outworn lies. Centuries of oppression and denial of freedom to develop limit and bind her and condemn her to nourish blindly and ignorantly the offspring which she as blindly and ignorantly bears.

Amid the confusion and clamor occasioned by the world-wide uprising of woman demanding equal political and economic status with men, recognition of this relation

of political and economic servitude to the limitations and degradation of motherhood makes itself felt. Through woman's loud protest vibrates her passionate yearning for liberation from all that stands in the way of her fulfillment of her divinest function, motherhood, with wisdom and joy. Her dream is not limited to the right to vote upon the same terms as men, or even to equality with man in the labor market. These are at best beginnings — they are the foundation stones upon which the freedom of motherhood is to be built.

Socialism appeals to the mother with peculiar force. It is the Liberator. At all times and in all places the Socialist movement has waged war against every political, social and economic disability of woman and proclaimed the gospel of her emancipation. With unfaltering courage and constancy it has proclaimed its faith that until woman is set free so that she can stand erect and unbound, free to achieve her highest and noblest aims, free to love and choose ma-

ternal responsibilities with fullness of knowledge and power, the race-life can never attain its perfect blossoming, the Superman never be born.

II

Socialism appeals most strongly to the mother through its fundamental demand for the equalization of opportunity. Men do not see as vividly as women do, nor feel as keenly, the terrible injustice of unequal opportunity in childhood, or the limitless suffering and wrong arising from it. A man may assent heartily, without reservation, to the Socialist demand for an equal chance for every child born into the world, but only in rare instances will he comprehend the full significance of the demand as readily as a woman will, especially if she be a mother. A mother will understand that the demand for equality of opportunity as the birthright of every child voices the most revolutionary aspiration ever born of human hopes and nurtured by human hearts.

The claim for an equal chance for every child born into the world carries with it that most fundamental of claims, that every child has a right to be well-born into the world. And that ideal can never be realized until every mother-to-be is safeguarded by all the arts and resources of our civilization to the end that she may bring her baby into the world with joy — healthy of body, glad of heart, serene of soul, unafraid of the future, unterrified by want or the fear of it, secure in the consciousness that the child she bears is heir to all the riches and advantages of earth.

It is sometimes charged that the demand for equality of opportunity is a modification of the revolutionary aim and temper of true, uncompromising Socialism. Nothing could be farther from the truth! So long as the Socialist movement unequivocally stands for that principle, and directs all its policies toward its realization, it will be revolutionary, the incarnate voice of Social Revolution. As so often happens, its simple, in-

flexible justice gives to the demand a sweet reasonableness which induces many to assent to it lightly without any serious examination of all that it involves. The witchery of words lures men on and on until they find themselves far beyond their depths in the great ocean of thought. Simple as it may be to say, "I believe in an equal chance for every child born into the world," an intelligent understanding of all that the declaration implies would limit its acceptance to those who realize the necessity of a complete reconstruction of society.

III

We cannot separate the demand for equality of opportunity as the child's birth-right from the claim that every woman who assumes the peril, pain and responsibility of motherhood is entitled to all the care and protection which the collective power and knowledge of civilization make possible. With this as our standard of judgment, let us with full candor face the facts that are

and then see if we cannot visualize in our imagination the facts which might be.—

Upon the Avenue, in a home of refinement, beauty and comfort dwells a woman. She has never felt the bitterness of poverty, or the fear of it. She has never had to toil in weariness, fearful lest she lack food, raiment or shelter. As a child she was carefully nurtured and protected from every evil influence. She enjoyed her birth-right of play and laughter and song. No factory's gloom ever chilled her spirit, no harsh machines ever hushed her song with their angry clangor. Wisdom and love tenderly watched and nurtured both her body and her mind, so that she grew into womanhood strong and beautiful of body and mind. Thus we see her in her home, splendidly equipped for motherhood, as every woman ought to be.

When the sweet sense of dawning motherhood comes to her it comes as a beautiful dream. She does not contemplate with terror the thought that the Unborn nestling

beneath her heart may have a childhood like unto her own. She looks to the future with serene confidence. She lives over again in memory her own happy childhood.

As the critical days draw near, what infinite resources she commands for her own peace and the welfare of the Unborn! What care is expended, what art employed, to shield her from danger, from weariness of body or distress of mind! And then, when the first low cry falls upon her ear like angel-music, no fear chills her heart. She rejoices in the consciousness that her child is heir to all the ages, that all the treasuries of art, of science, of beauty belong to it. She can say with the Psalmist:

“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

By way of contrast, let us watch the unfolding of another life: On a side street, in a tenement that is mean and poor and void of beauty, dwells another woman. She dwells in the same city as her fortunate sis-

ter, but not in the same world. The gulf which separates the two is well-nigh as broad and impassable as that which separates mankind from the anthropoid apes. Wonderfully unlike in their lives, they are yet wonderfully alike in one respect. *They are both mothers.*

The tenement mother has never known the bliss of freedom from poverty. The fear of Want has darkened every stage of her life. Its ugly shape brooded over her birth and perched upon her cradle. It spoiled her birthright of play and laughter and song. When she ought to have been playing in the enchanted gardens of childhood, an Invisible Power made her captive and bound her to the remorseless wheels of industry. The same great Invisible Power took the light of hope from her eyes, the bloom of health from her cheeks, the song of the joy of life from her heart, and transmuted them into gold. Overworked, underfed, and forever afraid of the morrow, she grew somehow into a pathetic sort of

womanhood, weak and weary of body, untrained, tragically ill-equipped for motherhood.

When first she feels the gentle stirrings of a new life the pride of motherhood's shy dawning is soon dispelled. The Great Fear which haunted her childhood rises to mock her pride and turn her cup of joy to bitterness. She lives her own childhood over again, and in her terror sees the Unborn hunger as she hungered, weep as she wept, toil as she toiled, faint and fall beneath the heavy burden as she fainted and fell. She sees the Unborn despoiled by the Invisible Power as she has been despoiled.

As the critical days draw near her terror increases with the pain caused by the restless life of the Unborn. The pains of the body are as nothing when compared with the anguish caused by the fearful thought that the Unborn must face a future like her own past—a tragic struggle with sordid poverty. She longs for rest for the sake of the Unborn, that it may rest, but in vain.

Daughter of toil and privation, she must toil on, despite her pain. The arts and resources of civilization are not available to shield such as she from danger, from weariness of body or distress of mind!

At last there comes a day when she sinks by her unfinished task exhausted. She hears the low wail of her child. It falls upon her frightened ears like the reproach of an outraged spirit. In the moment of her deliverance from the pain of the body, the anguish of her soul increases. She sees, as only a mother can, the heritage of toil and privation to which her child is born.

IV

The contrast is not overdrawn. It is tragic and terrible, but we must face it and reckon with it if we would understand all that is implied in the demand that every woman who assumes the functions of motherhood shall have equal protection, equal advantage, equal opportunity, so far as the gift of these lies within human power.

It is no answer to our demand to urge that *absolute* equality of equipment for motherhood is a beautiful but unattainable ideal; that there are factors which are beyond human control. Let so much be granted: there still remain the awful inequalities which are of human causation and remediable by collective action. In the case of the two mothers of our illustration all the advantages of the mother of good fortune and all the disadvantages of the mother of ill fortune are of human origin. The beautiful home of the mother of good fortune is an environmental condition of human making. The skill and care which protected her and equipped her for motherhood are human forces. Likewise the squalid tenement home of the less fortunate mother is an environmental condition of human origin. The poverty which blasted her life is a social condition of our human making. The labor in childhood which wrecked her body is a social condition, too, for which we are collectively responsible.

There is no reason other than our shortcomings, our social ignorance, indifference or greed why any of these evils should continue to exist. It is well within our collective power to make the advantages enjoyed by the fortunate mother on the Avenue equally accessible to every mother in the civilized world. There is no good, sensible reason why a single ugly tenement should be built anywhere, or why those we have already suffered to be built should continue to exist and blight and dwarf the bodies and souls of the dwellers in them. It is well within our social power to make all human habitations conform to the splendid ideal of Ibsen's Master Builder Solness:

“ . . . homes for human beings. Cozy, comfortable, bright homes, where father and mother and the whole troop of children can live in safety and gladness, feeling what a happy thing it is to be alive in the world — and most of all to belong to each other — in great things and in small.”

There is no good, sensible reason why any

little child anywhere within the boundaries of civilization should be denied the precious birthright of joyful play and forced to perform body and soul destroying tasks in factory, workshop or mine, while strong men stand idle in the market place and complain, "No man hath hired us."

And surely there is no good reason why anywhere within the limits of civilized society a mother must imperil her own life and that of her offspring by working her body to weariness during the period of her pregnancy; no reason why the health and happiness of mother and child should be menaced by the mother's fear of the hideous monster, poverty. It has been shown by Pinard and others that overwork during pregnancy seriously affects the offspring and is an important cause of premature birth and of still-birth.¹ If we take a hundred working women and enable them to rest during the last three months of pregnancy, we shall find

¹ In Boston more than five per cent. of the births are still-births.

that their offspring are larger and finer than those of a hundred similar working women who have pursued their regular employment until a short time before their confinement. Moreover, there will be fewer premature births. It is not as generally known as it ought to be that prematurity of birth is one of the important causes of excessive infant mortality. Prematurity means immaturity. The prematurely born child comes into the world ill-equipped to withstand the perils of infancy and childhood. How important this is may be guessed from the fact that, according to Havelock Ellis, about one-third of the babies born in civilized countries to-day are prematurely born.²

If the right of the child to be well-born means anything at all, if it is more than a cant phrase, it means the right of every mother to be surrounded by all the care, all the skill, all the safeguards of the health and happiness of herself and her child, which

² HAVELOCK ELLIS, *The Problem of Race-Regeneration*, p. 18.

human love and knowledge make possible. So much the intelligent and humane breeder of animals provides for the brood mare. Even the poor ignorant Kaffir aims to assure so much to the mother of his children. Élie Reclus tells us that savages almost universally exempt their women from toil for long periods before and after childbirth.³ It is only among civilized human beings that this fundamental claim of motherhood receives no recognition!

Socialism, then, demands that every social condition, every art and every power of science which now contribute to the healthfulness and happiness of motherhood for the privileged few shall be democratized and made common to all mothers. It would transform the privilege of a class into an inalienable right for all. Its cardinal principle, the communism of opportunity, touches the whole octave of life, but nowhere is it of more vital significance to the life of the race than where it touches the

³ ÉLIE RECLUS, *Primitive Folk*, p. 35.

fundamental claims of motherhood in this far-reaching and revolutionary proposal.

V

But it is not enough that the mother shall be given an opportunity to bring her baby into the world with all the advantages of healthful and beautiful preparation and of healthful and beautiful surroundings for the child. Motherhood needs a larger freedom yet. Every mother needs and should have the perfect freedom of a full opportunity to be a mother in the most complete sense of that much too narrowly interpreted word — freedom to remain with her child to nourish and guard its body and soul during all the dependent years. Nothing less than that will suffice.

Motherhood is not for all women, perhaps, but it is surely woman's highest and holiest mission. A curse rests upon the social system which tears millions of mothers away from the cradles of their babies, from their true vocation as builders of the bodies

and souls of their sons and daughters, and forces them into factories, workshops, stores, counting-houses and other women's kitchens to labor while their children are neglected. A social system which finds larger profit in the making of paper bags and shoddy clothing for the sake of dividends to an exploiting class than in the development of strong, well-nurtured children, is doomed.

Yet this wrong is going on all the time, practically unchecked, all over the civilized world. The shockingly heavy mortality of our large factory towns, where many mothers are employed in factories, leaving their babies in the charge of old women, or of small girls, is very largely due to the employment of the mothers away from the home.⁴ There is no food for a baby which

⁴ At the Fifteenth International Congress of Hygiene and Demography, held at Washington, D. C., September, 1912, Dr. George Reid, public health officer of Stafford, England, gave an account of an inquiry which he had conducted, on behalf of the British government, to determine, if possible, the effect of the labor of married women on infant mortality. According to *The Survey*, October 5, 1912, the twelve months' life history of 5000 infants in the families of Staffordshire artisans was

can compare with its mother's milk. The mortality of hand-fed babies is generally three times that of breast-fed babies. Sometimes the difference is even greater than that. There are many mothers who cannot nurse their offspring for physical reasons. They and their babies are to be pitied. There are women who can, but will not. They refuse to make the sacrifice of social enjoyment which nursing their babies would involve. Such women are to be condemned. Their sin comes perilously near to that form of selfishness which prompts infanticide.

But there are other mothers whose breasts are full, and who would gladly nurse their babies, yet do not. They cannot. They are prevented from doing so by that great Invisible Power which drives them into

studied. The employment of married women in the pottery towns of Staffordshire is common. Says *The Survey*: "The infant mortality among the class of working mothers was found to exceed that among the housewives by 43 per cent. By a shift in the statistical classifications it was found that the mortality among infants partly artificially fed exceeded that of the naturally fed class by 79 per cent., that those wholly artificially fed exceeded the breast-fed babies by 157 [per cent.]."

the industrial world to become wage earners. Of all the wastes of which civilized society is guilty, the worst and most tragic is the waste of motherhood. The talents of uncounted thousands of mothers are wasted, perverted to base and unworthy ends. Sometimes members of the employing class experience some qualms of conscience as a result of the recognition of this waste, and, in a spirit of philanthropy, build nurseries in connection with their factories, so that the mothers may suckle their babies at stated intervals of their work. So keen is the desire to reduce the infant death rate, to stop some of the waste of baby lives, that many of our social reformers welcome this hideous compromise. They do not ask themselves why motherhood should thus be subordinated to profit-making; why in our social economy the maternal function of building up the body and soul of the child should be subordinated to the production of commodities.

In *The Master Builder*, one of the profoundest of his dramas, and the most beauti-

ful, Ibsen describes with vivid power the true vocation of the mother, to be a builder of the bodies and souls of little children. Halvard Solness, the Master Builder, tells little Hilda Wangel, that elfin-like creature whose radicalism challenges him, the story of the great tragedy which wrecked his wife's life and made her the wraith-like creature that she is. He tells her that his wife's vocation has been crushed and stunted, in order that his own success might be achieved. He tells his bewildered companion that Aline, his wife, had a talent for building.

“Not houses and towers, and spires — not such things as I work away at,” he explains, and Hilda asks, “Well, but what then?” He replies with bitter agony:

“For building up the souls of little children, Hilda. For building up children's souls in perfect balance, and in noble and beautiful forms. For enabling them to soar up into erect and full-grown human souls. That was Aline's talent. And there it all

lies now — unused and unusable forever — of no earthly service to anyone — just like the ruins left by a fire.”

In all our industrial towns there are numerous women like Aline Solness. Their name is legion. Dowered by nature with the wonderful talent of motherhood, for “building up children’s souls in perfect balance, and in noble and beautiful forms,” they are compelled to give their lives to other, less noble, work. Their talents lie “unused and unusable forever — of no earthly service to anyone — just like the ruins left by a fire.”

Nothing in the world can take the place of maternal affection and attention. From time to time amiable theorists — generally childless! — have propounded plans for supplanting the individual mother in the rearing of children. All sorts of communal nurseries with “scientific direction and management” have been advocated. If there is any one thing about which we may speak with assurance it is the folly of the basic idea of

these schemes. All observed facts go to show that it is a calamity for a child to be deprived of the attention of its mother. The most elaborate communal or coöperative nursery ever devised, despite the most scientific direction and management, cannot equal in efficiency the care of a healthy mother of average intelligence. For orphans and foundlings such institutions may, in some cases, be necessary, but they are necessary evils. Experience plainly teaches that it is far better to place the little ones in real homes, no matter how humble the homes may be. Every little human child needs and should have "a pair of mother's arms all its own."

Even the practice, formerly much more common than now, of handing infants over to wet-nurses to be suckled, should never be resorted to if the mother can nurse the child herself. Such nursing is better than bottle feeding, but the mortality of infants suckled by others than their own mothers is double that of babies nursed, as nature intended

them to be, by their own mothers. Plato, in his immortal Utopia, provided that no mother should be able to nurse, or to identify, her own child. We know now that Plato, profound thinker though he was, made the fundamental error of regarding maternity as a purely animal function, and of disregarding the subtle psychic factors which enter into it.

The whole authority of modern science supports the demand of the Socialist for such a change in our industrial system as will free motherhood and make it possible for every mother to devote herself to the care of her children. The world does not need — it will be infinitely better without — the great universal waste of the talents of motherhood.

VI

It is just a hundred years ago since Robert Owen, in the first of his *Essays on the Formation of Human Character*, wrote: “Any general character, from the best to

the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by the application of proper means; which means are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men." Owen's experience at New Lanark had convinced him that human character depended upon heredity to a very much smaller degree, and upon environment to a very much larger degree, than was generally believed. He was not slow to perceive that here was a fact of tremendous significance to the worker for social reformation. So long as men believed that the physical and moral decay by which they were confronted had its roots in the past, that children were literally "damned before they were born," they could not undertake the task of social redemption with the faith and confidence essential to success. Owen's success was due to his profound belief that environment was far more im-

portant than heredity, and he bravely did his part to dispel the fear of heredity which paralyzed the hearts and hopes of men.

We know to-day that Owen was right. The overwhelming bulk of scientific evidence supports his conclusion. It was the belief of the late Dr. Barnardo, the famous English philanthropist, that heredity is a practically negligible factor in the general problem of poverty, vice, crime and racial degeneration. He gathered the human driftwood of the great English metropolis, the foundlings picked up in the gutters and ash-cans, the orphans of the criminal and vicious and shiftless denizens of the slums, the waifs and strays who found their way into the clutches of the police. From such unpromising material, he reared men of good health and character, from whose ranks Canada, South Africa and Australia have recruited thousands of their finest citizens.

At the First International Congress on Eugenics, held in London in the summer of 1912, Mr. Arthur J. Balfour, the former

Prime Minister of England, pointed out that there is far less dogmatism, and far more divergence of opinion, upon the subject of heredity to-day than in the seventies and eighties of the last century. That is true, at least to the extent that it is now generally admitted that environment is the more important factor. Sir John MacDonald, perhaps the leading English authority on the subject, stoutly maintained that, in the majority of cases, the habitual criminal is made so by his environment and training, that heredity is a far less important factor. Morals depend upon physical health and good environment far more than upon heritage. Professor S. G. Smith, of the University of Minnesota, epigrammatically summed up the case in his declaration that he would "rather be the son of a healthy burglar than of a consumptive bishop." He took the view of Dr. Eichholz, expressed in his testimony before the famous British Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, that there "is a lack of any real

evidence of any hereditary taint or strain of deterioration even among the poor populations of our cities . . . our physical degeneracy is produced afresh by each generation . . . there is every chance under reasonable measures of amelioration of restoring our poorest population to a condition of normal physique. . . . The interpretation would seem to be that Nature gives every generation a fresh start.”

From the point of view of the Socialist seeking to remove poverty, vice and crime, and from the point of view of the mothers of the race, this is the most inspiring and encouraging message science has ever given to the world. It means that the wrongs of our ancestors affect us much less than an older generation of scientists taught us to believe. It means that if we can surround the children from the moment of birth with decent conditions, maintain them in a proper environment, solve the problem of the distribution of wealth and do away with poverty, we can move upward, and onward practically

unhampered by the sins of past generations, unaffrighted by the terrible specter of physical heredity damning our babies while yet they lie in the wombs of their mothers.

We Socialists do not deny an important influence to heredity. Still less do we deny the importance of many of the things our friends, the Eugenists, are so vigorously contending for. That certain hereditarily transmissible diseases and weaknesses ought to bar marriage and procreation is in nowise incompatible with our faith. As Dr. Saleeby reminds us, recent study has clearly shown the importance of heredity in the realm of idiocy and insanity, but it has shown also, with equal clearness, that *even in cretinic idiocy, the addition of "one single ingredient to the diet may convert the poor idiot into a person of fair and normal mind."*⁵ It is only when eugenics is offered as an all-sufficient solution of the social problem that we Socialists need have any conflict with the Eugenists.

⁵ C. W. SALEEBY, *Methods of Race-Regeneration*, p. 12.

So long as it was believed that tuberculosis was perpetuated mainly, if not wholly, through the channels of heredity, that "it ran in families," and was "born in the blood" of its victims, so long we were helpless to effectually combat it. We only began to effectually fight the disease when we set ourselves free from the fear of heredity.⁶ And so it is with the great problem of race degeneration, including in that term poverty, vice and crime. We can only address ourselves hopefully and confidently to the task of regenerating the race when, no longer oppressed and dominated by the fear of heredity, which is beyond human control, so far as all the countless generations of the past are concerned, we turn our attention to the living present, to the great facts of environment, which are within our control.

⁶ In a paper read at the Academy of Medicine, New York City, on January 19th, 1914, it was declared by the eminent medical authority, Lieut.-Colonel Woodruff, late of the U. S. A. medical corps, that it is the consensus of expert opinion that no child is ever born with tuberculosis.

VII

The hope of the race, then, lies in the equalization of opportunity which is the Alpha and Omega of Socialism. And to the mothers of the race that ideal must make its strongest appeal. Socialism is a living protest against the waste of human life represented by the appalling volume of needless infant mortality. Our gravest peril is not "race suicide," but race homicide. The heart of our problem is not a low birthrate, but a needlessly high death-rate. More than thirty per cent. of our babies die without reaching the age of two years. One-fourth of all the babies born to the mothers of America die without reaching the age of one year. Each year, in the United States, we needlessly sacrifice fully 150,000 baby lives. These are victims of poverty, of neglect, of ignorance—in a word, of the frightful inequality of opportunity which characterizes our social order.

Socialists are often accused of hugging to

themselves the delusion of a world in which all men and women will be equal. Their enemies taunt them with aiming to bring about "the dull level of equality." In point of fact, only through the equalization of opportunity can we ever realize anything approaching true individualism. The Socialist ideal is not at all incompatible with the development of individual genius and character. On the contrary, until we socialize all the opportunities for healthful living, so that they are the common heritage of all, we shall waste an incalculable amount of potential individual genius.

There must be inequality of capacity, of character, of achievement. That is Nature's universal and immutable law. But if we are to obtain the best results from that inequality of capacity, character and achievement, we must give to every child born full and free access to every social gift, so that he may develop all his gifts. The inevitable result of this communism of opportunity must be a glorious individualism of achieve-

ment. Socialism, then, is not aiming at equality and a level plain of mediocrity, but rather at a glorious inequality through the equality of advantage which it seeks to establish.

That there is a much greater degree of equality in human capacity and talent than we have heretofore recognized is certain. As we have seen, within the species, environment counts for more than heredity. A great deal of the moral and intellectual superiority which exists among men is due to exceptional advantages, rather than to an inherited superiority. To admit so much is not to claim that with the destruction of the barriers which now deny to the many the advantages enjoyed by the few there would no longer be differences among men. Equality could only be attained by holding down the stronger to the level of the weaker. Equality of opportunity, on the other hand, would simply unbind those who are now bound down by lack of opportunity and set them free.

Poverty must be abolished, because it is anti-social, and denies millions of souls an adequate opportunity to develop their in-born powers. The disease-breeding tenement and the slum must go for the same reason. Child labor must go, because it stunts the body and the mind, destroying the physical, intellectual and spiritual forces which are essential to the highest and noblest development of a human being. When we turn back to the Athens of Pericles, where individualism flourished and produced the noblest art the world has ever known, we are struck at once by the fact that there was in Athens then, for the free citizens, a splendid communism of opportunity. Athens found that the highest individualism was the natural fruitage of her fundamental communism which placed the means of the common life under the control of the whole body politic. In like manner, we Socialists believe, the most generous individualism of intellectual and spiritual culture will result from the socialization of production and exchange and

the social advantages based upon production and exchange.

VIII

To-day the production and the exchange of wealth are functions carried on with an anti-social object, namely, the profit of a class of non-producers. That is the fundamental wrong of capitalism. That is the source of its poverty, its vice, its crime, its inefficient lives, its inequality of opportunity. Those who make the bread of the world cannot eat the bread their hands have made. No one is poor because there is not enough for all. No child in America suffers hunger because there is a dearth of food in America. No child wears rags or goes without shoes because good clothes and shoes cannot be made in sufficient quantity to supply all.

No! When the hunger-cry is loudest the storehouses groan with their burden of food. When there is the greatest lack of clothing and shoes, warehouses are filled to overflowing with them. And even if it were otherwise, there is always a well-nigh inexhaustible

reserve of productive capacity available to supply every human need. Machinery and labor and raw materials are plentiful. On the one side we have abundant natural resources and wonderful powers of production; on the other side we have a great unsatisfied need which could be easily satisfied by the application of a moiety of our powers to an infinitesimal portion of our resources. But we have not as yet learned to direct our productive capacity to the social good.

If our economic activities were inspired and controlled by a social purpose and vision, no human want would remain unsatisfied so long as there were unexhausted productive powers and opportunities. All our resources and our skill and might would be combined to meet the needs of every human being. If we found ourselves incapable of producing plenty for all, we should, if we were truly social, see to it that all shared in the dearth due to the lack of productive capacity. On the other hand, finding ourselves capable of producing infinitely more

than we need, we should, if we were truly social, see to it that all shared the advantages of our triumph as producers. We should aim to make life better, richer, happier and more beautiful for all. We should see that the result of our triumph was more beauty in the homes of all and larger leisure for all to enjoy the beauty. Inspired and controlled by the ideal of social well-being, we should see that no human being performed in pain a task which might have been performed in joy; that nothing ugly was produced which might have been made beautiful; that nothing was made which was unworthy of our best power; that our work was the worthiest, and performed under the worthiest conditions, of which we were capable.

So long as the prevailing capitalist system lasts this social ideal will remain unattainable. For capitalism is essentially anti-social. Its entire structure rests upon the production of things primarily for sale to the end that a ruling class may profit, instead of upon the social principle of production for

use, for social gain, for the common good and joy of all.

There is no other adequate explanation of our social shortcomings. The only reason why men who are capable of building beautiful homes — as is shown by the palaces they build for the rich — build ugly, prison-like, gloomy tenements for themselves and their wives and children to dwell in is the fact that their labor is governed, not by the desire to attain supreme usefulness, but by the desire for profit. The only reason that a man's burdens are fastened upon a child's frail back is profit. The only reason for the adulteration of the milk of the helpless child and the bread of the father is profit. And it is that same anti-social thing, profit, which explains the wanton destruction of the food for which men, women and children pine, and for lack of which they starve and die. In 1911, amid a nation-wide outcry against the prevailing famine prices and the increasing difficulty of making ends meet experienced by millions of people, the newspapers told

the story of cold storage warehouses being opened up and food wantonly destroyed, of a million dozen eggs destroyed in New York alone, in order that the supply might be lessened and the high price of eggs arbitrarily maintained.⁷ Only in a society which produces primarily for profit and class advantage could such a condition ever exist.

To whom can the abolition of these and the manifold other evils of capitalism be of greater interest than to the mothers? Who better than they can know the bitter cost of production for profit? Who is better able than the mother to translate the tale of capitalist profit into the terms of social loss — of poverty, of suffering, of dwarfed bodies and souls, of wrecked hopes and lives? Who can have a greater interest than the mother in the promise which Socialism brings of a world redeemed from the curse which production for profit has laid upon our civilization?

⁷ *Vide* daily newspapers, October 28, 1912.

IX

Production for use instead of profit, for the common good instead of for the gain of a few at the cost of the many, can only be made possible through the collective ownership of the resources of nature and the principal means of production. And so everywhere the Socialist movement is striving to bring about the collective ownership and democratic control and management of all those means of production which so long as they are owned and controlled by individuals, or by groups of individuals, enable their owners to build thrones of pride and power upon the degradation of the many, the users of the tools, the actual producers. Collective ownership of the means of production, with democratic management, is the central demand in the Socialist programme everywhere.

This programme does not contemplate the destruction of all forms of private property, and the making of all things common to all.

On the contrary, it is quite certain that collective ownership of the great social agencies of production and exchange would result in making private property far more general than it is now. Millions of people have practically no private property at all to-day. They do not own the homes in which they live. They do not own the things they produce. They do not own enough to provide the necessities of a decent existence during a month of enforced abstention from labor. When sickness, accident, or other misfortune, compels them to be idle for a few weeks they are reduced to dependence upon charity as the only alternative to starvation. Even in the most prosperous times millions of people are so divorced from property of all kinds that they never have enough good food to eat, enough good clothes to wear, or decent homes in which to live. How idle, therefore, it is to urge as a reason for opposing Socialism and remaining content with the existing order the fear that Socialism would do away with private prop-

erty! Capitalism has never provided all people with private property. Socialism on the other hand, would make it possible for every human being to have and own all the private property which that human being could use to advantage and without imposing any disadvantage upon another human being.

The collective ownership of the principal means of social production — that is, the natural resources, the mines, factories, railways, machinery, and so on — would not take away anything from the great majority of people. True, the worker would not himself own the machine used by him, but that is his condition to-day. The workers in our great factories and workshops do not own the tools with which they labor. They do not own the raw materials upon which they labor. They do not own the places in which they labor. They do not own the things which they produce by their labor. All these are owned by an exploiting class of non-producers, whose interest it is to see that

the producers get in the form of wages as little as they can manage to live upon, and produce as much more than they receive as possible. This is the inevitable interest of the owning class, because its own income is derived from that which the workers produce over and above what they receive in the form of wages.

Collective ownership and democratic control of the means of production would not give the ownership of the tools of labor to the individual worker. That was once possible, in the days when production was of necessity carried on by hand labor. It is not possible with machine production, which is only carried on by the organized labor of masses of workers. But collective ownership would make it impossible for the idle few to exploit the industrious many. It would make it possible for the workers themselves to exercise an effective control over the products of their labor and their distribution. It would make certain a fuller enjoyment by the producers of the wealth they produce.

This is what we mean when we say that collective ownership of the forces of social production would result in a greater diffusion of real private property.

It is not difficult for the mother to understand how common ownership of the means of production can be combined with private ownership in consumption goods in social economy. Every mother can see that the principle is the same as that which governs the home. The ideal home is, indeed, only a microcosm of the ideal state. In the well-regulated home there is equal care for the collective interest of the family as a whole and for the individual interest of each member. The comfort and advantage of each individual member of the family depends upon the denial of the power to monopolize many things in the home, and maintaining them as the common property of all the members. No one member could assert and exercise a right to the sole ownership and control of these things without injuring every other member of the family. On the other

hand, there are many things which must be regarded as belonging to individual members, if harmony is to prevail.

Every mother sees this and comprehends the philosophy of distribution upon which it is based. If there are things essential to the welfare and happiness of all the members of the family, the control of which by a single member would give that member a power to rule all the rest, and to deny them comfort and happiness except upon irksome and humiliating conditions, the safety of the family is only assured by making those things common to all. But things which the individual needs to own and control for the attainment of personal happiness and well-being, the ownership and exclusive use of which does not subject other members of the family to discomfort, properly belong to the individual, and the happiness of the family depends upon the ability of each individual in it to secure all such things necessary to the satisfaction of his or her wants.

Socialism, then, is an attempt to realize

in the larger life of the community that rational and fair adjustment of collective and individual power and responsibility which is exemplified by the family at its best. And to the mother-genius with its full understanding of family life Socialism may well bear its programme, confident of a sympathetic understanding.

X

Many a thoughtful mother sees in the Socialist ideal a beautiful inspiration and yet remains aloof from the Socialist movement because the goal seems so far off and unattainable. She measures the task by the narrow span of her own lifetime and is overwhelmed. On every hand she sees poverty and suffering. The need is immediate, and Socialism seems so far remote. She wants to feel that her life and her work benefit those who are suffering now, not the unborn generations alone. The social reform which promises immediate improvement, however small, makes a strong claim for her support, weaning her from service in

the struggle to bring about the great comprehensive change which must take such a long time for its consummation. She wants to feel here and now that by her labors life is made happier for the children of misfortune.

Such a mother needs the assurance which comes from a full knowledge of the Socialist movement, and the important work it has accomplished in the sphere of practical social reform. No greater mistake could possibly be made than to regard the Socialist as one whose passionate yearning for the millennium of his dreams causes him to refuse to deal with present problems and to disdain such measures of relief as lie close at hand. Yet that is a widely prevailing conception.

It is not the least of the glories of the Socialist movement, and certainly not the least of its claims upon the thoughtful mother, that it is the most powerful force at work in the world for the amelioration of present evils and for present social betterment. This is the natural result of its

class character and origin: born of the suffering and striving of the disinherited and downtrodden, voicing their sorrows and their visions, it could not remain indifferent to the possibilities of relief and betterment during the long struggle toward its goal. Socialism has caused those who most feared it to work for social reforms in the vain hope that these might appease the people and wean them from Socialism. "Social revolutions are averted by judicious social reforms," said Turgot. It was in that spirit that Bismarck inaugurated the social reform policies of Germany. They have signally failed to accomplish Bismarck's subtle purpose, but have had the opposite effect of helping Socialism by improving the equipment of the people for the great struggle. Similar results have attended the efforts of all those who, in various countries, have followed Bismarck's example. Politicians may attempt to lessen the number of Socialist ballots by granting social reforms, but as surely as these reforms increase the physical, mental and moral

stamina of the workers, making them stronger and wiser, they will devote their newly acquired powers to the struggle against capitalism.

But it is not alone by frightening concessions from the master class that the Socialist movement promotes social reform. In every country in which the Socialist movement has taken root it has been the pioneer of all effective social reform. Even if we go back to the famous *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, we shall find the need and value of social reform recognized. Indeed, many a present day reform programme reads almost as if it were taken from the second section of that Socialist classic.

No mother can be indifferent to the splendid record of the Socialists as fighters for reforms dealing with the welfare of children. There is hardly a single measure in the programme which the most thoughtful and progressive social reformers of today are advocating which has not long been zealously advocated by Socialists. In most

cases, the Socialists were the first to see the necessity of the reforms and to advocate them.

Wherever Socialists have been elected to parliamentary bodies, or to administrative offices, they have fought for the protection of motherhood. Many years before the International Congress of Hygiene, in 1900, passed a resolution declaring that "every working woman is entitled to rest during the last three months of her pregnancy," and urging that legislation be enacted to that effect, the Socialists in many countries had vigorously urged that reform. Moreover, they had faced the need of providing for the mother during her enforced idleness and advocated the payment of "maternity subsidies" by the state or the municipality to atone for the loss of wages. It is now very generally admitted that some such provision must be made before the demand of the International Congress of Hygiene can be effectively met. The Socialists have gone even further and urged that society must, in

its own interest, put an end to the employment of mothers during the infancy of their children. They have pointed to the frightful mortality of infants whose mothers are compelled to work away from their homes, and to the ill effects of inadequate and improper care among the children who survive. They have urged that society ought to make it possible for the mother to be a mother in the full sense of the word, to care for her baby during the first years of its life. In many European cities where the Socialists have secured the necessary power they have actually made this possible. To the mother, soon after the birth of her baby, goes a representative of the city, bearing this message: "Mother, our city cannot afford to have you neglect your baby for the sake of going to work in factory, workshop or store. That would be an ill exchange for the city and for the nation. The highest service you can render society, the most valuable labor you can perform, is to bring up your baby in strength of body and character. For that

service the city feels that it can well afford to pay you as much as any manufacturer can afford to pay you for tending a soulless machine. Not as a dependent upon charity, but as a valuable servant of the city, you are to be paid for the best work of which you are capable — building up the soul of your child in a healthy and noble body.”

There is not a single measure for the physical welfare of children upon which experts are now agreed which the Socialists of the world have not long advocated. They were the first to see the close relation between high infantile mortality and a milk supply conducted for profit. They were pioneers in demanding the establishment of municipal depots for the supply of wholesome milk for infant feeding. They were the first, also, to recognize the plight of the under-nourished school child and the need of providing school lunches for tens of thousands of children, either free of charge or at a small cost. Finally, the Socialists are justly entitled to most of the credit for the

splendid development of the system of medical inspection and attention in our public schools. They were among the first in modern times to rediscover the close relation of educability to physical health. They were among the first to see the utter futility of the old methods of medical inspection, which simply sought for cases of contagious disease and excluded the children from the schools, heedless of the fact that they were often uncared for and, through playing with other children in their homes and upon the streets, were as dangerous as though they had remained in school.

Nowadays, in our most enlightened and progressive cities, medical inspection aims not at the detection of contagious diseases alone, but at the detection of every physical weakness or defect which may be a hindrance to the soundest development of the child, physically, mentally and morally. Defects of vision, of hearing and of breathing are sought out and, in many cases, properly treated, so that the child is given a chance

to attain the *mens sana in corpore sano*, which is the ideal of the wise teacher and the wise parent. Dental clinics in connection with the schools, outdoor schools for weak and convalescent children and school sanatoria have been advocated at first almost exclusively by Socialists, and have been established as a result of the growing acceptance of the Socialist ideal of social responsibility for the welfare of the children.

The true Socialist conceives of society as a great Over-Parent, not supplanting the protection and responsibility of the natural parents, but supplementing them by other and more far-reaching protection and responsibility. He would have society, like a great, universal mother, with all the wisdom and power of all the ages, protect all children from harm and tenderly lead them in the ways of Righteousness and Fellowship and Peace.

XI

Socialism and motherhood are one in their hatred of war and militarism and one in

their love of peace. Every mother's heart holds dear the great vision of world-peace, of a time coming when the red ruin of Mars shall no longer ravage the earth. And in the heart of every Socialist the same precious vision is held equally dear. As the greatest single force in the world aiming to destroy militarism and bring about peace, the Socialist movement must appeal to mothers.

Ask the thoughtful mother why she hates war and militarism, and she will answer: "I am a woman — a mother. All the strength and pride of men which war has disfigured, maimed and slaughtered upon all the battlefields of history have been carried beneath the hearts of mothers like myself, mothers who dreamed of joyous and beautiful lives for their sons. We, the mothers of the race, have been most despoiled by war: we have paid the supreme forfeit. The lives blotted out in the bloody mists of war have all been conceived in our wombs and nursed at our breasts. The lives broken and marred by war have all been blood of

our blood, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. Why, then, should we mothers do aught but hate war and love peace?"

Ask the thoughtful Socialist why he hates war and militarism, and he will answer: "I am a Socialist. All my hope and faith I repose in the working class, the makers of bread. To it I belong. Its woes are my woes, its foes are my foes. In every war the burdens fall most heavily upon my class. It is from my class that most of the victims of war are drawn. It is upon my class that the heavy task of paying for war's wicked waste inevitably falls. The labor spent in making the implements of war, even during the years of so-called peace, would feed all the children of my class who now perish from hunger. Why, then, should we of the working class do aught but hate war and love peace?"

It is not strange, therefore, that the Socialist movement is universally recognized as a mighty force making for universal peace, and that every political victory of the Social-

ists is interpreted as a fresh blow at militarism. "The Social Democracy is Germany's greatest peace organization," declared Professor Mommsen, the famous German historian, and that is becoming so well understood that the Socialists are admitted to be the most powerful preservers of peace in Europe, even by those who are most opposed to them. When the first news of the sweeping Socialist victories in the Reichstag elections of 1912 was conveyed to August Bebel, the veteran Socialist leader, he is reported to have exclaimed with deep emotion, "Good! The peace of Europe is now assured!" That was no idle boast. It is safe to say that in England, where fear of a war with Germany rested like a menacing cloud, the Socialist victory was hailed with as much joy as in Germany itself. When, soon after the Reichstag elections, one of the parliamentary representatives of the Social Democratic Party of Germany visited Great Britain, he was astonished to find that wherever he went, even in the remotest ham-

lets, he was hailed by the people with the greatest enthusiasm. No great warrior and conqueror of peoples ever made such a triumphal tour in modern times as did that simple representative of German Socialism. And the secret of it was simply that the people of Great Britain, without regard to party, saw in the Socialist Victory a splendid pledge that peace between Germany and England would be maintained.

With very rare exceptions, wars have always been carried on in the interests of ruling and exploiting classes. Modern wars are almost invariably wars for markets, that is to say, they are waged for the purpose of enabling the master class in one country to force its surplus commodities upon the people of some other country. The hope for world peace is inseparable from the hope of the proletariat. It is the interest of the working class to wage war against war. Marx understood that, and in an address written for the International Workingmen's Association declared, "The alliance of the

working classes of all countries will ultimately kill war."

The abolition of war! What an inspiration to believe that this great international movement will make real the sublime vision of universal peace! That the genius of mankind, inspired by the Socialist ideal, will forge into tools of peaceful industry the cruel weapons of destruction! That never again shall vultures prey upon bloody and corpse-strewn battlefields! That instead of spending more than seventy per cent. of our national income⁸ upon wars past and present and to prepare for future wars, we shall devote all our resources to the great work of making it easier for men and women to live healthy, happy and beautiful lives!

XII

This, then, is the programme of Socialism. That it makes a powerful appeal to the mother-instinct cannot be

⁸ In the United States, during the thirty years, 1879-1909, 71.6 per cent. of our total national income was so spent!

denied. It is vibrant with the love and tenderness of motherhood. None need fear this programme save the powers that lay chains upon the bodies and souls of the children of men and bind them down when they would climb to the heights in answer to the Challenge of the Spirit.

The message of Socialism is a message of Life and Liberty and Love. It promises to destroy the political, social and economic disabilities imposed upon womanhood: to give the mothers of the race equal freedom with the fathers of the race. It pledges itself to destroy those conditions of life and labor which weaken the mothers and deny to their babies the right to be well born. It claims for every child all the advantages of healthful and beautiful environment. It would destroy the dread fear of want which drives the mother from the service of her child into the service of a great factory. It would bestow upon every child, as its rightful heritage, opportunity to develop all its powers. It would apply the principles of

the family to the state. It would abolish the body and soul debasing labor of children and give to the little ones their Kingdom of Laughter and Dreams. It would end the waste of human lives by poverty, and make true wealth possible for all and illth for none. It would put an end to war — the war of classes as well as the war of nations — and organize and direct the genius and power of the race, now so largely given to destruction, to the enrichment of life for all and the realization of Human Brotherhood.

Socialism comes to the mother as an Angel of Light and Life, bearing the torch of a great hope. "I am Life Abundant," cries the Angel, "and I bring you as gifts the Freedom and Opportunity and Joy and Peace for which you have prayed. See, my Sister, Mother of Men, all these are yours if you will put forth your hand and receive them."

And the mother yearns to take the Angel's gifts, but does not. Fear holds her back. She is the Slave of the Fear.

II

THE MOTHER'S FEAR

I

IT is not difficult to understand why so many thoughtful mothers oppose Socialism and remain aloof from the Socialist movement, despite the powerful appeal to their hearts of its promise of political, social and economic equality for men and women and equality of opportunity for all children. To the attainment of these ideal conditions they would gladly devote their lives could they but feel certain that, in the effort to attain them, Socialism would not create new evils or destroy some good of priceless value already attained.

Probably the vast majority of those women who oppose Socialism do so because they have been taught to believe that it would abolish monogamic marriage and utterly destroy the institution of private family life which rests upon that form of marriage. The defenders of the existing social order

have charged the Socialist movement with the advocacy of "Free Love" with so much persistency that we cannot wonder that so many women dread it as an unspeakably evil thing. They believe, with ample warrant, that the private family based upon the permanent and voluntary union of one man to one woman is an essential condition of true civilization. They believe, with ample warrant, that whatever menaces such family life, menaces all civilization and progress. Not until their fears are dispelled will they embrace the Angel of Socialism and accept the gifts she proffers.

Women are not opposed to anything which can rightly be called "Free Love." They are not afraid of the freedom of love. They know that perfect love can only exist where there is perfect freedom. Every normal woman believes that unfettered love is the noblest sanction of human marriage and parenthood; that the baser considerations of wealth, title, social position, and the like, ought not to enter into the sacred relations

of marriage and motherhood and fatherhood. Every woman of normal mind and heart believes that a woman should no more be driven into marriage and motherhood for the sake of securing the assurance of food, clothing and shelter than she should be ravished by bestial brutes. And every woman of normal mind and heart believes that loveless marriage, whether for the advantages of social position, or for mere maintenance, is a degradation of womanhood, a form of prostitution in reality. No church ceremonial and no altar can sanctify such marriages. That men and women should be free from economic bondage — free to marry only in response to the promptings of pure affection, no woman will question. But that is not the freedom that is referred to when Socialists are charged with being Free Lovers.

What is meant by the charge is that Socialism seeks to destroy monogamic marriage, and to substitute for it some other form of sex relationship. No matter how these sub-

stitutes for the present marriage system differ in character from one another, they are all grouped together by the enemies of Socialism under the misleading generic title of "Free Love." The fact that some of the substitutes would greatly lessen social authority and responsibility, and to a corresponding degree free the individual from existing restraints of law or custom, while others would greatly increase social responsibility and authority, and lessen personal choice, is ignored: they are all covered by the single term of popular opprobrium, "Free Love."

II

It will help us greatly in our consideration of this subject to get this fact very clearly fixed in our minds. Plato, the great Greek philosopher, wrote a book describing the ideal social state as he conceived it. He first of all considered all the problems arising in the relations of imperfect humanity, and then, just as an inventor tries to invent a better mechanism than one which has been

found to be unsuitable, he tried to invent better-working social relations. These he described in his Utopia, *The Republic*. This is now universally regarded as one of the great masterpieces of the world's literature. As such, we enjoy it, while rejecting much of its philosophy and most of its devices. Its philosophy and its devices reflect the limitations of the age in which Plato lived.

Among the problems which Plato sought to solve were the problems of marriage and parenthood. He saw that the most fundamental of social relations were far from uniformly successful. There were many unhappy and unfortunate marriages then as now. Because women were regarded as chattels in his day, Plato, who had reached the conclusion that communism was the only remedy for the evils arising out of property relations, naturally concluded that for the evils connected with the human chattel, woman, the same remedy was needed. Therefore, he advocated the common owner-

ship of women as well as of all other forms of property. The state was to own and control all forms of property, including women.

Through its officials, the state would, in Plato's scheme, regulate procreation and the sexual relations generally. Anticipating our modern Eugenists of the extreme school, Plato provided for the state regulation of the mating and breeding of the human species. Only those men and women who possessed certain physical, mental and moral qualities were to be permitted to breed, and there was to be no permanent union of a particular man with a particular woman. As soon as babies were born they were to be taken from their mothers and placed in communal institutions, in which all mothers would nurse all babies except their own without discrimination or favor. The most elaborate precautions were provided against any mother being able to recognize her own child. Of course, it is evident that in all this Plato had only one purpose, namely, to insure the confining of procreation to the

best developed men and women; that the unfit were prevented from perpetuating their kind. He aimed thus to produce what the modern Eugenists call the Super Race.

Now, it is quite obvious that it is a misnomer to call Plato's scheme by the high-sounding term, Free Love. In the first place, the romantic element, the mutual love of the man for the woman and the woman for the man, hardly enters into it at all. In the second place, there is no freedom for the individual in the scheme. It is a very elaborate scheme of state regulated stirpiculture, which in practice would reduce human beings to the level of the animals in the stud farm. It is a scheme of compulsory mating, not of Free Love.

Socialism is not even remotely connected with either Plato's philosophy or his scheme. These reflect the limitations of Athenian civilization three centuries before Christ, while Socialism, whether considered as a philosophy or as a movement, is of modern

origin. Yet it is by no means uncommon to find critics of Socialism harking back to Plato's *Republic* and making their criticisms of it part of their indictment of Socialism.

III

The polar opposite of Plato's ideal of sex relationship is the ideal of modern Anarchism, to which the term "Free Love" may be properly applied. The Anarchist regards society as being merely an aggregation of individuals, and believes that the aggregation of individuals can have no right greater than the single individual can have. The essence of liberty, as the Anarchist sees it, is the right of the individual to determine for himself what is right and what is not right. Just as no individual can, without tyranny, control the actions of another individual, society as a whole cannot rightly control the actions of any individual. Philosophically and practically, Anarchism is based upon the supremacy of the individual. It denies the doctrine of social supremacy and

responsibility upon which all laws and governments and institutions for regulating human conduct rest.

Anarchism is, therefore, opposed to the legal forms of marriage, regarding them as invasions by society of the liberty of the individual. It opposes every interference by the state in what it believes to be a matter for the individuals immediately concerned to regulate according to their own desires. Anarchism teaches that the only sanction necessary for the union of a man and woman in marriage is the desire for such union by the man and the woman; that the duration of the union must depend solely upon their will and pleasure; that any legal tie which binds men and women to one another against their will, when they have ceased to love one another and to regard such union as indispensable to their happiness, is wrong. The Anarchist believes that love should be the only bond uniting men and women in marriage, and that every form of restraint or compulsion is wrong. If a man and a woman

outgrow their love for each other, they should be free to dissolve their union without consulting anybody or asking the permission of anybody. And if they desire to enter into new unions, they should be free to do so. That is Free Love, using that term in its true sense, and that is the Anarchist ideal.

We may not believe in that theory of marriage. Most of us do not. We may believe that in practice it would be certain to work infinite hardship and suffering, and that it would be a retrogressive step and not a step forward. Perhaps most of us do believe that. Such opinions, however, ought not to blind us to the fact that it is perfectly possible for one to hold the Anarchist view of marriage, and to apply it in actual life, and, at the same time, to believe in and practice the strictest monogamy. Dangerous as the Anarchist philosophy may be, it is not incompatible with a high standard of personal conduct. Free Love, as the Anarchist conceives it, may lead to promiscuity of sexual relations, and many of us

believe that in practice it would certainly do so, but the two things are not synonymous.

On the other hand, legal marriage does not insure perfect obedience to the monogamic code. There is no particular virtue in the legal form itself. What counts is the recognition of social authority and responsibility symbolized by the legal form. Monogamy is perfectly or imperfectly attained in proportion to the degree to which recognition of that social authority and responsibility, supplemented by personal loyalty and affection, is effective. That perfect loyalty and chastity are not made certain by legal forms is all too unhappily evident to all of us. But most of us believe that, despite all its shortcomings, despite the alarming number of failures and divorces, legal marriage does make for greater stability of family life than would otherwise be possible, and that the stability of family life is a necessary condition of true civilization. What we hope for, therefore, is not the abolition of legal marriage,

the denial of social authority and responsibility, but the improvement of marriage, the maintenance, and, if necessary, the further development, of social authority over and responsibility for marriage. Possibly it will be found that the improvement of marriage, its greater permanence, and its greater efficiency as a promoter of monogamy, will result from a general social and economic readjustment, rather than from alterations in the laws affecting marriage specially designed to that end.

IV

Between the sex servitude advocated by Plato and the denial of social authority in the Anarchist ideal, both comprehended in the general unthinking denunciation of "Free Love," we shall find many very different forms of family life and sex relationship, to every one of which the same term has been uncritically applied. They have all been as uncritically denounced as "Socialistic," their shortcomings have been

charged against the Socialists, notwithstanding the fact that they were generally of religious origin and significance, and rarely associated with movements remotely or closely connected with Socialism.

We have, for example, opposition to marriage on the part of certain sects of religious celibates, like the Shakers. Because the Shakers practiced communism among themselves, the unfair and the uncritical have taken the accusations made against the Shakers and woven them into their indictment of Socialism. The Shakers were accused of being Free Lovers, of attempting to destroy the home, therefore the charge is made against the Socialists! Curiously enough, however, the intensely religious characteristics of Shakerism are ignored, and the Socialists are denounced as Atheists.

The truth is, of course, that no sort of relation exists between the teachings and practices of Ann Lee and her followers and the teachings and practices of modern Socialism. The communism of the Shakers, like their

contempt for marriage and their glorification of celibacy and their practice of confession, was exclusively a religious practice, the result of their special interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. It seems absurd to apply the term Free Love to their peculiar view of sexual relations. They regarded marriage as at best an evil, viewed with contempt the "generative order" to which it pertained and extolled absolute celibacy as the highest virtue. Their four cardinal principles, Virginal Purity, Christian Communism, Confession of Sin and Separation from the World, as well as most of their theological beliefs concerning the Duality of the Godhead, the Millennium, the Second Coming of Christ, and similar matters, were quite commonly held by many Christian sects in mediæval times. Shakerism and all similar movements are properly connected, not with Socialism, but with the development of Christianity.

We find the term Free Love applied with more reason to the various forms of group

marriage and sex communism which have been advocated and practiced by various sects, ancient and modern. From 1847 until 1879 the followers of John Humphrey Noyes, the Perfectionists of Oneida, advocated and practiced sex communism through what they termed "complex marriage." All the men of the community were jointly married to all the women of the community, so that every man was husband to every woman and every woman wife to every man.

Like Shakerism, Perfectionism was essentially of Christian origin and in nowise connected with Socialism as that term is properly understood. Noyes derived his ideas of communism in goods and communism in sex relations from the New Testament, from the story of the day of Pentecost. Salvation from sin through the grace of Christ, the duality of God's nature, the possibility of attaining perfect holiness were fundamental to his teaching. In every respect, Perfectionism was a modern revival of a very

ancient form of religious sectarianism which flourished in the first few centuries of Christendom, and again in mediæval times, as witness the Apostolicans, the Adamites, and similar mediæval sects.

Yet another form of sex relationship and family life claims our attention as being opposed to monogamy and the form of family life based upon it — polygamy. Whether we limit ourselves to Mormonism in our examination of polygamy, or go back to the time of the Anabaptists, we shall find that, leaving primitive and uncivilized peoples out of account, polygamy almost invariably appears as a principle of religious sectarianism, with religious sanctions. Nowhere does it appear connected, however remotely, with the development of modern Socialism, the movement of the working class to emancipate itself from economic exploitation and tyranny.

To sum up this phase of our discussion: there can be no wisdom or justice in the indiscriminate lumping together under the

term Free Love forms of sex relationship so different as the state regulated stirpiculture of Plato, the celibacy of Ann Lee and her disciples, the group marriage of the Perfectionists, and the polygamy of Jan of Leyden and Brigham Young. Nor can there be any wisdom or justice in charging to the account of the Socialist our criticisms of any of these, not one of which was connected in any degree whatsoever with the Socialist movement, and all of which, with the exception of Plato's scheme, were of religious origin — offshoots of Christianity.

V.

Although it is somewhat of a digression, it is worthy of notice that the sex relationships advocated and practiced by many of the religious sects combined with their romantic religious mysticism much of the harsher pagan utilitarianism of Plato. Not infrequently, we find theories of eugenics and stirpiculture advocated, and, to a limited extent, practiced.

Take the Shakers, for example: Elder

Eades, one of their ablest publicists and leaders, likened the "state of mankind" to a house, consisting of basement, ground floor and upper story. Those living on the "upper floor" are the true Christians, for they, like Christ, are celibates. They have advanced beyond the world of the flesh with all its lusts and affections. Their concern is with the "soul-world" only. Risen above the "generative order," they despise marriage and procreation and dwell in celibacy, man's highest state. Those dwelling on the "ground floor" are inferior mortals who still live in the "generative stage." Their concern is with the physical life, with the body and the mind. For them marriage and procreation are permissible. Their intermediate state is well enough in its secular way, but they cannot be Christians on the "ground floor," because Christ did not dwell there. They are ruled by the flesh and its lusts, the love of individuals one for another, and by the idolatries of parentage. Those who dwell in the "basement" are still

inferior. They are the weak of body, mind and morals. For all such, procreation is wrong and should be prevented.

Another of the Shaker leaders, Elder Prescott, while holding to the ideal of celibacy, vigorously advocated scientific regulation of procreation among those on the "ground floor" and the prevention of procreation by the dwellers in the "basement." From Plato to the most radical Eugenist of today, the argument has never been more baldly stated:

"What is the reason man does not know how to improve his own race, as well as he knows how to improve the ox, the sheep, the horse, and the feathered tribes? He does know how — it is by observing the same law, walking by the same rule, and minding the same things. At our state and county fairs we see that the lower order of animals has been carried to a high degree of perfection by stirpiculture or scientific propagation; and it is by the same means that the human race can be improved physically, i. e., by scientific

selection and combination in obedience to certain given laws of reproduction. As things are, multitudes of persons of both sexes are no more suitable to reproduce human beings in the image of God than the roach-backed, crooked-legged, spindle-shanked, slab-sided, Indian ponies are suitable for generating the best types of the noble horse!"¹

Precisely the same views were held by John Humphrey Noyes and his followers, the Perfectionists, and to some extent practiced within their institution of "complex marriage."² It is a strange mixture of religious mysticism and secular utilitarianism which one finds in these religious communities!

VI

It is important to remember that the cry of Free Love, now raised against the Socialist movement, to prejudice the minds of

¹ Quoted by HINDS, *American Communities* (Edition of 1908) pp. 56-57.

² See e.g., *Scientific Propagation*, by J. H. NOYES (pamphlet).

the people against it, has been raised against many other popular movements. There is hardly a great popular movement in history, whether religious or secular, against which the charge of seeking to abolish marriage and family relations has not been brought by its enemies. The noblest men and women in all ages have been subjected to this particularly vicious attack. The charge has been made against the Catholic Church by fanatical Protestants and against Protestantism by fanatical Catholics. It was made against the Quakers, and against the Abolitionists. The pioneers of the Woman Suffrage movement were bitterly assailed as advocates of Free Love. The same charge was made against the Chartists in England in the early part of the nineteenth century. It was hurled at the followers of Frémont, the founders of the present Republican Party, during Frémont's campaign in 1856.³

The charge was never directed with

³ Cf. *Applied Socialism*, by JOHN SPARGO, Chapter IX, for a more detailed account of this.

greater energy and bitterness against any human being than against the greatest and noblest American of all — Abraham Lincoln. Incredible as it may seem to us today, Lincoln had to bear the insulting charge of advocating Free Love! Yes, Lincoln,

“ A man that matched the mountains, and compelled
The stars to look our way and honor us ”

bore that with many another indignity. No sooner had he been nominated by the Republican Party, in 1860, than the attack began. There was, for example, the cartoon, familiar in every household, entitled “ The Republican Party Going to the *Right* House,” showing Lincoln riding into a lunatic asylum, astride a rail carried by Horace Greeley. Behind Lincoln march his followers, a motley crew of “ long haired men and short haired women,” each proclaiming his or her special fad or folly. There is the woman who follows Lincoln because she feels “ a passional attraction ” every time she sees “ his lovely face.”

There is the man who cries out, "I represent the Free Love element, and expect to have free license to carry out its principles." Close by is the man — a familiar friend — who announces, "I want religion abolished, and the book of Mormon made the standard of morality." Behind him come the negro who wants it understood that the white man has no rights which the negro is bound to respect; the loafer who wants "everybody to have a share of everybody else's property," and so on. As a fitting climax to the whole outrageous assault, Lincoln is represented as addressing these followers and saying: "Now, my friends, I'm almost in and the Millennium is going to begin, so ask what you will and it shall be granted!"

When we resurrect this infamous cartoon from oblivion, now that Lincoln's fame is the most resplendent in our national history, and his name the best beloved, we realize that the charge of promoting Free Love is a poisoned arrow rarely absent from the quiver of the cowardly and unscrupulous

defenders of Privilege and foes of Progress. Today the charge is made against the Socialist movement — made by dignitaries of the Christian Church, by eminent political leaders and publicists — with as little truth and justice as against Abraham Lincoln, the Liberator.

VII

Putting aside, as wholly irrelevant to an intelligent and candid discussion of Socialism, all such schemes as those of Plato and Campanella, of Adamites, Apostolians, Shakers, Perfectionists and Mormons, let us see what evidence there is to support the charge that Socialism is antagonistic to monogamic marriage and family life.

At the very outset of our investigation we encounter, in the writings of individual Socialists, some very outspoken criticisms of marriage and the family as they exist today, together with prophecies that in the Socialist society of the future little or no social authority or control over the union of the sexes will exist. In some cases, it must be admitted,

the authors of these criticisms have been prominently identified with the Socialist movement. The opponents of Socialism have carefully winnowed the vast literature of Socialism and gathered together a sheaf of such criticisms and prophecies, which they have published broadcast to bolster the charge of Free Love. Let us, then, pay them due attention.

For the sake of convenience we will take the most outspoken of these criticisms and prophecies and divide them into two groups — those which come from individual Socialists, of no particular standing in the Socialist movement, however eminent they may otherwise be, and those which come from representative Socialists of acknowledged eminence in the Socialist movement itself.

To the first of these groups belongs, very definitely, the prophecy of that splendid but ill-starred genius whose melancholy ruin ranks among the most tragic episodes of literary history — Oscar Wilde. Though he was never identified with the Socialist move-

ment — perhaps because he was too aggressively individualistic — Wilde, for a brief space of time, called himself a Socialist. He wrote, it will be remembered, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, in which his Utopian conception of Socialism is set forth in noble and beautiful prose. In it we find the sweeping declaration, quite unqualified, that “Socialism annihilates family life.” For this assertion there is offered no shred of authority, no evidence, no reasoned argument to show that the annihilation of family life must result from the social readjustments upon which Socialists are determined and agreed. What we have is the bare assertion of Oscar Wilde.

Immediately, a number of questions crowd the brain — how authoritative an exponent of Socialism is Oscar Wilde? — Is his Socialism representative, typical of the Socialism which is inspiring millions? — How much does he know of his subject? We seek an answer to our questions in his essay, comparing his utterances, and the spirit of them, with those of the recognized leaders of So-

cialist thought. And soon we discover that he is not a Socialist at all, if we are to judge Socialism by Marx and Lassalle and Liebknecht and Kautsky and Bebel and Vandervelde and Jaurès and Hyndman and Hillquit; or by the platforms of the Socialist parties of the world. He is rather, like Prince Kropotkin, an Anarchist-Communist. Years later, in his *De Profundis*, written while in prison, Wilde wrote of Kropotkin that his was one of the two most perfect lives he had come across — “a man with a soul of that beautiful white Christ which seems coming out of Russia.” It was the praise of the master by his disciple.

The evidences that he was an Anarchist-Communist, rather than a Socialist, are numerous. Thus, in his essay he insists over and over again that there shall be no government in his ideal society: “What is needed is Individualism. If the Socialism is to be Authoritarian; if there are Governments armed with economic power as they are now with political power; if, in a word, we are

to have Industrial Tyrannies, then the last state of man will be worse than the first." Again: "It is clear, then, that no Authoritarian Socialism will do. . . . Every man must be left quite free to choose his own work. No form of compulsion must be exercised over him. . . . And by work I simply mean activity of any kind." And again: "But I confess that many of the Socialistic views that I have come across seem to me to be tainted with ideas of authority, if not of actual compulsion. Of course, authority and compulsion are out of the question. All association must be quite voluntary. It is only in voluntary associations that man is fine."

These are the ideas of an Anarchist-Communist, not of a Socialist as that term is properly used. When we read in Wilde's essay that "Socialism annihilates family life. . . . With the abolition of private property, marriage in its present form must disappear," we know that Wilde was really thinking of Anarchist Communism and not of

Socialism as we understand it. And even were that not the case, even if Wilde had been the most orthodox of Marx's disciples, it would still be sufficient to remind our critics that Wilde embarked upon the dangerous ocean of prophecy upon his own responsibility; that for the personal views of Wilde the Socialist movement cannot be held responsible.

To the same group we must assign the declaration of a very different writer, Professor Karl Pearson, author of *The Ethic of Free Thought*. Although a professed Socialist, and a learned and brilliant writer upon certain biological subjects, Professor Pearson has never been actively identified with the Socialist movement, nor can he be justly called a representative Socialist writer. Professor Pearson speculates upon the probable influence of the political and economic emancipation of women upon marriage. He reaches a conclusion that appears to involve serious difficulty: "For the non-childbearing woman the sex relationship, both as to

form and substance, ought to be a pure question of taste, in which neither the society nor the state would have any need to interfere, a free sexual union, a relation solely of mutual sympathy and affection, its form and direction varying according to the wants and feelings of the individuals." ⁴ So far, we have the Anarchist ideal, entire freedom from social authority and control. But it will be observed that Professor Pearson confines this freedom from social interference to the childless unions. But what of those unions which result in children?

When Professor Pearson reaches this question he abandons his Anarchistic ideal of pure voluntarism, and turns to a form of state supervision which is essentially despotic. The state now must interfere, for the state is to regulate the number of births. He harks back to the teachings of Aristotle and Plato: the state is to regulate procreation. "If the state is to guarantee wages, it is

⁴ KARL PEARSON, *The Ethic of Free Thought*, quoted by BARKER, *British Socialism*, p. 339.

bound in self-protection to provide that no person shall be born without its consent. The state is to sanction the number of births; all others are immoral, because anti-social. . . . An unsanctioned birth would receive no recognition from the state, and in times of over-population it might be necessary to punish, positively or negatively, both father and mother.”⁵ Surely, here we turn away from Free Love to state despotism of the worst type!

On the one hand Professor Pearson’s ideal is purely Anarchistic, utterly repudiating social authority and responsibility in the regulation of marriage. On the other hand it becomes frightfully bureaucratic, utterly denying personal freedom and placing human mothers on a level with brood mares. It is inconceivable that the citizens of a free democracy would tolerate the bureaucratic regulation of procreation. Such a scheme would require the power of a dominant ruling class to impose it upon a subject class in some

⁵ PEARSON, *op. cit.*, quoted by BARKER, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

such fashion as the Jesuits imposed the stirpicultural regulations of Campanella's utopian scheme upon the natives of Paraguay. Probably nine hundred and ninety-nine Socialists out of every thousand would repudiate Professor Pearson's scheme. It is of interest and value only as the result of one man's rather reckless speculation and hazy thinking.

VIII

Of all the statements upon the subject by individual writers who cannot be said to be representative Socialists, used by the anti-Socialists in their propaganda, the statements by Oscar Wilde and Professor Pearson are the most sweeping. They are certainly the most important by virtue of the eminence of their authors in certain fields of intellectual labor. Let us turn now to those writers whose prominence in the Socialist movement itself lends to their utterances special force:

The foremost Socialist of our generation was the late August Bebel, the veteran leader

of the German Social Democracy. No one will deny that he personified the Socialist movement as fully as any one human being could do. It is impossible to plead that he was not a representative Socialist. His long acknowledged eminence in the international Socialist movement lends great weight to his every utterance. It is not surprising, therefore, that the enemies of Socialism have seized upon certain passages in his writings which vigorously assail the present marriage system.

In his famous book, *Woman and Socialism*, Bebel attacks legal marriage as a form of slavery and sex subjection, and argues that it must disappear with the elevation of women to a plane of political, economic and cultural equality with men. In its place, he predicts, there will be simply a voluntary union of individuals, a union depending solely upon affection, with which society has nothing whatever to do, and which the individuals can terminate at will. There can be no mistaking the meaning of the following paragraph,

in which Bebel sets forth his idea of the relation of the sexes in the future :

“ In the choice of love woman is free just as man is free. She woos and is wooed and has no other inducement to bind herself than her own free will. The contract between the two lovers is of a private nature as in primitive times. The gratification of the sexual impulse is as strictly the personal affair of the individual as the gratification of every other natural instinct. No one has to give an account of him or herself, and no third person has the slightest right of intervention.”

It is impossible to read Bebel's work with candor and intelligence without reaching the conclusion that the ideal it preaches is Free Love. This is not the same thing as sexual promiscuity, nor is it incompatible with strict monogamy. What is meant is that the force of love alone ought to bind man and wife together, without any external compulsions, either of government, economic dependence or social customs ; that every marriage which

depends upon any or all of these external compulsions, which love alone is not strong enough to perpetuate, ought to be dissolved in the interests of morality and happiness.

This is the personal opinion of August Bebel, for which he alone is to be held responsible. It is probable that not one per cent. of the Socialists of America, or of the world for that matter, agree with it. The Socialist movement is no more to be charged with responsibility for Bebel's idea of the probable future development of marriage and family life, than for the views on vegetarianism, agriculture and the fertilization of soils contained in the same volume. It is no more to be charged with responsibility for Bebel's views on any of these subjects than for the views which the present writer has freely expressed upon the laws of population and the relation of advancing civilization to such phenomena as the decline of fecundity and maternal capacity,⁶ for ex-

⁶ See, e. g., *The Common Sense of the Milk Question*, by JOHN SPARGO.

ample. Bebel himself, with his usual candor, has warned us of this, but it suits the critics of Socialism to ignore the warning.⁷

It would be utterly disingenuous to dismiss the subject with this observation, and to ignore the fact that other Socialists of acknowledged standing have expressed views quite similar to those of the great German

⁷ “. . . *This complete solution of the Women's Question is as unattainable as the solution of the Labor Question under the existing social and political institutions.*

“My fellow Socialists will agree with the last proposition, but I am not at present in a position to affirm that they will agree to the manner in which I foresee its realization. I must therefore, request readers, and especially opponents, to regard the following statements as *the expression of my personal opinions*, and to direct any attacks they think fit to make against me alone. . . . Indeed *I have every reason to believe that my explicit request will be disregarded by a certain number of them.* They must be left to the promptings of their own hearts.” Thus Bebel wrote in the Preface to *Woman and Socialism*. How accurately he judged the honesty of his opponents may be judged by the fact that an examination of over six hundred books, pamphlets and magazine articles in which his words are quoted to prove that Socialists advocate Free Love, shows that not in a single instance is there any intimation of the important fact that Bebel specifically states that he is unable to claim that his fellow Socialists accept his views!—J. S.

Socialist. We may cite the eminent collaborators, William Morris and Ernest Belfort Bax as typical of those of a not inconsiderable body of Socialist writers who adhere more or less closely to Bebel. Morris, in his utopian romance, *News from Nowhere*, pictures complete voluntarism in the union of the sexes, everybody "free to come and go as he or she pleases."⁸ In *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome*, Morris and Bax argue that marriage as it now exists is a property relation merely, and that the abolition of the economic dependence of women would necessarily lead to the abolition of the marriage system resting upon it:

"The present marriage system was based on the general supposition of the economic dependence of the woman on the man, and the consequent necessity for his making provision for her which she can legally enforce. This basis would disappear with the advent of social economic freedom, and no binding

⁸ *News from Nowhere*, Tenth Edition, p. 90.

contract would be necessary between the parties as regards livelihood. . . . Thus a new development of the family would take place, on the basis, not of a predetermined life-long business arrangement to be formally and nominally held to, irrespective of circumstances, but on mutual inclination and affection, an association terminable at the will of either party. There would be no vestige of reprobation weighing on the dissolution of one tie and the forming of another.”⁹

Bax has vigorously championed the same view in numerous essays. A typical statement of his position is the following:

“Socialism will strike at the root at once of compulsory monogamy and of prostitution by inaugurating an era of marriage based on free choice and intention, and characterized by the absence of external coercion. For where the wish for the maintenance of the marriage relation remains, there external coercion is unnecessary; where it is neces-

⁹ *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome*, Second Edition, London, 1896, p. 299.

sary, because the wish has disappeared, there it is undesirable.”¹⁰

It is no more than just to point out in this connection the fact that upon all matters concerning the relation of Socialism to women Bax holds a peculiar position in the movement. His anti-feminist views have been almost universally condemned and ridiculed. He is a notorious opponent of the demand for equal suffrage regardless of sex which holds a conspicuous place in the programme of every Socialist party in the world. He argues that women are organically inferior to men, and ought, for that reason, to be excluded from the right to vote, just as children and aliens belonging to an essentially lower race are excluded! He adopts all the arguments of the conventional anti-suffragists, including the fear that women, if granted the ballot, will establish a sex tyranny and subject men to their rule!¹¹ All this is not an

¹⁰ BAX, *Outlooks from the New Standpoint*, pp. 159-160.

¹¹ See, e. g., in his *Essays in Socialism*, the following essays: “A Bundle of Fallacies;” “The ‘Monstrous

argument against his views concerning the probable nature of sex relationships under Socialism, but it is an argument against an uncritical acceptance of them as typical of the views generally held by Socialists.

IX

We cannot deny that some Socialists have preached Free Love as the ideal form of sex relationship. But we can and must deny that the realization of the Socialist programme necessarily leads to that ideal. We can and must deny that the Socialist movement accepts it. We can and must affirm that Free Love is based upon the Anarchist philosophy of the independence of the individual and the supremacy of the individual will; that it involves a complete denial of the Socialist philosophy of the interdependence of all individuals and the consequent supremacy of society. The non-interference of society and the unrestricted freedom of individual action

Regiment' of Womanhood;" "Some Current Fallacies on the Woman Question;" "Female Suffrage and Its Implications."

in matters of such social consequence as marriage and childbearing are the postulates of crude individualism, no matter how eminent the Socialist who embraces them may be.

There is nothing in the philosophy or programme of Socialism which is incompatible with the maintenance of the private family based upon monogamic marriage. Probably ninety-nine per cent. of the Socialists in the world believe that Socialism would result in a much greater degree of monogamy than now obtains, and, as a result, in a greater degree of stability and permanence in marriage. They believe that the economic readjustment essential to the realization of the Socialist programme would have the effect of making mutual affection the only reason for contracting marriage, thus doing away with loveless marriages for mercenary reasons, which so often prove failures and end in divorce. They believe, too, that when women are economically equal with men, and politically equal with them, they will insist upon a single standard of morals for both sexes — upon

men being as strictly monogamous as they require women to be.

Lamartine, in his rhetorical *History of the Revolution of 1848*, repeats the ancient aphorism that "Communism of goods leads, as a necessary consequence, to communism of wives, children and parents," and many a foolish criticism of Socialism has been based upon it. But in truth the criticism is wholly irrelevant. Modern Socialism does not aim at "communism of goods." It may be freely conceded that, in olden times, when production by hand labor obtained, it was practically impossible successfully to combine communism in the distribution of goods with the maintenance of separate family life. There was always the danger of hoarding by the separate families to the prejudice of the community. There was also the very real danger of overpopulation. Aristotle recognized this more than two thousand years ago.

But modern Socialism is not seeking to bring about communism in goods. It is not aiming at the abolition of private property.

What it is aiming at is the collective ownership of those means of production which are now used by the few to exploit the many. Under capitalism, we have coöperative production by masses of workers, using privately owned machinery and tools, with the result that the owners of the machinery and tools, without laboring as producers, can and do receive more of the products than the producers. Socialism would simply shift the ownership of machinery and tools to the community, deny the non-producers' right to exploit the producers, and combine collective ownership of the means of production with private ownership of the goods produced, the workers receiving according to their labor.

Acceptance of this programme does not imply the acceptance of any particular theory or forecast of the future development of marriage and family life. That this is the case is easily shown: consider the Socialist principle of collective ownership and control coupled with private enjoyment of the utilities derived therefrom as illustrated by

our streets and highways. Does the collective ownership of streets and highways imperil marriage and the family? Would these institutions be safer if streets and highways were owned by private individuals or by corporations? If not, is there any good reason for believing that the extension of the same principle to the ownership of street railways and highways of steel rails would imperil the family and the home? Is there any reason to suppose that family life is less safe where public ownership of railways prevails, as in Australia, for example? Suppose we applied the principle of collective ownership to telephones and telegraphs, to the supply of electric light and power, to the express service, to the water supply and the ice supply, is there any good reason for believing that the result would be Free Love and the destruction of private family life? Has that been the result where these things have been tried?

Carry the principle farther, apply it to the industrial activities of the nation: sup-

pose that, as a result of the revolt of the people against the exactions of the Meat Trust, the business of raising, killing, packing and selling meat were taken over by the people, through the government. Would the fact that we bought our meat from a state or municipal shop, as we now buy stamps from the post office, knowing that we were not being exploited by a parasitic corporation, weaken the bonds uniting husbands and wives, lessen our love for our children, or otherwise imperil family life? Would such evils result from the collective ownership of the coal mines, the substitution of organized society as a whole for the Steel Trust, or the Oil Trust?

But there are other forms of collective ownership than ownership by the government. The coöperation of workers in voluntary copartnership, coöperatively owning their tools and sharing their products, may well become a very important part of the economic organization of the Socialist commonwealth. Let us suppose, then, that the

workers in a given industry, say tailoring, develop coöperative enterprise to such an extent that whoever buys a suit of clothes will know that the tailors who made the clothes got the full value of their labor, that no part of the price of the clothes represents surplus value in the shape of rent, interest or profit. Will that fact be likely to make husbands and wives forsake each other and seek new matrimonial alliances, or to make parents love their children less, or in any other way imperil the peace and harmony of family life?

An honest answer to these questions will prove the *reductio ad absurdum* of the criticism we are considering. It is not without significance that among all the thousands of anti-Socialists writers who have made the criticism, not one seems to have made any attempt to demonstrate in what manner the accomplishment of the Socialist programme would tend to weaken or destroy the family. The nearest they ever come to that issue is to declare that the private family could not exist if private property were abolished and

communism completely established. Since Socialists do not aim at the abolition of private property and do not seek to bring about communism, the declaration has no bearing upon the subject.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the fact that it is no part of the aim of modern Socialism to bring about a particular form of marriage or family organization. Its one aim is the reorganization of our political and economic life to the end that there shall be no exploitation of workers by idlers through the channels of rent, interest and profit, and no class warfare as a necessary outcome of such exploitation, the exploited and the exploiters struggling for the advancement of their specific economic interests. In a word, the aim of Socialism is the attainment of complete political and industrial democracy. Individual Socialists may join to the most honest and loyal service to that aim equally honest and loyal service to other ends — to vegetarianism, anti-vivisection, religion or anti-religion, proof of the existence of intel-

ligent beings on Mars, demonstration of the Baconian authorship of the plays attributed to Shakespeare, and so on — but these accretions are no concern of the Socialist movement.

X

Of course, the reorganization of society upon Socialist lines must of necessity affect the family. It is impossible to imagine such a fundamental change being accomplished without influencing one of the fundamental institutions of society. Every great comprehensive change in the economic structure of society heretofore has had a marked influence upon family life, and we cannot in reason expect that so comprehensive a change as Socialism will prove an exception to the general law of social development. It is this fact which causes so many Socialists and others to attempt to forecast in detail the exact nature of the developments of marriage and family life which Socialism will bring about.

Now, only the foolishly narrow-minded would condemn or attempt to discourage hon-

est and serious thought upon a matter of such vital importance to the life of the race, for such thinking is a necessary condition of progress. But the Socialist movement is not committed to any of the conclusions reached by these individual speculations. There is no Socialist theory of marriage.

We believe that the reorganization of society upon the basis of collective ownership and democratic control of the economic forces will put an end to those evils which now menace the integrity and stability of family life. We believe that marriage for economic reasons will disappear with the abolition of economic classes and economic exploitation. We believe that the greater part of prostitution with its attendant evils will disappear. We believe the elevation of family life will result. We do not believe that anything but good can result from these changes. Whatever developments in family organization take place in the Socialist society of the future will be in response to the collective will of men and women free from political

or economic tyranny. Why need we fear that a society in which women are politically and economically free and equal with men will tend to lessen monogamy? Ought we not rather to believe and hope that by increasing the power of women, whose monogamous instincts have been much more highly developed than the monogamous instincts of men, monogamy will be greatly strengthened?

In truth, there is no need to fear Free Love or polygamy or group marriage, or polyandry. The whole trend of social and economic evolution is away from these and toward a more perfect monogamy. Anton Menger is undoubtedly right when he says that the defects of Free Love are so numerous and so serious that, even if all the political and religious forces which now buttress monogamic marriage were to be swept away, "the masses of the people would themselves refuse to permit it."¹² And Frederick Engels is right when he bases his hope for the attainment of a more perfect monogamy

¹² ANTON MENGER, *Neue Staatslehre*, p. 132.

upon the economic emancipation of women: "Remove the economic considerations that now force women to submit to the customary disloyalty of men, and you will place women on an equal footing with men. All present experiences prove that this will tend much more strongly to make men truly monogamous, than to make women polyandrous."¹³ The realization of true monogamy will be made possible by the elevation of woman to the plane of economic and political equality with man. To that end the Socialist movement is striving.

The Socialist ideal is not compatible with the destruction of social authority and responsibility comprehended by the term Free Love. Nor is it compatible with the denial of personal freedom essential to all schemes for compulsory mating and applying the methods of animal breeding to human beings. The fundamental democracy of Socialism is as inimical to the one as to the other. The

¹³ FREDERICK ENGELS, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Chapter III.

race cannot be elevated by the degradation of individuals, whether in the direction of the harem or the stud-farm.

The Socialist ideal involves a deeper sense of social interdependence and responsibility, combined with a larger personal freedom, than has ever yet existed. All the observable tendencies of social evolution point to the further development of social sanctions for marriage and parentage, rather than to their progressive abandonment. There are abundant signs of an increasing recognition of the need for well-considered collective action aiming at encouragement of marriage and procreation by the fit and worthy and the discouragement of marriage and procreation by the unfit and unworthy. There is an increasing demand for education for parenthood, both for fathers and mothers. Especially is the education necessary for mothers: too long we have permitted women to enter the maternal wilderness blindfolded. Education for motherhood will mean that maternal functions will be chosen deliber-

ately and intelligently, with a full sense of all their attendant perils and responsibilities.

There is a demand, too, for the adoption of a sane and humane policy of permanently segregating the victims of mental defects and diseases believed to be transmissible. These provide an enormous proportion of the recruits to the ranks of the degenerate classes — the habitual drunkards, the prostitutes, the purveyors of venereal contagion, the criminal and vicious classes in general. It is probable that, long before the Socialist goal is attained, measures will be taken to segregate permanently all known victims of mental or physical evils known to be incurable and transmissible, and to prevent them from burdening society with their undesirable offspring.

There is little reason to doubt that such social safeguards as these will be considerably developed in the Socialist society of the future. Side by side with that increase of social responsibility will be developed a larger freedom of personal choice and action than has ever existed, as a result of the breaking

down of economic compulsions. Men and women will be free to marry for love and love only. Probably, too, divorce will be made more easy and the cessation of love be freely recognized as a sufficient reason for the dissolution of marriage ties, especially where there are no children concerned.

So much we may say with assurance concerning the future of marriage and the family. But when we try to go beyond these limits, to forecast the future and picture it in detail as we picture the present, we enter that realm which is ruled by no law other than the dreamer fashions for his own dream. If an individual Socialist seeks to forecast that future and tells of elaborate systems of endowed or salaried motherhood, we may listen with what degree of interest and faith we will: his vision is his alone, and is in no-wise a part of the Socialist programme.

XI

The thoughtful mother will not fear Socialism when it is presented to her properly de-

limited. She will separate the chaff from the wheat; the non-essential utopian vision of the individual from the great essential collective purpose. She will not be afraid that the elevation of her sisters to a plane of political and economic equality with men will demoralize them and cause them to use their power to destroy monogamy and the private family. She will not be afraid that the abolition of class exploitation, which gives rise to poverty, vice, crime, disease and war, will harm a single human being. She will not be afraid of applying to society as a whole the principle of equal opportunity which is the ruling principle of family life.

On the contrary, she will welcome Socialism as a parched flower welcomes the gentle summer rain. She will hail it with joy and gladness, firm in the faith that it will emancipate womanhood from the thralldom of the centuries, glorify motherhood, protect the home and insure to childhood its precious heritage of opportunity.

*No longer the Slave of Fear, she will laugh
Superstition to scorn and with joy take the
gifts of the Angel.*

EPILOGUE

SOcialism is most fittingly symbolized by the twofold character of the Spirit of Motherhood.

Defending her child against attack, the human mother matches the reckless ferocity of the tigress defending her cubs. The two mothers are sisters in their savage passion.

But toward her child what beautiful tenderness that same human mother displays! The gentle kiss of the dewdrop upon the cheek of the rose is not more tender.

So, toward the enemies of childhood the Spirit of Socialism turns with savage menace and defiance, and cries aloud to the Masters of Bread — to the Lords of Privilege and Power — to all the Despoilers of Little Children:

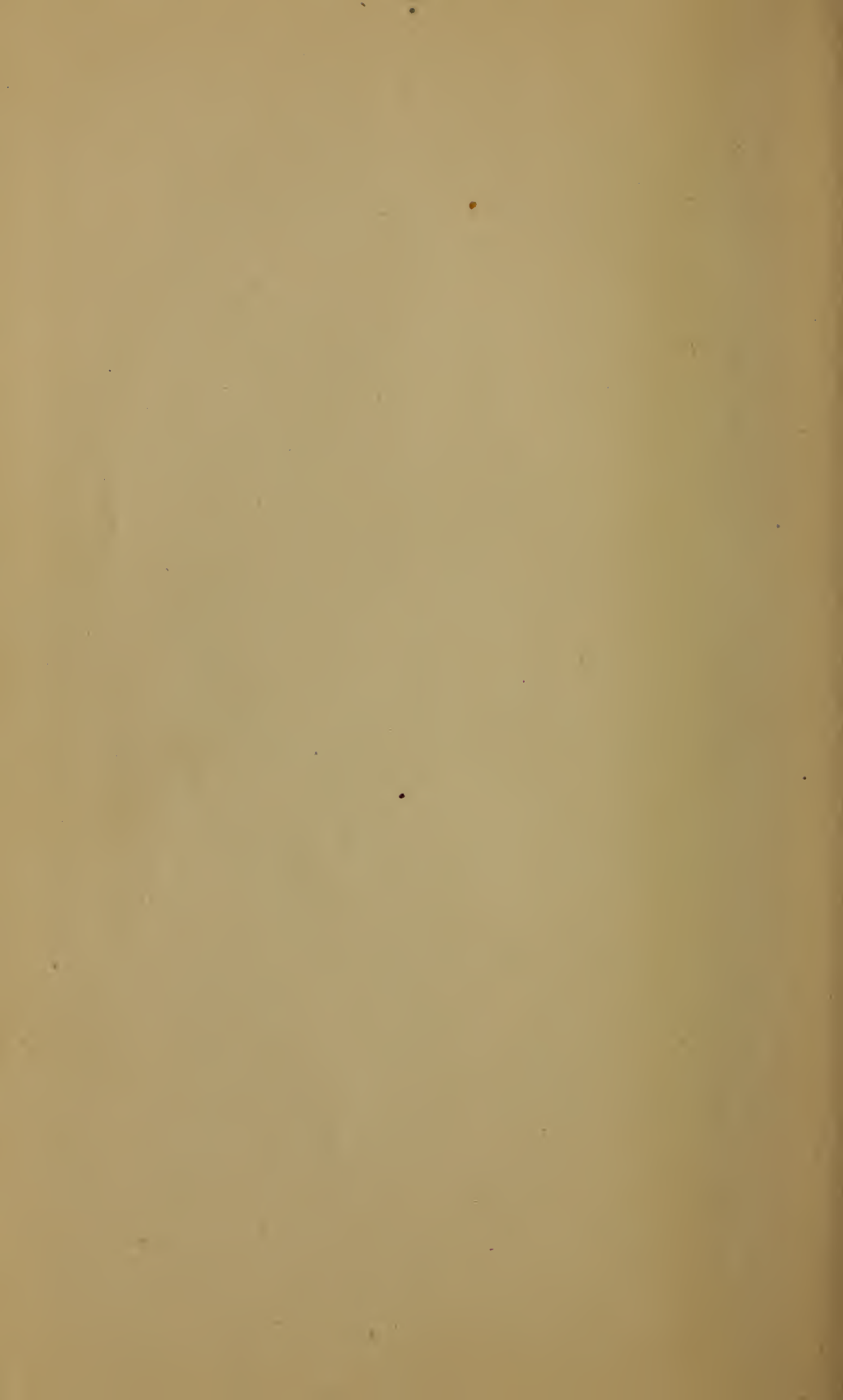
“ You shall not steal the bloom of health from the cheeks of the children! — You shall not darken the light of their eyes! — You shall not banish the laughter from their lips!

— *You shall not silence the songs of their hearts! These things you shall not do, for, by The Eternal! I, the Spirit of Socialism, have sworn that I will not falter, nor pause, nor rest, nor make truce, until I have destroyed your cruel power and broken down the last barrier which stands between a human child and its right to all the glory and beauty and joy of the world.*”

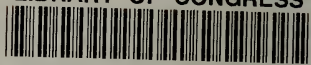
Then, like a young and beautiful mother, beckoning her child and watching over it as it comes with eager, faltering footsteps, the Spirit of Socialism stands at the gateway of the Garden of Life, bidding the children enter, saying tenderly:

“*Come, little ones, here is the Garden of Life. Enter and pluck for yourselves the flowers of Life and Love and Joy and Beauty! They are yours! They were planted for you! They have been tended and nurtured for you through all the ages of human sacrifice and labor. Here, in the midst of the Garden, are the King’s Treasuries of Art and Science and Philosophy and*

Power. Come! Enter! I will unlock them for you, for they are all yours. Wander where you will and take freely what you will, for these things are your Heritage.— And when you are tired — when through the evening shadows you must pass out of the Garden of Life to your Rest and your Dreams — you shall leave more than you gathered, even though you know it not.— And then, when your footsteps are no longer heard in the Garden, and your voices are no longer mingled with the whisperings of the flowers, other children coming after you shall find that in your footprints flowers of unfading beauty bloom. They shall find the Garden of Life lovelier because you lingered and played in it; the King's Treasuries richer because you took from them to satisfy your needs and added to them new treasures of your own.— For thus, my little ones, the Glory of the Ages is kept unfailling and undimmed.— Thus has your Heritage been kept, and thus shall it be maintained for all children, Forever and Forever!"



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