Socialism

Socialism means plenty for all. We do not preach a gospel of want and scarcity, but of abundance.

Our desire is not to make poor those who to-day are rich, in order to put the poor in the place where the rich now are. Our desire is not to pull down the present rulers to put other rulers in their places.

We wish to abolish poverty and to provide abundance for all.

We do not call for limitation of births, for penurious thrift, and self-denial. We call for a great production that will supply all, and more than all the people can consume.

Such a great production is already possible, with the knowledge already possessed by mankind.

To-day production is artificially checked, consumption still more so.

How is production checked?

Production is checked by private ownership of land, the means of production and transport. In Scotland large areas of agricultural land are turned into deer forests. In every English county numerous large private parks are kept for the pleasure of single families. Production on farms is limited because farmers lack capital to enable them to employ the labour and materials necessary to work their land fully. Landowners with capital find more profitable means of employing their capital in agriculture or stock raising. Country landowners refuse to build cottages on their estates in order to preserve their own privacy. Landowners in and about towns put up the price of land till it becomes prohibitive to the purpose of building houses for any but the rich. Vacant plots remain for years until they are bought for factories or cinemas.

Production is also limited by inability to secure raw material owing to carefully organised cornering of supplies by persons who make money by such immoral practices, and by inability to pay the prices demanded for raw material.
Production is deliberately limited in order to secure high prices for short supplies, and because the market in which the produce can be sold at a profit is limited.

Production is to a minor extent limited by wage-workers in order to keep up the price of labour.

Consumption is cruelly limited by lack of means to purchase.

Our cities teem with people lacking the decencies and necessaries of life because they cannot afford to pay. Even Mr. Neville Chamberlain, a Tory Minister of Health, has admitted that a large proportion of the population of this relatively prosperous country is herded together under conditions which are scarcely human.

Entire nations are plunged into scarcity under which the poor die of starvation and even the middle and professional classes are reduced to hunger because the whirligig of finance has reduced the exchange value of the currency of such nations.

Capitalism offers no hope of ending this reign of poverty.

Millions of men and women, trained in the arts of production and transport, are unemployed, factories stand idle or run at half speed, land lies fallow, shops and warehouses teem with goods for which there are insufficient purchasers.

The majority of the population is not engaged in productive work. The greater part of the non-producers is employed in the buying, selling and advertising of the commodities produced by the minority. A large number of non-producers is employed in administering insurance doles, pensions, Poor Law relief and charity to the unemployed and to those whose wages do not suffice to maintain them. A considerable minority is living on rent and dividends drawn from the labour of the producers. This minority includes the people with a small unearned income just large enough to maintain them, and also the very rich who keep hundreds of persons uselessly employed in waiting upon them, who monopolise thousands of acres of land for their pleasure-grounds, and who sometimes consume inordinate quantities of manufactured goods to satisfy their insatiable desire for artificial pleasure and extravagant display.

This is the private property system.

We wish to replace it by Socialism.

Under Socialism the land, the means of production and transport are no longer privately owned: they belong to all the people. The title to be one of the joint owners of the earth and its products and the inheritance of collective human labour does not rest on any question of inheritance or purchase; the only title required is that one is alive on this planet. Under Socialism no one can be disinherited; no one can lose the right to a share or the common possession.
The share is not so many feet of land, so much food, so many manufactured goods, so much money with which to buy, sell, and carry on trade. The share of a member of the Socialist Commonwealth is the right and the possibility of the abundant satisfaction of the needs from the common store-house, the right to be served by the common service, the right to assist as an equal in the common production.

Under Socialism production will be for use, not profit. The community will ascertain what are the requirements of the people in food, clothing, housing, transport, educational facilities, books, pictures, music, theatres, flowers, statuary, wireless telegraphy - anything and everything that the people desire. Food, clothing, housing, transport, sanitation — these come first; all effort will be bent first to supply these; everyone will feel it a duty to take some part in supplying these. Then will follow the adornments and amusements, a comfortable, cultured and leisured people will produce artistic and scientific work for pleasure, and with spontaneity. Large numbers of people will have the ability and the desire to paint, to carve, to embroider, to play, and to compose music.

They will adorn their dwellings with their artistic productions, and will give them freely to whoever admires them.

When a book is written the fact will be made known, and whoever desires a copy of it, either to read or to keep, will make that known to the printers in order that enough copies may be printed to supply all who desire the book. So with a musical composition, so with a piece of statuary.

So, too, with the necessaries of life. Each person, each household, will notify the necessary agency the requirements in milk, in bread, and all the various foods, in footwear, in clothing. Very soon the average consumption in all continuous staples will be ascertained. Consumption will be much higher than at present, but production will be vastly increased: all those who are to-day unemployed or employed in the useless toil involved in the private property and commercial system, will be taking part in actual productive work; all effort will be concentrated on supplying the popular needs.

How will production be organised?

Each branch of production will be organised by those actually engaged in it. The various branches of production will be co-ordinated for the convenient supply of raw material and the distribution of the finished product.

Since production will be for use, not profit, the people will be freely supplied on application. There will be no buying and selling, no money, no barter or exchange of commodities.