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THE HUMAN WELFARE STATE

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The foremost problem of society today is to cultivate and preserve incentive and independence for the individual and security for the masses of the people.

There is and can be no blueprint for such a plan. Experience alone can determine the specifications; and they will change from time to time as needs multiply and wisdom is acquired. But its details are unimportant so long as our attitude towards it is healthy.

If we have an understanding of the problem and a faith in our capacity to solve it, we have found the road to survival. Our only real risk is that we will be the victims of our preconceptions, that our thinking will lack flexibility, that we will wait until a crisis occurs before we cope with the conditions that give rise to it.

The cultivation of this attitude is the great educational challenge of the century. Without it we may become victims of the propaganda of totalitarian ideologies.

When technology ushered in the industrial system, the workers had tremendous readjustments to make. The machine displaced men, robbing them of their jobs. It employed some through the prime of life and then made them unemployable. It made automatons out of many. The factory produced more and more routine and monotonous jobs that left little to the creative instinct. The jobs became impersonal. Work became an exhausting rather than an energizing thing. It developed tensions and conflicts in the workers. The end product of their toil seemed to be frustration. Marx and Engels proclaimed that work had lost "all individual character, and, consequently all charm for the workman" and that the laborer had become only "an appendage of the machine"; and they exploited the condition with their plans for world revolution.

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There were, however, social gains to be offset against those sacrifices. There was the great wealth of products which the machine manufactured. Those products could bring comfort, pleasure and health to all the people, and raise the standard of living the world around. There was no turning back of the clock, for the industrial system was here to stay. The problem was to preserve for society the benefits of the industrial system and to protect the position of the workers in it. Numerous laws protective of their rights were enacted so that they might not be ready victims of the factory system. More equitable distributions of the earnings of the machine were made. Wages increased; and the standard of living gradually rose at all levels of society.

Yet in spite of all those safeguards, there was an alarming insecurity in the system. There was an unrelenting ruthlessness about the business cycle. Contraction of demand, restriction of production, reduction of payrolls produced cycles of depression and despair. The man who had to take his place in the bread line because he lost his place at the lathe had only resentment at the factory. It became in his mind an evil. It was the source of his own misery. And Marx and Engels taught that the men who opened and shut its doors were the worker's real enemies.

The economic price of depressions was a very heavy one for society to pay. Our experience in the late 30's is eloquent evidence of the toll which the downward swing of the cycle took. The loss of wages alone is a measure of its severity.

During the half century ending in the early 1940's the money earnings of the average worker in this country (agriculture excluded) rose over 250 per cent. During that period the real earnings increased over 65 per cent. Nevertheless, the effect of the depression in the 30's was so severe that the real earnings at that time dropped practically to the level of forty years earlier. One-fifth of our national labor force was idle. The dent in our national income was so great that it completely wiped out the gain in wage rates that had been painfully obtained since the early 1890's.

But the total price was greater than dollars and cents could ever measure. There grew up within industry and around its periphery millions of unattached, insecure people.

They did not have the sense of belonging to a system—of being its beneficiaries and of sharing its responsibilities. They did not participate in the decisions on which their fate depended.

They lived in the shadow of insecurity—not knowing whether their hourly wage that looked good as a matter of arithmetic would

on a yearly basis add up to much. There were lay-offs and work stoppages; and above all else there was the spectre of depression.

Those who believe in *laissez-faire*—the let-business-alone group—developed an ideology in defense of the system. They reduced the swings of the cycle to rules of economics and made laws and principles that showed the inevitability of it all. They built up a system of property rights in defense of the system. The stockholders were the owners and they could do as they liked, it was said. It was no legitimate concern of anyone else.

The communist group took the defaults of the industrial system as proof of its viciousness and of its inevitable failure. They made dialectical materialism their religion and laid plans for the proletariat to take over the instruments of production. Their slogans had a high note of idealism. They were for the oppressed; they were champions of the underdogs; they were the saviors of the exploited.

This was the theory that the Soviets used for propaganda purposes. They inaugurated a police state, vested all power in a small select political clique, made all people conform to their ideas, suppressed the opposition, and used all known methods of persuasion from murder to psychological warfare to rush a people toward the destiny that had been chosen for them.

The fascists had a similar approach. They had a brutal pseudo-realism that they did not bother to clothe with any idealism. They seized control and suppressed all opposition. They made slave labor out of everyone but the top group. They, too, manufactured conformists by torture and by propaganda. They used all the power of the state to make men toe the line and bow to the will of the rulers. They showed through Hitler how awful evil can be.

The communists and fascists have a totalitarian philosophy in common. Each puts the state in full command of both the machine and man. Moreover, each views totalitarianism as the teleological completion of an evolution that begins with the factory system. Each imposes a mechanistic pattern on society and forces even men to become machine-like.

And all three groups—the *laissez-faire* economists, the communists, and the fascists—historically have had one thing in common. Each denied the people a voice in their destiny. Each was committed to an economic theory that brooked no interference by the public. Each feared the political power which the democracies vest in the citizens. Each placed no trust in the decisions of the people.

The *laissez-faire* group produced the communists. Lenin and Stalin produced Hitler. Each was a reaction to the other.

It would be the great tragedy of this age if the democracies in despair followed Hitler's path and sought to combat communism with fascism. That event would indeed mark a bankruptcy of ideas and of ideals. It would be an inexcusable default in our trusteeship. It would be trading the values of western civilization for a mess of pottage.

The sound direction of the counter movement to communism in the democracies has already been marked. It is the creation of the human welfare state. The human welfare state is the great political invention of the twentieth century. It is the instrument of politics that the communists fear above all else. It is important, therefore, to understand the human welfare state, to appreciate the forces that have shaped it, and to see the tremendous potentials for its use.

Gandhi once said that "God himself dare not appear to a hungry man except in form of bread."

The greatest assets of a nation, greater than any material resources, are its men and women. The industrial system was designed to serve mankind. Human welfare is the measure of its service. There is a place for justice in the factories as well as in the courts. Human rights transcend property rights.

As a nation we have therefore come to know that we must reckon costs in terms of human rights. Injuries to workers are costs as much as depreciation and obsolescence of machinery. Unemployment is a cost. So is old age itself. These are the costs that industry and society must carry.

Without such underwriting there can be no security for the mass of workers. Once they become floating, unattached people who receive no benefits from our civilization, they do not share its responsibilities. Then are the seeds of our destruction sown. There is the point of weakness that the communists exploit. That is, indeed, the only sure leverage they can get under any nation that is not subject to the pressures of the Red Army.

And so it is that the right to work has become the primary plank in the platform of the human welfare state.

The right to work has gained this ascendancy over property rights because of its importance to our capacity to survive. When a fetish was made of property rights, the industrial society began to crumble. Recognition of the right to work supplied the necessary adhesive quality to hold it together.

If the right to work is to be more than a phrase or a slogan, the problem of the business cycle must be tackled. Violent swings in it are not as certain as death or taxes. Nor are they as inexorable as the

laws of nature. They are man-made and therefore can be controlled by man. It is ironical to conclude that man is doomed to be the victim of his lack of planning and that he is powerless to do anything about it.

The communists say that war is the only force that can give the democracies maximum production and full employment. It would be shocking if we ever agreed to that thesis. We have the resourcefulness to substitute production and employment for man-made depressions. The problem stands as the key to most of our other problems. It requires the concentration of our best minds.

The challenge of the day is that we free our thinking of prejudices and preconceptions and go to work on this problem of the right to work in the typical American way. That is to say, we need to cast dogma and doctrine to one side and look to practical means and sensible results, as the Seabees did when they discarded the conventions of construction and overnight transformed remote islands into airports and harbors.

The right to work, though fundamental, is by no means the whole problem.

Both the communists and the fascists laid claim to the idea. They guaranteed work for everyone, though they neglected to advertise that some of it would be slave labor and some of it military service. Nevertheless they exploited the idea in an endeavor to make the right to work a spectre on the democratic front. That slogan of theirs carries some appeal to those obsessed with the fear of want. Men at the bottom of the economic pyramid sometimes see in the communist propaganda of guaranteed work the security they miss in their daily lives. It carries appeal to those obsessed by the fear of insecurity. Men at the top sometimes see in fascism the way of securing maximum work for minimum rewards, of quelling riots, of keeping order, and of crushing the discontent that often simmers in factories and along water fronts.

So it is that the central problem of our age strikes deeper than the right to work. Communism cannot be stopped and the world saved by flooding it with gadgets or other material goods. Moreover, work can itself become a form of slavery unless man is free to enjoy the dividends which work creates.

Those dividends are found in leisure. The leisure time made possible by technology gives an opportunity for full spiritual development to a greater number of men than at any time in history.

Man can never be only a machine. He has a soul, a personality, a creative capacity. He is happy only when he has an opportunity to

develop the spiritual aspects of his being. He can achieve happiness only when he is free.

Freedom will have different meanings in different cultures. But it has universal qualities that apply to all men:

(1) There is the basic desire to express one's self—by speech, through art, and by other creative means—and to understand and enjoy the expressions of others.

(2) There is the urge to look beyond the tree tops to the stars and to worship God as one chooses.

(3) There is the eagerness to participate in the affairs of life, to help mould the decisions that affect one's destiny, and to feel the warmth of comradeship in common endeavors.

Both the communists and fascists strangle the first two of these. They confine freedom of speech to the limits of their own ideology. They make art and books and all the handiwork of men conform to their specifications. They try to make their materialistic state the God of all the people.

But in form they give the third of these—the freedom to participate in the affairs of the state—somewhat greater respect, though what they do falls far short of our democratic standards. They go through the ritual of consulting the people. They congregate them in vast halls and give them stirring lectures. They let them march to martial music. They even go through the form of elections.

But these acts are only pretenses. The truth is that totalitarian regimes do not trust the people. They do not trust them with the ballot. They do not believe they should have the power to be rid of their rulers and to elect new and different ones. Their consultation with the people is only a public relations job to keep discontent at a minimum.

Men harnessed to jobs under totalitarian regimes may be well-fed and well-housed. But they stand to suffer spiritual starvation. Men do not live by bread alone. That is why in the long run those regimes will not endure.

The freedoms that the communists and fascists crush out are the values of western civilization which the democracies cherish the most. They are part of the cultural stream that is our inheritance. Part of it came down from the ancient Greeks and Romans. It has been conditioned by the teachings of the Bible. It carries with it the influences of the Renaissance and Reformation. Magna Carta, the French Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of

Rights, the Emancipation Proclamation, are all political manifestations of that philosophy. Universal suffrage is the assurance that political power will not vest in any one select, self-perpetuating group. And civil liberties have been put beyond the risks of political manipulation through the development of habits and traditions of governments and the fashioning of constitutions.

Both general experience and psychiatric data show that these freedoms produce health in individuals and in societies.

Freedom of religion and of expression are the keys to spiritual strength of men. Without them personalities are shrunk and man's fullest development as a spiritual being is thwarted.

Free elections are the means whereby society itself is kept from becoming stagnant. At regular intervals the power of government is reclaimed by the people and then granted anew to other delegates. This prevents entrenchment of rulers; it emphasizes the trusteeship of those who govern.

But the importance of free elections strikes deeper. They give the people a direct remedy for their grievances; they allow them participation in shaping their collective destiny; they give them the sense of belonging to and being a vital part of a society and a nation. They create loyalty to one's country rather than to its institutions or officeholders. As Mark Twain said, the country is "the eternal thing" while its institutions are "its mere clothing" which can wear out or become ragged.

The sense of sharing and belonging is the great adhesive force that holds a free society together. The advent of the factory system has made it an increasingly critical political problem for all the democracies.

It is possible for man to feel an intimate tie with the things that he makes with his hands. But work has become less personal under the aegis of the machine.

The factory was a cold and aloof place. It did not cultivate the sense of belonging. Mass production caused the relation between the worker and his job to become more and more tenuous. Employment became an impersonal thing rather than an intimate arrangement as it was in the smaller New England factories a century ago.

The trade unions stepped in and at least partially answered the yearning of men to belong, to be a part of a vital system. They supplied comradeship and a friendly tie in a common endeavor. They supplied protection. They gave a sense of security. They appealed to the sense of fraternity and cooperation that is deeply ingrained in man.

Labor and management both began to appreciate that this feeling

of belonging, of sharing, of participating is the key to the productivity of the modern plant. Mayo in *The Social Problems of An Industrial Civilization* showed from his studies what miracles that attitude can perform. He has shown that when the workers were allowed to participate in decisions affecting their work, so-called labor problems began to disappear or assume minor importance. The idea has spread. To an increasing degree imaginative industrialists and business men have seen the wisdom and necessity of developing cooperative techniques at the factory level. Labor and management have been looking with greater frequency for ways of harnessing the full energies and enthusiasms of the rank and file, so as to make increased production and increased productivity the common undertaking of all groups in industry. Charles Luckman has proposed joint productivity clinics composed of labor and management to formulate the methods and procedures for increasing productivity. The same attitude has had numerous manifestations.

Political controls in the sense in which we think of bureaus and departments of government can never operate to produce collaboration between groups in the inner wheels of our industrial organization. They are, in the first place, too far removed even at the state level from the daily problems of the factory. Moreover, cooperation cannot be legislated or imposed by a directive. It must come from inner compulsions and desires. It must be a spontaneous thing that springs from the hearts of men. It can come only from an opportunity and an eagerness to share in an adventure, to have a hand in planning.

The franchise gives citizens that opportunity to participate in public affairs at the municipal and national level.

There must be a constant exercise of the political power for it to remain healthy and vigorous. Otherwise corruption or deterioration sets in.

Cooperative techniques at all other levels of activities must also be assiduously cultivated and practiced. If the industrial machine is to operate smoothly, collaboration of all groups must be the standard. Once the cooperative attitude is neglected, inner tensions develop and the group begins to pull apart and disintegrate. That is true of the family and the state. It is also true of the factory. Once the divisive rather than the cooperative techniques come into play, this sensitive, integrated system of ours begins to collapse.

Politics embraces all the techniques that the ingenuity of man has fashioned for dealing with the problem of human relations. It includes sociology and psychology and all the arts and devices for developing cooperative habits among men. Max Ascoli has said that "Politics

is the technique of using freedom." It is indeed the way which free men both express and preserve their freedom. It is the source of their independence.

We democrats have gone far in outstripping all our competitors in technical skills of industry. We must now outstrip them in the development of the art of social cooperation. We have a considerable advantage in that respect since we start with political freedom. If we exploit our political freedom to the fullest, we can show the world the way to preserve incentive and independence for the individual and security for the masses of the people. There are no secret police, no censors, no totalitarian decrees to enjoin or detain us in that endeavor. Only our prejudices or our neglect can handicap us in the venture.

Property is important in the human scheme of things. Man's possessive instinct is strong. Ownership of property is one of his prized liberties, whether the property be a hut or a castle, a farm or a factory, a shop or a fishing boat. The prospect of acquiring it and the opportunity of managing or caring for it are powerful incentives in the lives of men. Those incentives release energies which give vitality and drive to an economy. They put inventive genius to work. They develop habits of independence and give to society a core of stability that Marx and Engels bitterly deplored.

We can recognize the values which a privately owned property system contributes to a society without making property our fetish. We must be as ready and willing to modify or control it when it blocks the program of security for the mass of people, as we are to utilize it whenever possible to supply incentive and independence to the individual. We have modified it in many instances. The Tennessee Valley Authority is a striking example. The hydro-electric and irrigation programs of Grand Coulee Dam are another. The great cooperative movement is still another.

The Soviets make a fetish of state ownership and management of property. In so doing they put themselves under a tremendous handicap in the competitive world, for they sacrifice the values of other powerful incentives.

The challenge to us is to avoid becoming prisoners of any dogma whether it be free enterprise or government ownership or control. We must preserve flexibility in our thinking, so that we may pick and choose the best device for each task at hand. We must carry that attitude into our social and economic affairs. We must nourish the experimental approach. We must seek in our economic organization the balance that preserves freedom for the individual and security for the masses.

Across the world today are many varied kinds of organizations in the fields of agriculture and industry. The democracies are showing the way in those experiments. Palestine and Puerto Rico, whose meager resources prohibit any lavish experimentation, are proving that pluralism in economic organization can thrive under the democratic processes. We must be alert to those experiments and pick and choose our own instruments of economic organization with reference to their practicality, not with reference to dogma.

There is a collateral task that we must not neglect. It is important that we understand the nature of the Soviet propaganda which today fills all channels of communication. If we do not understand it, we may fall to quarreling among ourselves and be diverted from our objective. Then we may lose the battle by default.

The Soviet influence is divisive. It seeks to pull men apart, to explode institutions through the cultivation of inner turmoils and tensions, to prevent reforms. An effective democracy where justice prevails is anathema to the Soviets. The human welfare state is the spectre that stalks the political clique that rules the Soviets.

Marx and Engels embraced the theory that in general "the mode of production determines the character of the social, political and intellectual life." That was the core of their historical materialism. To it they hitched dialectics and marshalled all of man's ingenuity in an endeavor to prove the truth of their thesis by promoting it. "The materialistic doctrine that men are the products of conditions and education," wrote Marx, "forgets that circumstances may be altered by men and the educator has himself to be educated."

They transformed a theory of history into a method for making history. Economic analysis of events and psychological analysis of men became guides for controlling behavior, for plotting the course of a foreordained plan. Class activity became the medium through which the historical process comes to pass. The class was put in the vanguard of the movement. The social needs of that class supplied the idealism of the movement. Thus dialectical materialism became a religion and sought to sweep all before it as it rushed to meet its manifest destiny.

By communist standards everything that stands in the way of that program is evil. A state that encourages free enterprise or pluralism in economic organization, or free speech or religion, or any of the earmarks of an independent people must be destroyed.

What they desire above all else is ineffective performance by the democracies. They oppose reforms. Marx set the pattern in his contempt for what he called "hole-and-corner reformers of every kind."

To Marx and Engels "law, morality, religion" were "bourgeois prejudices behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests."

Liberals who have seen the communist influence at close hand know that the communists promote reforms up to the point where the efforts might be successful and then they sabotage the program. Labor leaders know that the communists seek only to perpetuate industrial strife rather than to develop patterns of cooperation or to gain recognition of labor's equitable claim to the earnings of an industry.

The communists use every democratic device that is available to exploit the unhappy conditions that prevail in the world. They at times appear to outdo the democrats in their zeal to promote democratic causes. In the United Nations they use all available forensic opportunities to spread distrust, hatred, and suspicion. But when the democratic forces of the world seek to forge programs that will remedy the conditions which enslave people, the communists will usually be found in a position of opposition.

The pattern is uniform. It should be studied. As President Conant of Harvard recently stated, study of the communist creed is indeed "the number one educational need of the present moment."

If we become wise to the communist approach, we may even get large dividends from their propaganda. We can move rapidly to eradicate the conditions that they exploit. We can quicken the sense of awareness of our own responsibilities. We can ourselves become missionaries of a faith that holds more promise for mankind than the dreary dogma of totalitarianism.

We place our faith in a society that preserves the greatest possible freedom for the individual yet secures the masses in their basic needs. We can implement that creed with programs of action.

The communists have no monopoly on the techniques of ideological warfare. They have no patent on making history their way.

The economic and spiritual content of our democratic faith has infinitely more appeal to all people than the materialistic-police state of the Soviets.

This democratic community of ours is composed of men of goodwill. Happily, the communist propaganda is making us a more compact, solidified nation. We are acquiring cooperative habits that a generation ago would have been thought impossible. If we can cultivate the experimental attitude in our social problems that we have in the physical sciences, there will never be any dogma to imprison us nor any prejudice to defeat us. Yet they are the most imposing enemy that confronts us.