

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01300618 4



SOCIAL STRUGGLES AND
SOCIALIST FORERUNNERS

By the same Author

A HISTORY OF BRITISH SOCIALISM

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF KARL MARX

SOCIAL STRUGGLES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

SOCIAL STRUGGLES IN ANTIQUITY

SOCIAL STRUGGLES AND THOUGHT (1750-1860)

1641843

SOCIAL STRUGGLES AND SOCIALIST FORERUNNERS

BY
M. BEER

TRANSLATED BY
H. J. STENNING

AND REVISED BY
THE AUTHOR



1929

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK

278592
12. 16. 32

All rights reserved

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

HN
8
B47

CONTENTS

I. THE CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES	9
1. Dissolution of Papal and Imperial Power	9
2. Social Antagonisms	13
II. THE PEASANT REVOLTS	19
1. Flanders	19
2. France : The Jacquerie.	25
III. NATIONAL AND HERETICAL SOCIAL STRUGGLES	32
1. Introductory Remarks concerning the Chief Tendencies and the Leading Personalities	32
2. England : Economic and Social Con- dition	34
3. Revolutionary Agitation	37

CONTENTS

4. John Wycliffe	39
5. John Ball	44
6. The English Peasants' Revolt	47
7. William Shakespeare and Communism	54
8. Bohemia : Political and Social Development	60
9. John Huss and his Precursors	65
10. The Hussite Wars	70
11. Tabor's Communism and End	76
IV. GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPIHEAVAL, 1516-1535.	82
1. The First German Revolution	82
2. Economics and Politics	85
3. Social Consequences	89
4. Precursors of the Peasants' War	96
5. Communistic and Social-Reformist Tendencies in Humanism, expiring Scholasticism, and the Anabaptist Movement	100
6. Sebastian Franck and Thomas M�nzer	107
7. The Peasants' War and the Twelve Articles	115
8. Suppression of the Anabaptists : Final Episode of the Revolution	124
9. Epilogue	133

CONTENTS

V. THE AGE OF UTOPIAS	135
1. Nominalism, Renaissance, and Humanism	135
2. Moral Philosophy, Materialism, and Natural Law	142
VI. ENGLISH UTOPIANS	147
1. Sir Thomas More	147
2. Utopia	150
3. Social Criticism	152
4. Reform or Revolution	155
5. The Structure and Institutions of Utopia	158
6. Francis Bacon's <i>New Atlantis</i>	167
7. Winstanley's <i>Laws of Freedom</i>	170
8. Chamberlen and Bellers as Social Reformers	173
9. Middle-Class Social Theories: Social Contract. Hobbes, Locke, Smith, and Paley	175
VII. THE ITALIAN UTOPIA	181
1. Thomas Campanella	181
2. The Sun State	183
3. Objections against Communism	190

CONTENTS

VIII. FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM	193
1. Economics and Politics	193
2. Social Critics : Messier, Morelly, Mably	198
3. Middle-Class Critics : Rousseau, Linguet, Necker, Brissot	209
4. Utopian Description by Vairasse d'Allais	213
5. Imitations of the Great Utopians	216
APPENDIX	218
American Religious-Communist Settlements.	218
INDEX	223

SOCIAL STRUGGLES AND SOCIALIST FORERUNNERS

I

CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

I. DISSOLUTION OF PAPAL AND IMPERIAL POWER

THE decay of the Roman Empire was the consequence of economic weakness, while the dissolution of the Middle Ages was the consequence of the rise of the new economy and was consummated amid violent internal struggles. Traces of the process of decomposition distinctly reveal themselves in the fourteenth century. The two universal powers, the Papacy and the Empire, whose adventures and antagonisms filled the stage of the Middle Ages, were shaken to their foundations by the new insurgent force: the national State. Within both central bodies nuclei were forming

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

which became the centres of elements related to them, and formed smaller but firmer economic, cultural, and popular bodies, which began to revolve upon their own axes. They made increasingly stronger efforts to free themselves from the central bodies. The new kernels were the towns, the seats of the new economy, the centres of their own interests ; at first they allied themselves with the territorial princes and kings in order to offer united resistance to the pretensions of the world powers. In contrast to Italy, where the towns frequently engaged in conflict both with Papacy and Empire, France, England, and Germany saw in the Papacy their most dangerous adversary. In the course of these endeavours the literature of the individual States escaped from the tutelage of the universal language of Latin, and the poets and writers created a national language : the great pioneers of national languages in Western and Central Europe were anti-papal. The statesmen created a national policy. National ecclesiastical politicians and theologians laid the foundations of the Reformation, as in England, Bohemia, and Germany : an analogous

CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

movement was Calvinism in France, whose monarchy moreover made the Pope prisoner and subjected the clergy to the State laws. From the fourteenth century until well into modern times Rome—the Rome of Gregory and Innocent—was obliged to fight for its bare existence, not only against the national states, but against its own ecclesiastical councils, which asserted the right of control over the Pope.

Matters went even worse with the German Empire: it died of imperialistic inflation, that is, it held nominal sway over numerous countries, but its title was devoid of all political value; precious German blood was sacrificed to this inflation, while proper German interests were neglected. The Empire, caught in its dream of world dominion, was oblivious of the new German economy, the Hansa League, the flourishing towns, the early capitalism of south Germany, except when it was convenient to extract loans in order to finance its foreign adventures.

The most vigorous elements of the nation, the new captains of urban economy, aimed at world trade and expressed their civic feelings only in municipal affairs. From

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

time to time their political consciousness asserted itself; they established leagues of cities, and supported the Emperor in his struggle with the Papacy, but the ambitious national policy of the Empire dissipated the foreign energy and prevented any political concentration. After the death of Louis of Bavaria (1347) the Empire dwindled to a shadow; it disappeared from the German horizon, and removed its capital to the extreme east of the Empire: to Austria, to Vienna, and Prague. It became eccentric.

The individual territorial princes then had the long-awaited opportunity of furthering their aspirations to independent domination and sealing the dismemberment of Germany for centuries, and this at a time when in the west of the Empire the French national power was becoming increasingly centralized, laying the foundations of a standing army, and making the maintenance of the dismemberment of Germany the guiding principle of its diplomacy. And in the midst of these national political changes internal conflicts and class struggles broke out, which were inevitable in the dissolution of an old social system and the emergence of a new one.

CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

2. SOCIAL ANTAGONISMS

The multiplication of towns, the increase of their population, the extension of commercial and industrial activity involved the bourgeoisie in an antagonism of interests with the landlords. The nascent economy, the work of the merchant guilds and of the guilds of handicraftsmen which arose out of them, soon felt feudalism to be a fetter.

The new economy required the mass of the population to have freedom of movement ; freedom to buy and to sell, freedom to turn to any kind of trade, or to hire themselves to any kind of employer ; feudalism was based on attachment, on temporary exchange of land or military protection for services ; it tied the great mass of the population—the peasantry—to the soil, deprived it of freedom of movement, imposed on it onerous services which hardly allowed it to buy and consume the commodities produced in the towns. The feudal system thus prevented the flow of workers to the towns, and further it considerably restricted the demand for urban commodities. Those who were concerned with the interests of the urban labour and

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

commodity markets were, under these circumstances, obliged to fight feudalism.

It was not only labour and consumption which suffered. Production, too, was adversely affected, for the landlords, both temporal and spiritual, controlled the raw materials which the urban industries needed to work up into finished articles.

The landlords and the abbots owned the forests, and thus wood and fur; they possessed herds of cattle, thus hides and wool; hemp and flax grew in their fields, metals lay in their soil, and consequently all the raw materials without which the urban industries could not function. The same lords, both temporal and spiritual, levied tolls on roads and bridges, and could disturb and paralyse communications. It was the landowners' control of labour, raw materials, and communications which created the antagonism between the town and the feudal system. Of necessity the town was obliged to champion freedom, to strive for the abolition of the feudal system, which was based on the attachment of the peasantry. Consequently the town wished to abolish servitude; it offered free asylum to the peasant: a market for the products

CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

of agriculture, which provided the peasants with the pecuniary means of commuting their servitude whenever a noble needed money. The noble's appetite for money had considerably increased since the crusades had made him familiar with the world and its delights.

Better times seemed to be dawning for the peasantry. But the same circumstances caused the deterioration of the material and legal position of the peasant. Urged by his need of money, the noble proceeded to exercise a tighter control over his sources of income, and therefore to press with increasing severity upon the serfs, augmenting their burdens, seizing their commons, and usurping the ownership of forests, rivers, hunting-grounds, meadows, and fields, which had been common since the primitive Teutonic period. Thus the growing peasant population was deprived of elbow-room for extending its communes. The hides were systematically cut up, the communes were diminished. Yet there remained more peasants than could find accommodation in the hides or on the commons. They sank to the level of proletarians.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

The consequence of the development was a country-wide agitation which had assailed Western and Central Europe since the fourteenth century, assuming a revolutionary character, and aiming at the restoration of the village community and democracy.

This agitation was accentuated by the conflicts of the various sections within the towns. Agriculture created the village, whilst the town was the result of trading and industrial activity. Rural settlements which had become the centres of administrative or ecclesiastical activity or junctions of communications evolved into settlements of men who carried on trade and industry, or into towns. As the soil belonged to a noble, a bishop, or an abbot, the towns were obliged first of all to buy their liberties and their right to self-government from the landlords. This process too was not effected without friction between the town and the feudal system. Those who carried on trade and industry organized first in merchant guilds. Then the separate industries and trades broke away from the original guild, and formed guilds or corporations or associations for themselves. The corpora-

CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

tions worked both for their own account and for customers. The relation among the members of the corporation was that of a buying association having the object of providing equal opportunities, restricting competition, and stabilizing prices and wages.

Good relations existed among the masters and journeymen and apprentices from the beginning of guild organization until about the middle of the fourteenth century. From this time onwards we often read of conflicts between masters and journeymen, of wage disputes, and even of strikes by particular associations of journeymen. However, these antagonisms did not assume the character of a general labour movement. Of a more serious nature were the antagonisms between the guild members who had become wealthy and those less fortunate. The old families monopolized all municipal rights. They formed the Patriciate. From their ranks the Council was recruited, and to them fell all the honours, while the less favoured guildsmen did not possess the franchise.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there were violent franchise struggles which

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

frequently ended with the victory of the democratic sections. In these political conflicts social issues gradually became involved, as the widening class cleavage, which accompanied the growth of private economy, divided the mediæval urban population into possessing and propertyless classes. All the regulations of the guilds were powerless to prevent the emergence of sharp social antagonisms. From the beginning of the peasant wars in the fourteenth century the poorer sections of the urban population are everywhere found to be the allies of the militant peasants. Truly it may be said that the peasant wars are only the generic name for the revolts of the labouring masses of that time. They were called peasant wars because the rural population furnished the chief contingent to the insurrections. As we shall see later on, demands of a social reform and communist character played a considerable part in these insurrections, and these demands assumed a theological nature, partly because those who formulated them were theologians, partly because, in common with the Reformation movement, they were directed against the Church.

II

THE PEASANT REVOLTS

I. FLANDERS

SCARCELY any nation in Europe was more warlike and more jealous of its liberties than the mass of the population of Flanders, the greater part of which was of Teutonic (Frisian) origin. By virtue of the treaties of Verdun (843) and of Mersen (870), which portioned the Frankish Empire of Charlemagne, Flanders fell to Charles the Bold, whose heritage formed the nucleus of France. Like the other feudatories of the French Crown, the counts of the Flanders marches took advantage of the weakness of the Carolingians and acted independently. The Capets, the successors of the Carolingians, who gradually inaugurated a national policy of centralization, were the first to make vigorous efforts to attach Flanders more firmly to France. The results of these efforts were wars between

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

the kings of France and the counts of Flanders.

This political antagonism was complicated by the class cleavage of the Flemish population. The rise of the Flemish wool weaving, and of the cloth trade, the prosperous growth of such towns as Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, Cassel, Furnes, etc., sundered the urban population into antagonistic classes : into patricians and less favoured guild members and proletarians ; in the country the peasants got rid of their statute obligations, and became hereditary tenants. In north-western Flanders, where feudalism had never gained a foothold, the number of free peasants increased.

The prosperity of the towns exercised a favourable influence on the peasants, the purveyors of foodstuffs and raw materials, and they resisted the pretensions and privileges of the noble, whose aim it was, by using his social and political influence, to extort from the peasants the old economic tributes and services which were slipping away from him with the dissolution of the feudal system. The patricians and the nobles, who were in a small minority compared with the persons engaged in

THE PEASANT REVOLTS

industry and the peasants, sought the protection of the French Crown, and were generally biased towards the French, while the peasants and the mass of the guild members, constituting the working class, championed the independence of their country and supported the Count of Flanders in his struggle against France.

Some historians have perceived in these conflicts a struggle between the Teutonic and the Latin races; it is however clear that what confronts us here is a class struggle which dynastic ambitions invested with a national political character.

At the end of the thirteenth century Franco-Flemish relations were severely strained, and soon war broke out. The centralizing King of France, Philip the Fair, whom we have already encountered ¹ in a struggle against the Papacy, overran Flanders with war. The nobles and the patricians greeted enthusiastically and everywhere favoured the French troops who occupied the country, but the Flemish handicraftsmen were able to defend themselves, and totally defeated the French chivalry at Courtrai (1302). The war

¹ See *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages*.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

finally ended with the treacherous peace treaty of Athis (1304), which imposed heavy war indemnities upon the population. The noble and patrician friends of France formed the "Reparation Commissions," and were favoured by the French governor, Jacques de Chatillon.

The labouring population groaned under the burdens, and relieved themselves from time to time by sporadic insurrections. Meanwhile Bruges was organizing a general rebellion of the masses of the people, which broke out in 1323 and, with fluctuating success, lasted until 1328. The free peasants of western Flanders and the hereditary peasant tenants of eastern Flanders furnished the largest number of victims in this first war of the working people of Europe. Of the towns, Bruges, Cassel, and Ypres took the part of the peasants, but Ghent sided with the nobles and patricians. The Papacy and the French monarchy fought against the people: the Church by means of the great ban (interdict) which it laid upon the rebellious district, the monarchy by the military aid which it rendered to the patricians and nobles, and also by the prohibition of trading relations with Flanders.

THE PEASANT REVOLTS

Contemporary chronicles do not divulge whether the revolt was inspired by socialistic or heretical-communistic motives. The grievances of the rebels imply no more than that they were revolting against the exploitation and oppression of the upper classes, and that they condemned every income which was not derived from the labour of a man's own hands. The most prominent among the leaders of the insurrection were the peasant, Nikolaus Zannekin, and the Bruges handicraftsman, Jakob Peyt. Zannekin accused the upper classes of despising the old customs and usages of the Flemish people, while Jakob Peyt had a decidedly heretical-social cast of mind. He assailed the wealthy and the Church, and conducted the campaign with terrific energy. Those who did not openly and honestly espouse the cause of the people were treated as enemies. He apostrophised the ruling classes: "You are far more concerned about the favour of princes than the welfare of the community from which you derive your means of support." Peyt taught the people to despise the great ban of the Pope, to withhold recognition from the priesthood, and only to pray in spirit to

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Jesus, the persecuted and crucified, and follow His teachings. Soon afterwards Peyt was treacherously murdered at Furnes; but the people revered him as a saint, particularly after the clergy had decided to treat the murdered man as a heretic, and to consign his corpse to the flames.

During the first years of the peasant war the insurgents were able to register considerable successes. The fugitive nobles and patricians meanwhile schemed in Paris to induce the kings of France, Charles IV (1321-1328) and Philip of Valois (1328-1350), to undertake a campaign against the insurgents "who threatened the entire social order" (*turbato ordine regiminis universi*). In the first year of his reign Philip of Valois equipped a considerable armament, and in June 1328 marched through Arras into Flanders. With the aid of the City of Ghent he defeated the insurgents at Cassel on the 23rd August 1328. Nine thousand peasants and handicraftsmen fell on the battlefield. The engagement was decisive. The insurgent cities surrendered unconditionally. The French and Flemish nobles wreaked a terrible vengeance on the survivors, women and children not being

THE PEASANT REVOLTS

spared. Confiscation of the property of the defeated insurgents, execution of the ringleaders, and heavy war indemnities imposed on the cities, broke the spirit of the Flemish population for some time.

In October 1328 order was restored, and the Pope gave, albeit reluctantly, his assent to the removal of the great ban.¹

2. FRANCE : THE JACQUERIE

The victory of Philip of Valois over Flanders brought to a head the economic causes of the Anglo-French War of Succession, which began in 1339 and lasted intermittently for a hundred years. England, the chief purveyor of wool to Flanders, and one of the chief interested parties in the Flemish cloth trade and in Flemish business prosperity, watched the French policy towards Flanders with strong suspicion.

And when after the battle of Cassel (1328) the King of France became the master of Flanders, English distrust crystallized into a definite policy: the King

¹ H. Pirenne, *Soulèvement de la Flandre Maritime*, Brussels, 1900; M. Kowalewsky, *Oekonomische Entwicklung Europas*, Berlin, 1909; Warnkönig, *Flandrische Staats-und Richtsgeschichte*, Tübingen, 1835.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of England, Edward III (1327-1377), the founder of English maritime and economic policy, raised a claim upon the French Crown. In the year 1328 the last Capet, Charles IV, had died. He was succeeded by Philip of Valois, who belonged to a collateral branch of the Capets, while Edward III, grandson of Philip the Fair, was likewise a member of the Royal House of the Capets. In this way the so-called Hundred Years War of Succession originated, in the course of which England laid the foundations of her maritime and economic power, and France, after several defeats, remodelled her army and established the foundations of French military power. This long war of succession was ushered in by great alliances and diplomatic arrangements. Edward III, the brother-in-law of the Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria, sought an alliance with Germany, and actually concluded an alliance with the Flemish towns, which was highly useful from the military and economic point of view, and he assumed the title of King of France.¹

¹ From that date the kings of England also designated themselves kings of France. It was not until the year 1820 that the English throne renounced this title.

THE PEASANT REVOLTS

Otherwise the war effected no changes in the property relations of the participating countries. Victories and defeats cancelled each other ; but everywhere the labouring population suffered, rebelled, and bled under the burdens and exactions of the war policy. And, at the end of the frightful bloodletting, the French people were so superstitious as to ascribe the deliverance of their country from the English yoke to the Maid of Orleans.

After a decade filled with preparations and intrigues, the English King Edward III declared war on the French in the year 1339. In 1340 a great sea battle was fought at Sluys (Port of Bruges). For an entire day victory was in the balance, when the intervention of the Flemish fleet decided the battle in England's favour. The great French fleet with 20,000 sailors went to the bottom. Thus Flanders was avenged on Philip of Valois.

In 1346 the English archers destroyed a great portion of the French chivalry at the battle of Crecy ; in 1347 the English took Calais,¹ which remained in their possession

¹ The English then called Dover and Calais the two eyes of England.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

for upwards of two hundred years ; in 1356 an English army triumphed at Poitiers over a French army five times stronger ; the French king, John the Good, was taken prisoner and brought to England.

The result of this war, with its armaments, threats, defeats, and forays, was the demoralization of the nobles and the impoverishment of the labouring population of northern France. The repute of the Crown sank ; the towns, hitherto the firmest supports of the monarchy, now sought to make themselves independent. Bands of robbers, well organized and often led by bankrupt nobles, roamed and plundered the country ; robbery became a profitable vocation ; the feudal lords squeezed out of the peasants, whom they derided as Jacques Bonhommes, the last remnants of the produce of their labour. A spirit of revolt gripped town and country, a revolt against king and noble. The first sign appeared in Paris. In 1357 the merchants and guilds, at whose head was the high-minded Etienne Marcel, extorted from the heir-apparent a decree which transferred the governmental power from the Crown to the nation. As, however, the

THE PEASANT REVOLTS

nobility and the clergy withheld their support from the middle class the decree remained a dead letter. Simultaneously with the agitation in Paris the countryside became restless, and in May 1358 the peasant war broke out in Compiègne. It quickly spread through the northern district from Paris to Amiens, and gained the sympathy of the working population of the towns; in addition, Etienne Marcel allied himself with the peasants' leaders, so that together they might put an end to the mismanagement of the demoralized, incompetent, and predatory nobles.

The French peasant war—called the Jacquerie—was an unorganized and elemental rising of the exploited and ill-treated Jacques (countryfolk) against their oppressors. It was devoid of any ideas whatsoever of freedom and equality, or traces of heretical-social tendencies. The Inquisition of the first half of the fourteenth century did its work thoroughly in France. There were many social injustices, much poverty, but no more revolutionaries, no more heretics, no more social reformers among the peasants and the labouring population of the towns. Only among the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

middle class were there isolated men who demanded civic freedom, but they could find no support. On the other hand, the nobles, although unable to cope with the enemy at the gates, were strong enough and cohesive enough the moment it became necessary to repress an enemy at home. Demoralized ruling classes, especially when allied or even identical with the military power, always possess sufficient strength and resolution to check and quell unorganized, popular revolts, all the more so as elemental mass insurrections, after their initial successes, seldom manage to secure efficient leaders or to organize the class war upon uniform lines.

In their indignation the Jacques did not deal tenderly with the noble folk; they avenged themselves on their oppressors, but the latter soon regained the upper hand. The peasant movement was confined to the district between Amiens and Paris. In the third week of June the nobles, with the aid of the governmental power, were in a position to take the offensive. At Meaux and Clermont-en-Beauvais, they encountered the rebels in two battles, in which the badly armed

THE PEASANT REVOLTS

peasants perished by the thousand. The entire Jacquerie lasted from the 21st May to the 24th June 1358. The suppression of the insurrection proceeded with ruthless cruelty. "Even the English, the worst enemies of the Kingdom," observed a contemporary chronicle, "could not have behaved with such tyranny as the nobility exhibited towards the peasants." The peasant leader, Guillaume Calle, was—under the pretext of concluding an armistice—enticed by the Dauphin Charles to Paris, where he was slain, after fearful torture: he was "crowned" peasant king with a glowing tripod, and then his head was cut off. All peasant settlements between the Oise, the Seine, and the Marne were destroyed by fire and sword. Women and children were massacred, and the Jacquerie was drowned in streams of blood.¹

¹ Luce, *Histoire de la Jacquerie*, 2nd ed. p. 94. Paris.

III

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL SOCIAL STRUGGLES

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS CONCERNING THE CHIEF TENDENCIES AND THE LEADING PERSONALITIES

THE liquidation of the Middle Ages in England, Bohemia, and Germany was accomplished amid protracted and violent struggles for religious, social, and national political objects. The outcome of the religious struggles was the Reformation; the social struggles took the form of the peasant wars; the national struggles aimed at breaking away from the universal Church, or were characterized by foreign wars—England versus France; Bohemia versus Germany.

The spiritual leaders of these movements and struggles were: John Wycliffe (Wiclif, Wiclef) in England; John Huss in Bohemia; Martin Luther in Germany. The only real

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

scholar among them was Wycliffe, who was distinguished for his erudition, having mastered both its method of inquiry and its subject-matter, scholasticism and theology ; he was also the only communist among them. Huss occupies a very high place as a resolute and tenacious character, but intellectually he was completely under Wycliffe's influence ; he does not appear to have been greatly interested in communism, but, on the other hand, he was eminent as a political and Church reformer from the standpoint of Czech nationalism. As an example of elemental Teutonic force, as a blunt national fighter and a character of fine integrity, Luther is sufficiently remarkable. He is indeed typical of German nationalism : a compound of formidable moral earnestness and unbridled sensuality ; of stormy and impetuous energy checked by the brake of conservatism ; prone to profound heart searchings, yet bounded by narrow horizons ; liable to attacks of spiritual dejection, when he feverishly clutches at any kind of authority ; his personality discloses no trace whatever of the social thought of the Middle Ages.

All three men were involuntarily drawn

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

into the peasants' and social struggles of their time: in Wycliffe's case the English Peasants' War (1381) and its extreme communistic leader, John Ball; in the case of Huss, the Hussite Wars (1419-1436) and their extreme leader, the Taborite Andreas Prokop; in Luther's case the German Peasant War (1524-1525) and its communistic leader, Thomas Münzer.

The similarity of these movements and the simultaneous appearance of religious, national, and social struggles and champions in the three countries point doubtless to a causal sequence in the march of events. This movement first arose in England: Wycliffe is the pioneer of modern times in the religious and national spheres. Bohemia and Germany, however, surpassed England in the violence of the struggles and their communistic implications.

2. ENGLAND: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITION

The new social and economic factors began to be perceptible in England about the middle of the thirteenth century. Dozens of urban settlements were soon

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

known for their industrial and commercial activity, and for their guilds and courts of justice. The towns afforded markets for foodstuffs, Flanders with her linen industry maintained a large demand for English wool, and likewise English merchants grew into the habit of establishing weaving factories in Flanders. The structure of society did not remain uninfluenced by these causes : in the degree that agricultural products increased in value, the feudal lords and abbots took steps to restrict the peasants' common lands, enclosing large slices of them, *i.e.* made them their private property. The village communes gradually lost their traditional status, and peasants liable to render service were degraded to the position of serfs. This depredation of peasant rights took place at a time when the economic position of the peasants was on the upgrade, for, as a partner in the village commune, the peasants could exchange the superfluous corn and vegetables with the townspeople for money or for industrial products, and as workers on the land they could also obtain higher money wages. This antagonism became all the more acute when the Black Death or the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Plague, which broke out in 1349, carried off a great part of the labouring population, thus causing an increase in the demand for labour power. To make it impossible for the workers to take economic advantage of this situation, the government, that is, the parliament dominated by nobles, passed, in 1350, a law directed against the working class (The Statute of Labourers), which depressed wages to the level of 1348.

The attacks upon the village communes and the workers' wages gradually created great discontent among the labouring population, setting up an agitation which soon assumed a revolutionary character, as the peasants' cause was championed by members of the Franciscan Left, who had emigrated to England from Flanders, partly as weavers, partly as persecuted heretics; by the spokesmen of the Lollards; by the poor priests and the heretical preachers, who spread among the peasants the primitive Christian and Patristic doctrines of natural law.

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

3. REVOLUTIONARY AGITATION

In the fourteenth century the peasants and labouring population generally of England were not without teachers, spokesmen, and agitators. It was the time of the first translations of the Bible into English: writers ceased to employ Norman-French or Latin, and composed books in the popular language, as obviously a demand for books written in English had made itself felt.

Two of the most eminent writers of that time were the poet Geoffrey Chaucer (b. 1328, d. 1400) and William Langland, who composed *Piers Plowman* in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. The former was chiefly a poet of the upper classes, the latter of the independent peasants. Both were anti-communist. Yet they wrote in the popular language. Of the speeches and writings of the heretical-social agitators—with the exception of the Latin writings of Wycliffe referred to later—only a few fragments have been preserved, which we will reproduce in another place.

The centre of this agitation was the seat of learning of Oxford, whence poor priests

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

and heretical theologians propagated their doctrines to the "open fields."¹

There is no doubt that the underlying ideas of the agitators' speeches were taken from the social ethics of primitive Christianity and of the Church Fathers. For Langland complained: "They preach of Plato and prove it by Seneca that all things under heaven ought to be in common" (Langland, *Piers Plowman*, Bk. XX. pp. 273-76). Langland asks if, according to the Holy Scriptures, everything should be in common, how could God have forbidden stealing in His ten commandments. Stealing presupposes private property. Therefore private property is a divine institution. This argument shows how vigorously the communistic agitation was carried on at this time. However, it was the writings of John Wycliffe which gained the greatest reputation and exercised the widest influence, an influence which extended far beyond the borders of England.

¹ The peasant communes were called "open fields"; "enclosed lands" were the private property of the landlords. The enclosure of land with a fence signified so much common property transformed into private property. G. A. Little, *Gray Friars of Oxford*, pp. 63-64; Thomas Wright, *Political Poems and Songs*, Part I. Intro. p. lx.

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

4. JOHN WYCLIFFE

Among the men who prepared people's minds for the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, John Wycliffe (b. 1320, d. 1384) occupies an eminent place. From the standpoint of religious history he was the pioneer of the Reformation and of the rebellion of national kingship against the Catholic universal domination which was closely associated with it. In economics Wycliffe was still living in the Middle Ages, and he defended communal economy against the private property which was gaining the ascendancy. He studied theology at Oxford, absorbing the whole scholastic learning of his time, and being strongly influenced by the writings of Ockham.

What Ockham¹ accomplished on the European stage, Wycliffe in the years 1360-1380 endeavoured to perform for England: to liberate England from the Papal overlordship, to justify the English monarchy, and protect communal economy. His problem was twofold: first, a national problem, that is, the liberation of the English State from the Papal domination,

¹ See *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages*.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

and the making of the centralized national power (monarchy and parliament) sovereign ; secondly, to defend a communistic system, that is the village commune, against the rapacity of the nobles and the Church. His championship of evangelical poverty (of a propertyless condition of the Church) would have signified in practice the confiscation of Church property by the secular power (king, nobles, towns), and would have earned for Wycliffe the lasting friendship of these powers, had he not at the same time defended the rights of the peasant and advocated the theory of communism. The demand that the Church should be propertyless was actually understood by the secular power only in the sense that the Church ought to renounce her material possessions in favour of the Crown and the landlords. Consequently the Reformers who supported this demand, but were indifferent to communism and the peasants' programme (like John Huss), or definitely opposed them (like Luther), were the darlings of the nobility.

It was otherwise with Wycliffe. At first he was in favour among the higher nobles, but as soon as the latter perceived whither

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

his doctrines led, they fell away from him. The mission of Wycliffe relating to ecclesiastical reform and economic reform brought him into antagonism with the Church. Wycliffe became a heretic ; he impugned important basic dogmas of the Church, such as aural confession, absolution, adoration of the saints. Several of his doctrinal tenets were then condemned by Pope Gregory XI (1377), and likewise the Synod of London (1382) declared them to be heretical. His defence of communism at length proved to be a purely theoretical matter, and in the last resort the communal rights of the peasant population were identified with a social kingship. After the Peasant War of the year 1381, Wycliffe became very cautious about his communism. His disciples, the Wycliffites, then refrained from attacking the private property of the laity, but demanded instead that the Pope and the Church should renounce all earthly possessions, and that the priests and monks should provide for their means of support through communal economy.

Wycliffe encountered great difficulties in the theoretical solution of his problems. Mediæval theology was permeated by the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

traditions of natural law and of Gregory VII, according to whom the monarchy originated in sin. The Church teachers of the later Middle Ages exerted themselves to remove this blot from Church and State. We have already seen this in the case of Thomas Aquinas,¹ as also in the case of Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham. The declaration of Aquinas is conservative in character ; the declarations of Marsilius and William of Oakham are democratic. According to Aquinas, the State is adapted to the sinful condition of man and to the general state of things. According to Marsilius and Ockham, monarchy is only legitimate when it arises with the consent of the people. Wycliffe was unable to embrace either of these theories. For him monarchy always reeked of sin, and it can only be purified from this stain if it embarks upon reforms of a communal character and protects the peasant communes against attack. Only in connection with communism can monarchy become legitimate in the eyes of natural law. Wycliffe regarded communism as the best and most salutary foundation of national

¹ *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages.*

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

power, and he defended Plato's communistic ideas against the attacks of Aristotle. "Communism," said he, "is not opposed to Christianity. The apostles held all in common. Communism is as superior to individualistic economy as universal truths are superior to particular truths. It is, of course, true that Aristotle objected to Plato's doctrines concerning a community of goods, but his objections are only valid so far as they apply to the community of women. Communism does not weaken the State, but strengthens it, for the more the citizens are interested in property, the greater is their interest in the public welfare. Common interests promote unity, and unity is strength" (*De Civili Dominio*, vol. i. chap. xiv. pp. 100-101).

Moreover, Wycliffe was of opinion that communism was not to be attained by means of insurrection or force, but solely through the moral elevation of the people. Where private property existed, it could only be justified through virtue, through the state of grace. Those who are in a state of mortal sin have no right to property. This doctrine, which moreover coincides with that of Augustine, is much more

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

revolutionary than one might think. Peasant leaders with the gift of agitation could easily conclude from this that the unjust and sinful landlords and abbots had no right to their possessions, and that consequently their forcible expropriation would be a virtuous action. Of this opinion was John Ball, the preacher of the English peasant revolt.

5. JOHN BALL

A rather shadowy tradition tells us that John Ball was a disciple of Wycliffe. Contemporaries only confirm that Ball was a famous preacher, who, however, mixed "much chaff with his wheat." The themes of his discourses were freedom and equality, democracy and communism. Glancing back on the primeval social state, he asked :

"When Adam ploughed and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?"

He preached upon the state of nature in accordance with the theological doctrines of natural law. In the beginning men were born equal ; the relations of master and servant came about through efforts

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

of unworthy men to repress their fellows, against the will of God. The time had now come to break the yoke of slavery ; if the masses of the people were really in earnest, they could now free themselves. The state of society was like a cultivated field ; the wise husbandmen pulled up the weeds, freed the ground and the good seed from all harmful growths ; the landlords, the lawyers, and the judges were the weeds which sucked at the life of society, and must therefore be removed. Only then would the countryfolk be able to enjoy the fruits of their fields and delight in life. In this way all men would become noble.

The French chronicler of that time, Froissart, a courtier and enemy to the peasants, who also described and calumniated the Jacquerie, has transmitted a speech of John Ball's. Froissart also stayed in England a long time and observed — from his standpoint — English conditions. He makes John Ball preach :

“ MY GOOD PEOPLE,—things cannot go well in England, nor ever will until all goods are held in common, and until

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

there will be neither serfs nor gentlemen, and we shall all be equal. For what reason have they, whom we call lords, got the best of us? How did they deserve it? Why do they keep us in bondage? If we all descended from one father and one mother, Adam and Eve, how can they assert or prove that they are more masters than ourselves? Except perhaps that they make us work and produce for them to spend! They are clothed in velvets and in coats garnished with ermine and fur, while we wear coarse linen. They have wine, spices, and good bread, while we get rye-bread, offal, straw, and water. They have residences, handsome manors, and we the trouble and the work, and must brave the rain and the wind in the fields. And it is from us and our labour that they get the means to support their pomp; yet we are called serfs and are promptly beaten if we fail to do their bidding" (Froissart, *Collection des Chroniques*, vol. viii. chap. cvi.).

Responding to the national needs of the time, Ball is reputed to have lamented the absence of a strong central power, which

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

would have been willing and able to take the part of the peasants. Edward died in 1377 after a fifty years' reign ; his successor was his grandson Richard II. (1377-1399) who ascended the throne when he was only eleven years old. Ball opined : " Woe to the country whose king is a child," although he ought to have remembered that it was Edward III who had sanctioned the Statute of Labourers.

While Wycliffe held aloof from all popular agitation, Ball placed himself in the midst of the people, and as by virtue of his priesthood he was subject to the archiepiscopal jurisdiction, he was condemned to several months' imprisonment for his " heretical speeches." According to Froissart, who considered the Lollards to be the spiritual authors of the peasants' revolt, Ball also was a Lollard.

6. THE ENGLISH PEASANTS' REVOLT

In June 1381 the first peasant insurrection broke out. It must not be supposed that the revolting peasant population was guided by purely communistic ends. All they asked was protection for their village

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

communal rights against nobles and abbots, and for the rest, the peasants and land-workers wanted their labour power to be at their own disposal, without being compelled, either through servitude or royal enactment, to render service to the feudal lords.

As in the Flemish and French peasant wars, a large section of the poorer industrial classes of the towns of southern England was in sympathy with the peasants' movement, while the patricians were on the side of the nobles. In addition to their hatred of the rich, the London workers and the poorer guildsmen loathed the foreign merchants and money dealers (Lombards) against whom native capital had for long waged a competitive struggle, as well as against the Flemish weavers in London, who excluded English workers from their guilds and work places. On the other hand, we are told by the chronicles of that time that Flemish weavers also took part in the insurrection on the side of the peasants.

In the second week of June 1381, the revolt broke out, and soon the whole of south-east England was involved in a class

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

war, in which the working class had at first the upper hand. The struggle revealed a certain degree of organization, for the countryfolk from the counties north and south of London gathered almost simultaneously around their leaders, Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, John Ball, John Littlewood, Richard Wallingford, and marched on London. On the way the castles of the nobility and the abbeys were plundered, the archives and legal records were burnt, and the peasant host was supplied with provisions. But the organization was neither unified nor comprehensive; every district had its particular leader; a central direction, a supreme command was lacking. The equipment was likewise defective; perhaps ten out of a hundred were armed with bows and arrows or old swords. Yet from the numerical standpoint the insurrection was imposing. And it was reinforced by the poorer sections of the towns.

In London the apprentices cut off their masters' heads, the labouring masses plundered the houses of the Lombards, and took possession of the City gates, in order to open them to the onmarching peasants. On the 11th June the rebels reached Black-

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

heath, where John Ball preached and prepared the masses for the days to come. At this point a section of the peasants was obliged to break away, owing to the lack of provisions. On the following day the rebels entered the environs of London. The young king, many nobles, and the archbishop took refuge in the Tower, as they were not yet ready to offer military opposition to the peasants. Henceforth the rebels were masters of the town and avenged themselves on their oppressors: the high nobility, the ministers, the lawyers, the officials, and the Lombards. In the Strand they broke into the Savoy Palace of the Duke of Lancaster, and found there a quantity of gold and silver vessels and other valuables. The chronicles of that time all agree that individual acts of robbery were punished with death. Whenever a peasant was caught stealing, he was immediately thrown to the flames. "We are the defenders of truth and justice," declared the rebels, "and not thieves and robbers." Thereupon they proceeded to the Temple, which was near at hand, and burned the legal records and documents. Then they paid a visit to the palace of the Lord

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

Treasurer in Clerkenwell, and destroyed it. The houses of other dignitaries met with a similar fate, and a number of officials were slain. On the 14th June the peasants proceeded to the Tower, and informed the King that they required a personal interview with him, and that for this purpose he should meet them at Mile End. The King responded to the appeal. Scarcely had the door of the Tower opened than the peasants swarmed within, cudgelling the royal councillors and slaying Archbishop Sudbury and the Lord Treasurer.

In fear and trembling the young King appeared at Mile End. But the whole of the peasant leaders were not present at the interview, owing to the absence of unified direction. The deputation laid the grievances of the people before the King and demanded freedom and legal equality for the peasant folk, as well as an amnesty for all who had taken part in the insurrection.

After consultation with his councillors, the King deemed it best to bow to superior force, and to concede the demands of the deputation, although he stipulated that the greater part of the peasants should leave the city and return to their haymaking and

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

harvesting, only an armed troop remaining behind until the freedom proclamation was put into force. The deputation expressed its satisfaction, and the peasants, mostly from the districts north of London, in their simple trust in the royal promise, turned their backs on the capital and went home "victorious."

Scarcely had a large section of the peasants withdrawn than the upper classes regained courage and resolved to decide the conflict by force of arms. Even the young King forgot his qualms; his advisers instructed and prepared him for the part which he had to play in the last scene which was enacted on the 17th June 1381 at Smithfield Market. The detachment of peasants was headed by Wat Tyler. The King came with his knights and city patricians. The peasant leader then rode round the King and urged him to carry out his promise. Instead of a proclamation, Wat Tyler received a blow from a knight, which threw him off his saddle. The other cavaliers immediately hastened to the spot and killed Tyler as he lay on the ground. The peasants ran to their leader's assistance, but their superstitious faith in the

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

King was their undoing. Richard told them that he himself would be their leader, and solemnly confirmed the liberties he had granted them. Satisfied with this promise, the peasants abandoned the struggle. Then the lords had a free hand. They abolished the liberties of the peasants and arrested the peasant leaders and condemned them to death. Jack Straw, John Ball, and the other leaders finished their careers either on the gallows or on the executioner's block. Terrible punishment was meted out to all who had taken part in the revolt. The lords were the judges. And the King declared to the peasants: "Villeins you were and villeins you are. In bondage you shall abide, and that not your old bondage but a worse."

The King's threat and the rapacity of the nobles found, however, a limit in the needs of the economic development. The breaking up of the village communes proceeded apace, but serfdom was gradually abolished, as, with the growth of the towns and the progress of commerce and industry, the migration of the country population to the towns began. And where the nobles were particularly harsh in the country, or

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

where the penal laws against the working classes pressed too severely, revolts broke out, as in Kent in the year 1450, when the peasants marched to London under the leadership of Jack Cade and came to a bloody reckoning with the royal advisers ; then in Cornwall in the year 1500 ; finally over a large area of England in the year 1549, but all these risings fell short in extent and vigour of the revolt of 1381.

7. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND COMMUNISM

The greatest dramatist of England and of modern times, William Shakespeare (b. 1564, d. 1616), was anti-democratic and anti-communist. His plays are the mirror of the intellectual tendency of the upper classes of society, for whom he wrote. In his drama, *Henry VI* (2nd Part), he has left on record the opinions of the upper classes about the peasants' revolts. This drama is important for us, as it represents Jack Cade, the leader of the peasants' revolt of the year 1450, as a communist and dictator.

It is in keeping with Shakespeare's whole

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

character that he satirizes Cade and seeks to make him ridiculous, and imputes ignorance, scientific hostility, and rapacity to the people. From the time of Aristophanes¹ up to our day the working classes have found few dramatists who have understood social economy. Hitherto dramatists have written for courtiers, nobles, and the upper middle class. Even a genius like Shakespeare is no exception.

As we know, Edward III, the warrior king and founder of maritime and commercial power, was succeeded by his grandson, Richard II, under whose reign the first peasant revolt broke out; he was followed by Henry IV (1399-1413) of the House of Lancaster, then Henry V (1413-1422), who successfully carried on the anti-French, maritime, and trade-promoting policy of Edward III; gaining a great victory over the French at Agincourt (1415) and conquering Normandy, which rekindled the patriotism and nationalism of the English; finally Henry VI (1422-1461), who experienced the second peasant war (1450) and lost the French conquests. The end of his reign was the

¹ See *Social Struggles in Antiquity*.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

beginning of the Wars of the Roses (the Houses of Lancaster and York), which lasted from 1459 to 1485, and ended by destroying the old, feudal, mediæval nobility, whose place was taken by a new trade and mercantile nobility.

The trilogy, *King Henry VI*, describes the chief events of this reign ; the second part deals with the second peasants' revolt and the beginning of the conflict between the Houses of York and Lancaster. In Act II, Scene ii, we hear the complaints of the working classes and their hopes in Jack Cade. The rebels, George Bevis and John Bevis, discuss the revolt that is being prepared, and George says : " Jack Cade, the clothier, means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap upon it." In other words, overthrow the old society and set up a new one in its place. To which John answers : " So he had need, for 'tis threadbare. Well, I say, it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up." George : " O miserable sage ! Virtue is not regarded in handicrafts men." Then various workmen are mentioned as suitable to be magistrates ; the tanner, the butcher, the weaver. Fin-

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

ally Cade himself appears and summarizes his programme: "all the realm shall be common." Shakespeare then makes merry over the material desires of the rebels: cheap bread, cheap beer, free love, etc., and makes Cade exclaim: "And you, that love the commons, follow me. Now show yourselves men, it is for liberty. We will not leave one lord, one gentleman. Spare none, but such as go in clouted shoon: for they are thrifty honest men, and such as would (but that they dare not) take our parts." Upon which one of his comrades named Martin observes: "They are all in order and march toward us." Cade: "But then are we in order, when we are most out of order." Martin then advises the storming of all prisons and the liberation of the prisoners. Immediately before the fight with the nobles Shakespeare makes the rebel leader dictator. Martin calls upon Cade to be dictator, whereupon the latter says: "I have thought upon it, it shall be so. Away, burn all the records of the realm; my mouth shall be the Parliament of England."

The second peasant revolt was crushed and Jack Cade slain in flight. The defeat

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

was partly due to the childish faith of the peasants in the King, perhaps also to the sentiment of nationalism—at least Shakespeare represents Lord Clifford as speaking to the peasants, and by appealing to their patriotic emotions, causing them to desert Cade. Lord Clifford says :

“ Is Cade the son of Henry the Fifth,
That thus you do exclaim—you'll go with him ?
Will he conduct you through the heart of France,
And make the meanest of you earls and dukes ?
Alas, he hath no home, no place to fly to !
Were't not a shame, that, whilst you live at jar,
The fearful French, whom you late vanquishèd;
Should make a start o'er seas, and vanquish you ?
Better, ten thousand base-born Cades miscarry,
Than you should stoop unto a Frenchman's mercy.
To France, to France, and get what you have lost.”

Nationalism and martial glory as antidotes of revolution ! And Cade bitterly complains how “ the name of Henry the Fifth hales them to a hundred mischiefs, and makes them leave me desolate.”

Thus, even at the beginning of the modern era, communism and revolution strove with patriotic sentiment and martial glory. And Shakespeare, the national patriot, attempted even in his last play, the fairy comedy, *The Tempest*, to poke fun at the

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

future State. His satire, however, only consists in confusing communism and sloth. One might be listening to a modern anti-socialist. Shakespeare puts the following good-humoured satire into the mouth of the honourable old councillor of the King of Naples, the statesman Gonzalo :

“ I’ the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things : for no kind of traffic
Would I admit ; no name of magistrate ;
Letters should not be known ; no use of service,
Of riches, or of poverty ; no contracts,
Successions ; bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none,
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil :
No occupation ; all men idle, all ;
And women too : but innocent and pure,
All things in common nature should produce,
Without sweat or endeavour, treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
Would I not have.”

The lords to whom Gonzalo describes his sluggard’s paradise season the disquisition with ribald remarks.

But when all is said and done, even *The Tempest* shows that communism was in the air. Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516) found English, German, and French translators, and was not to be laughed out of Court by any species of mockery. To

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

this, however, we return in another chapter. Meanwhile we proceed with our history of social, heretical, and national conflicts.

8. BOHEMIA : POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Bohemia, which geographically presses against the ribs of the body of the German Empire like a Slavic fist, was bound from early times to attract the attention of the Germanic races and their princes. Likewise, the Bohemian princes, once their country was aroused from its original economic passivity, were obliged to enter into relations with the culturally superior Germans. Owing to the precarious conditions that had prevailed in Central and Eastern Europe during the centuries following the migration of peoples, as also to the attempts of the Franks, the Carlovingians, and the Saxons to secure their eastern frontiers, bloody collisions occurred between the Bohemian princes and the German emperors, which left behind in Bohemia great distrust of the Germans. But the economic and social conditions proved to be stronger than the mistrust. In the

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

year 895 Bohemian princes joined the German confederation, and gradually invited German handicraftsmen, artisans, and merchants into the country, in order to raise urban civilization to a higher plane. Bohemia entered upon a period of economic prosperity with the opening up of the rich silver mines of Kuttenberg in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Through German mining enterprise the Bohemian king, Ottokar II, of the House of Premysl, was furnished with the means to found a great Bohemian Empire, which, in addition to Bohemia and Moravia, comprised Austria, Styria, Carinthia, and Krain. He came into conflict with the Emperor Rudolf of Hapsburg, and the conflict was decided against Bohemia in the battle of Marchfelde (near Vienna) in the year 1276. Ottokar II was slain in battle. A compromise was then effected, whereby King Wenceslaus (Ottokar's son and successor) retained Bohemia and Moravia, while Rudolf's sons received Austria, Styria, and Krain in fief, and founded the power of the House of Hapsburg. After the extinction of the Premysl dynasty, Bohemia was ruled from the year

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

1310 to 1437 by counts of the House of Luxemburg. Among them King Karl I (1346-1378) was the most notable. He was also elected German Emperor against Ludwig of Bavaria, and as such assumed the name of Charles IV. He was one of the most cultured of princes; he studied at the universities of Paris and Bologna, spoke and wrote Czech, German, Latin, French, and Italian. In 1348 he founded the Prague University—the first in Germany. Great scholars became its professors, and students from all countries flocked to it, soon numbering thousands. It was as famous as the universities of Oxford, Paris, and Bologna. Good government, wealth, education, diligent industry, and trade made Bohemia in the second half of the fourteenth century one of the most flourishing kingdoms of Europe. The reaction upon the social structure, the position and the modes of thought of the various classes could not be long deferred. The prosperity of the towns and the multitude of merchants, tradesmen, officials, builders, clothmakers, etc., in their midst caused the value of agricultural produce to rise. Peasants having a large acreage became

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

prosperous and bought their freedom ; many labourers migrated to the towns ; the bonds of serfdom relaxed, which only injured the small nobles who were henceforth obliged either to exploit the peasants more intensely or to pay higher wages, and neither of these alternatives was easy, while outlays of every kind increased. Help could only come to the small nobleman through the acquisition of more land. Consequently, he became land hungry and a Church reformer. Wherever the attempt was made to hold the peasant in strict bondage and to exploit the landworker more intensely, discontent and unrest showed themselves. The cause of heresy was promoted both by the plight of the small nobles and by the pressure upon the downtrodden poorer countryfolk. Since the thirteenth century heresy—chiefly Waldensianism—had been diffused in Bohemia and Silesia, and it directed its shafts against mismanagement in the monasteries and churches. The demand that the followers of Christ should live in evangelical poverty, in other words, that the property of the monasteries and the Church should be confiscated for the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

benefit of the nobles, could no longer be silenced.

As in all countries during modern times, the rise of middle-class economy in Bohemia was accompanied by the growth of national spirit. And where an antagonism to a foreign people or country existed at the same time, national sentiment thrived on this antagonism. It grew rapidly in Bohemia, as an economic conflict was added to national antagonism. The German element predominated in the silver mines and in the towns, becoming wealthy and respectable; this element was also the support of the Roman Catholic Church against heresy; in the Prague University the German professors and students were in the majority, and they voted against all heretical views; Prague had a wealthy German patriciate. The Czech national sentiment was also fostered and proceeded to range itself against the German. It became the guiding tendency of Czech history.

Thus in the fourteenth century a national, social, and religious agitation arose in Bohemia, which sooner or later was bound to cause a fearful explosion, unless in the

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

meantime it was handled with statesman-like wisdom and offered concessions and compromises. At that time it was extremely improbable that such concessions would be forthcoming either from the Germans or from the Church or from the nobles.

9. JOHN HUSS AND HIS PRECURSORS

The signs of the explosion that was preparing were distinctly visible during the reign of Charles IV. Sincere priests like Conrad of Waldhausen (d. 1369), Militsch of Kremsier, and Matthias of Janow attacked the clergy and the mendicant orders. And since 1380 Bohemian theologians had dared to discuss such ticklish questions as worship of saints, the value of relics, and images of Jesus. The most noteworthy of these men was Militsch of Kremsier, private secretary to Karl IV, archdeacon, and the holder of several rich benefices. In 1362 he voluntarily resigned his positions, in order to go forth as a popular preacher. He condemned trade, capital, and ecclesiastical property. Priests ought to live in apostolic poverty, or possess only so much common property as to enable them to

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

live from the fruits of their common labours. It is probable that he was acquainted with the writings of Joachim or Floris, and was influenced by them. Not less courageous, if not so political, was Matthias of Janow, confessor to Charles IV, who accused the Papacy of treason to its sacred office, if it did not carry out Church reforms. All these men gave utterance to the sentiments of their time, and were the precursors and intellectual pioneers of John Huss, who was the most vigorous representative of all the religious reformist and national aspirations of the Czechs, and with the aid of the writings of Wycliffe wielded the cudgels for them.

Intellectual intercourse between Bohemia and England was quite animated in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. King Richard II, the grandson of Edward III, married a daughter of Charles IV, whose eldest son Wenceslaus (1378-1419) followed him on the Bohemian throne (Wenceslaus also became German Emperor, from which position he was deposed in 1400). Richard II, in whose reign Wycliffe flourished, and the first peasant revolt broke out, was therefore a brother-

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

in-law of Wenceslaus. Jerome of Prague, who travelled extensively and studied everywhere, visited Oxford and brought the Wycliffian writings home with him, where they formed the theoretical basis for the religious reformist and national aspirations, and were much read and discussed at the Prague University.

The career of Huss commenced in the first years when the Wycliffian doctrines became known in Prague. Huss was born about the year 1369 of poor parents at Husinez ; he managed, however, to obtain a learned education, to visit the Prague University, and during the years 1390 to 1396 to pass through the university course to the position of Master of Arts (*magister*). Two years later he read theology there, in 1400 he was ordained priest, in 1401 he was deacon of the philosophical faculty, and in 1402 rector. In the same year he was appointed preacher of the Bethlehem chapel, where he distinguished himself by his passionate eloquence. A year later he began his career as agitator for Church reform ; at a meeting of priests he impugned their worldliness and scandalous mode of life. Influenced by the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Wycliffian doctrines, he advocated the evangelical poverty of the Church and general equality in religious matters, as well as the removal of the division between the laity and the priesthood, contending that Christians should be esteemed only for their moral qualities. He was also opposed to indulgences and the worship of saints. In 1407 his evangelical enthusiasm aroused the enmity of many priests, who accused him before the archbishop of having propagated heretical doctrines. Then Huss had the theologians and philosophers of the Prague University as his opponents. The animosity was caused partly by scholastic, and partly by religious and national differences.

In 1408 the Germans condemned the chief doctrines of Wycliffe. Huss then induced King Wenceslaus to cut down very considerably the numerical influence of the Germans at the university, whereupon the German professors and students left Prague and founded the Leipzig University. All these incidents gained for Huss the veneration and love of the Czechs, who perceived in him the spiritual captain of the nation. There is no object in discussing here the

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

religious quarrels in which Huss became involved. What interests us is his attitude towards communism. In this matter he may have followed his English prototype, although apparently he did not champion communistic theories generally. His zeal for Church reform and for the national assertion of the Czechs completely absorbed his energy. His fate is well known. Excommunicated in 1413 by Pope John XXIII, at the end of 1413 he journeyed to Constance, to defend himself before the council there assembled, and there he was burnt to death as an obstinate heretic on the 6th July 1415. About a year later Jerome of Prague was also burnt as a disciple of Wycliffe and Huss. All Bohemia, leaving out the Germans—including the German miners and other workers—as well as a small section of the Czech magnates, regarded Huss and Jerome as national martyrs, and took their part against the Council and the Papacy, whose bulls and ordinances were greeted with contumely.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

10. THE HUSSITE WARS

The sparks emitted in 1415 and 1416 from the fires of Constance kindled the Hussite wars, which lasted from 1419 to 1436, and were fostered by national as well as religious and social revolutionary passions. The Czech nation, although united against Constance and Rome and all outside attacks was, from the social and economic standpoint, divided into classes, and consequently could not achieve internal unity regarding the extent and purpose of the reforms. It became gradually clear that there were numerous sections of the population which were not satisfied with the Church reforms, but aimed at a social transformation. The nobles and the citizens were content to demand the confiscation of Church property and the administration of the sacrament in the two kinds (*sub utraque specie*) wine (the cup) and bread, in order to symbolize the Christian equality between the clergy and laity. The demand for the cup (*calix*) was to some extent the watchword of democratic equality, the summons to return to simplicity, as it obtained in the primitive Christian com-

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

munities. The adherents of this tendency called themselves Utraquists or Calixtines, and desired only to enjoy the confiscated Church property in peace and the clergy to abate their arrogance. They formed the moderate (noble and bourgeois) tendency and did not want the social order disturbed any further. Opposed to them were the poorer sections of the people: the small peasants and landworkers, the Czech handicraftsmen and workers, impoverished nobles, and similar elements, who demanded the full realization of the Wycliffian doctrines, and therefore social reforms. This was the radical tendency, and its adherents called themselves Taborites, as they established their headquarters in a small town on a hill (south-west of Prague) to which they gave the biblical name of Tabor.

Unlike the moderate tendency, the followers of the radical tendency were not united. All of them demanded a fundamental Church reform on the lines of primitive Christianity, but in social and economic matters they differed among themselves: many were moderate social reformers, others were consistent communists. Both sections defended their

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

opinions with Czech tenacity and logical thoroughness and were at constant feud with each other, but always closing up their ranks so soon as it was a question of offering battle to the common enemy. Strong reinforcements flocked to the Taborites, who administered the sacrament in both kinds to the masses at their headquarters. On feast days many thousands of Czechs made pilgrimage to Tabor ; and Beghards, Waldensians, Pacifists, and other communistic sectaries, who were persecuted in the various countries, sought refuge in Tabor, from whence they propagated their doctrines ; Tabor became for some time the centre of the heretical-social movement of Europe.

With the growth of the Hussite following, their courage mounted, and the Taborites made preparations to depose King Wenceslaus, but the influential priest Koranda dissuaded them from carrying out their intention ; he considered they would gain scarcely anything from a change of monarch, as King Wenceslaus was given up to drink, and they could do what they liked with him. The King, however, was more often under the influence of the

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

higher nobility and the priesthood, who induced him to oppose the reform movement and forbid public processions carrying the Host. This prohibition was the beginning of the Hussite Wars. On the 30th July 1419 the populace of the New Town of Prague set this prohibition at defiance, and found a resolute leader in the moderate Taborite, Johann Ziska. Under his leadership the masses stormed the Town Hall, threw the councillors assembled there out of the window, to be slain by the crowd in the street. When the "good" and lazy King Wenceslaus heard of this incident he fell into such a state of agitation that he was seized by an apoplectic fit, and two weeks later died. He was followed on the Bohemian throne by his brother, Sigismund, who had been German Emperor since 1410 and had played a base part in the proceedings against Huss in Constance, upon which account he was not acceptable to the Hussites. Moreover, as German Emperor he would be an object of suspicion to the Czechs. Nevertheless Bohemia remained quiet when Sigismund came to enter into his heritage. The magnates and the patricians did him

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

homage, but the masses adopted a waiting attitude, fortifying Tabor and transforming it into an impregnable camp. But when the Catholic party embarked upon the persecution of the Hussites, and employed coercive measures, the papal legate preaching a crusade against the Bohemian heretics in March 1420, the storm burst. On the 3rd April 1420 the Calixtines united with the Taborites to carry on the struggle in common. This unity was urgently necessary, for crusaders from all the countries of Europe answered the papal appeal against the Hussites. About 150,000 knights, soldiers, adventurers, and pious Catholics, attracted by the prospect of slaughter, flocked together against Bohemia in 1421 in order to prepare a bloody end for the Hussite heresy. Five times the crusading army attacked, and five times was it repelled with heavy losses. The struggle was waged on both sides with great cruelty. In 1424 Ziska died, and his place was taken by the Taborites, Prokop the Great and Prokop the Little, who were more inclined to the Left, and who in 1427 passed over to the offensive, embarking upon devastating forays through

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

the neighbouring German countries : Bavaria, Austria, Franconia, Saxony, Lausitz, Silesia, and Brandenburg, where they inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Imperial army which opposed their progress.

Hussites were then the terror of the German countries, like Sweden was two hundred years later.

After the crusade met with an inglorious end at the battle of Taus in 1431, the Pope and the Emperor began to think of reconciliation by compromise. After long negotiations at the Council of Basle peace was concluded in 1433, which allowed the Hussites to use the cup at the sacrament, and the Czech language in sermons, the confiscated Church property being left to the nobles. This peace is known as the Compact of Prague.

While the Calixtines and the moderate Taborites were satisfied by the concessions of the Prague Compact, these concessions were by no means likely to appease the earnest reformers and the communists, that is, those Taborite elements which had always formed the spear of the Hussite attack and had made enormous sacrifices in prosecuting the war. The Compact of

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

1433 split the Hussite movement, and left the extreme Left weakened and isolated to await the speedy oncoming of its fate.

II. TABOR'S COMMUNISM AND END

In the years 1418 to 1421 and onwards, that is, exactly five hundred years before the Russian and German Revolutions, Tabor was the centre of all the heretical, social, and communistic aspirations of Europe. In its initial primitive Christian enthusiasm Tabor lived like the primitive Christian community at Jerusalem. The spirit of brotherhood embraced all who were pure in heart. All distinctions due to status or property vanished; Mine and Thine, the source of all evil, were unknown there. Deep piety and joy, labour for the community, popular meetings and popular festivals in the open air characterized the life of the Taborites. Then the seriousness of the times invaded their peace. They became involved in war against their persecutors and oppressors. The Taborites divided their population into house and field communities; the former were drafted into the war, the latter attended to the food supply—a

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

division of duties similar to that described in *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages* among the Swabians and the Teutons.

The Austrian poet, Alfred Meissner (1822–1885), sang the struggles and hopes of Tabor in his lyrical epic poem “Ziska.”

“ All dwell in similar houses, each being near and ready to help his neighbour ; united they sit at the same table in the Hall, in similar attire. There is neither Mine nor Thine, and property is common to all—Brotherhood. One section does the peaceful work in the field, the other with horse and waggon joyously departs to fight the battle, and dreams of world-wide conquest.”

In this atmosphere, filled with the primitive Christian ideas of redemption and apocalyptic excitement, there was a burst of millennial enthusiasm at the end of 1419, which carried away the masses and plunged them into a state of joyous hopefulness and extraordinary readiness for sacrifice, but also made them receptive to all extreme communistic ideas which had arisen in the course of the Middle Ages since Joachim of

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Floris and Amalrich of Bena and the Cathari.

The Beghards (Picards), who, as we know, had at that time assimilated all heretical-social ideas, announced in Tabor at the end of 1419 the imminent return of Jesus, who would establish the millennial kingdom, the communistic future State. All the martyrs who had died for primitive Christian and communistic truth and righteousness would rise again, among them Huss and Jerome. The blessings and joys and knowledge and innocence and perfection which had characterized Adam before the Fall would be partaken by the comrades of the future State. It would be an epoch of equality and freedom, which would know neither royal nor human laws. State, Church, theology, and the whole scholastic erudition would vanish. Among the Bohemian extremists the priest Martinek Huska, called Loquis (the eloquent), became the spokesman of these ideas.

The strong antinomian tendency among the extremists led in the case of one group to polygamy. This group was known by the old Gnostic sect name of Adamites, as their members, scorning the customs of

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

civilization, were not ashamed of their nakedness.

The moderate Taborites under Ziska, who were as zealous to persecute the extreme communists as the Calixtines were to persecute all communists in general, embarked upon a crusade against the Adamites towards the end of 1421, and extirpated them with fire and sword.

The Prague *Compactate* (the peace of 1433), which satisfied the economic and the very moderate spiritual interests of the Calixtines and the Right Taborites, created a most dangerous situation for the Left Taborites. Submission was equivalent to treason to their past, opposition signified war with their former allies, whose numerical and economic strength was superior to that of the Left Taborites, all the more so as the Catholic and Imperial sections were also ranged against the Left Taborites. Actually the Prague *Compactate* created an aristocratic, middle-class, and lower middle-class social reform coalition against the communistic Left. Nevertheless the latter persisted in an attitude of implacable opposition, and was obliged sooner or later to appeal to arms. In the whole posture of

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

affairs a warlike decision was the only way out, although the upshot could not be doubtful. Scarcely six months after the conclusion of the Prague *Compactate* the collision occurred.

A coalition army of 25,000 men defied 18,000 communists. The decisive battle was fought on Sunday, the 30th May 1434, at Lipan. The battle raged all through the day and night until three o'clock on Monday morning, and proved unfavourable to the communists; about 13,000 corpses of the bravest Taborites, including that of the supreme commander Prokop, were strewn on the battlefield. Nevertheless the survivors again flew to arms in December of the same year; but they were no longer a serious menace.

And what was the result of the betrayal of the Taborite communists?

The very moderate ecclesiastical concessions were gradually rendered nugatory; the Prague *Compactate* led to no Bohemian Reformation; in 1483 serfdom was imposed on the Bohemian peasants.

Out of the remnants of the Taborites there arose in 1457 the sect of Bohemian and Moravian brothers, which has many

NATIONAL AND HERETICAL

resemblances to the Quakers. In principle they are pacifists, social reformers, industrious, and philanthropic.

The only spiritual result of the Hussite wars was the transplantation of the doctrines of Wycliffe to Germany. They came into prominence both in the German Peasant War and in the Reformation.¹

¹ Loserth, *Hus und Wiclif*, Prague, 1884; Palacky, *Geschichte von Bohmen*, vol. iii. 1-3, iv. 1-2, v. 1-2, Prague, 1845-67; Wadstein, *Eschatologische Ideen-gruppe*, Leipzig, 1896.

IV

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516- 1535

I. THE FIRST GERMAN REVOLUTION

THE two decades, 1516-1535, in which four great movements, the Reformation (Luther), Imperial Unity Plans (Sickingen), the Peasant War (Florian Geyer, Thomas Münzer), Communism and Anabaptism (Sebastian Franck, John of Leyden), so powerfully agitated the whole of Germany, form the first revolutionary epoch in the history of the German people. None of these movements alone is adequate to explain the significance of these two decades. Only when they are regarded in their connections as a whole can the magnitude of the efforts of this time be appreciated. From Wittenberg to Basle and Innsbruck, from the Tyrol and Swabia to Holland, the revolutionary fire glowed in the spirit of the German races. Re-

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

ligious, national, political, and socio-economic ideas and activities were subjected to the most drastic examination. The knighthood, the lower clergy, the intellectuals, the citizens, the peasantry, the poorer sections in town and country became an opposition party and, according to their interests and ideals, formulated their religious and sociological tenets and articles and sketched their programmes. Germany found herself in the melting-pot, and entered on her first revolution. In the centre of the social and economic struggles of that time was the peasantry, just as this position was occupied by the middle class in the second German revolution of 1848, and by the wage-earning class in the third German revolution of 1918.

The first revolutionary period was opened by Luther. His commencement was most promising. In 1516 he published the manuscript of an old German mystic under the title of *Teutsch Theologia*, which is a temperate treatise, composed in the German language, upon mystical, pantheistic, and communistic lines, the significance of which Luther scarcely realized ; it attracted him on account of the language

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

in which it was written, and its inward piety. The publication of this essay is only a symptom that Luther had been infected by the agitation. His real mission began with the nailing of the ninety-five theses at Wittenberg on the 31st October 1517. It was confined solely to questions of ecclesiastical reform and German nationalism, and formed only a small part of the first German revolution. We shall return to it later. More important for us, who are writing upon socialism and social struggles, is the circumstance that the appearance of Luther, in itself of small social revolutionary moment, fanned into flame all the social reform sparks which glimmered under the ashes. Pamphlets and draft programmes for the radical reform of the Imperial constitution and of the economic life appeared and were distributed, efforts were made for their forcible realization ; prophecies of an imminent historical crisis kindled the imagination of large sections of the people ; from 1519 onwards a great part of the nation lived in a state of tension and unrest, as if a catastrophic new order of things was near at hand.

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

That the only outcome of this immense travail of a great nation was a fragmentary, poor-spirited, ecclesiastical reformation. It is one of the chapters of the German tragedy.

Let us turn to our proper task and trace the origin and course of the Peasant War and of communistic Anabaptism.

2. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Germany was one of the wealthiest countries of Christendom. The sources of German national wealth were the mineral treasures of the soil, the expert diligence of the handicraftsmen, the enterprise and the activity of the merchants, the untiring labour of the peasants. The Harz, Saxony, Bohemia, Styria, and the Tyrol supplied silver, gold, iron, lead, copper, and salt. In the mines, forges, and workshops, skilful hands and heads created with all the technical appliances of their time. Improvements of old productive processes and inventions of new labour methods, including the most famous and revolutionary ; that of printing, established the fame

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of Nuremberg, Augsburg, Strassburg, and Basle. And south and north German merchants had accumulated sufficient experience and capital since the thirteenth century to adapt their undertakings to the growing world intercourse, the altered trade routes, and the overseas discoveries of the Portuguese and Spaniards.

Even in the thirteenth century the merchants of Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Ulm had commenced to develop the Levantine-Italian export trade from Venice and Genoa as far as north-western Germany and Flanders. North German merchants, organized in the powerful Hanseatic League, were the masters of the Baltic Sea commerce from Lubeck to Novgorod. The activity of the Hansa had, however, at the beginning of the modern epoch a much smaller importance than that of the south German merchants : firstly, because the latter were increasingly bound up with native production, while the north German merchants had confined themselves to commerce ; secondly, because the south German merchants had learned much in their intercourse with industrially rich north Italy, which had a highly developed commercial

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

and financial technique, whereas the Hanseatic League in its intercourse with the Baltic only came in contact with colonial and raw material districts, which still remained impervious to civilization. The greater mobility and adaptability of the south Germans was shown when maritime communications were transferred from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. The advance of Osman, which led to the fall of Constantinople (1453), and eventually to the stoppage of Mediterranean Sea communication, compelled the nations to seek new ways of communication between Europe and Asia. The consequences were: the rounding of the Cape, the discovery of America, and the material ascendancy of Portugal, the Netherlands, and England. Lisbon, Antwerp, and London became centres of world trade, while Spain, which through her Clericalism and her Inquisition mortified or dispersed the economic forces, achieved only a political ascendancy, and became the first world power at the turn of the sixteenth century under the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic (1479-1516) and of Isabella. As Ferdinand was allied by marriage and

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

treaties with the House of Hapsburg, and therefore with the German Emperor, it came about that, after his death (1516), the Spanish Crown, and three years later also the German Imperial Crown, fell to his grandson Charles, who became Charles I of Spain, and is known as German Emperor under the name of Charles V. He reigned from 1519 to 1556, and witnessed the epoch of early capitalism in south Germany, the German Reformation, the first German unity movement, the German Peasant War, the rise and fall of communistic Anabaptism—in short, the whole German social, political, and spiritual revolution. To this revolution the south German merchants unconsciously contributed a great deal; they made the fullest productive and financial use of the expansion of German-Spanish world intercourse. Among the great business houses of Nuremberg and Augsburg those of Fugger and Welser were specially prominent. In their hands were the German mining industry, Spanish and Hungarian mines, the trade with Lisbon and Antwerp, and the financial operations conducted by the Emperor Charles V. In addition, numerous south

German trading companies were engaged in the metal trade and colonial commerce, bringing small-scale industry under capitalist control, and conducting loan and usury business. The urban life of south and central Germany dominated the culture of the whole German land of the modern epoch. But this urban life came into increasing conflict with patristic-canonical ethics, with the mediæval Christian conscience, with the whole outlook of primitive Christianity, to which trade and commerce, usury and profit were godless. How difficult it was to be saved by works! This was the feeling which began to torment the German middle classes of those times.

3. SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of the early capitalist prosperity of Germany were numerous and manifold. The widening of the horizon, the growth of national well-being, the general hurry and chase after trade and wealth aroused among the labouring masses the desire for greater freedom and equality, and a larger share in the good things of the earth. All those sections

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of the people who imagined themselves injured or oppressed were seized with discontent, which increased as the class divisions of society became acuter and the pressure upon the lower sections sharper. The gulf between the landowning patricians, the great merchants, the monopolists, the newly enriched financiers, and the landowning and trading clergy, on the one hand, and the small handicraftsmen, agriculturists, and the proletariat (the impoverished handicraftsmen and peasants, unemployed knights, and serfs), on the other hand, became deeper, the antagonism more marked and acute. In addition, there was the rising cost of living and the continually increasing taxes, duties, and levies to Town and Church. As a result of the increase in the supplies of precious metals—thus of the means of payment—as well as of the many monopolies, a general rise in the prices of the necessaries of life set in, from which the less favourably placed and proletarian sections suffered most. Taxation grew, as, in consequence of the disruption and impotence of the Empire and the increasing demoralization of the Knighthood, the towns were obliged to

expend ever larger sums for the maintenance of military defence. And the Church demanded and received numerous fees for baptisms, marriages, deaths, and indulgences, and she had to collect very considerable sums and send them annually to Rome. At a time when discontent spread over wide circles of the people, Germany's large annual tribute of gold to Rome was certain to become the object of a vigorous agitation, and to stimulate the discontent.

The consequences of the economic transformation hit the peasants with particular severity. As producers of the means of sustenance and raw materials for the growing urban population the peasants, had they been free, could have shared to a large extent in the national wealth, but they were prevented from doing so by the relations of servitude in which they stood to the lords of the soil. They had to pay the lords what was due: to the "greater" tithes of corn, to the "lesser" tithes of cattle, often even the third sheaf; moreover they had to do socage service—unpaid labour with hand and plough; finally, they had to pay them a kind of inheritance

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

tax on the death of the head of the family. In view of the rising prices of the necessities of life, and the increase in the value of the soil, the peasants recollected that the landlords appropriated a portion of the heath and meadows of the village commune, and in addition monopolized the hunting in the forests and the fishing in the waters. Then the nobles also, since the fourteenth century, had been seized by the mercenary spirit and oppressed the serfs. All traces of canonic law, and also of the old Teutonic communal rights, were obliterated, and their place was taken by Roman law, according to which the Allmende belonging to the village communes were promised to the landlords, and the tribute-owing peasants were regarded as the serfs of the lords.

A social ferment of great strength and wide extent set in, in which—seen from our viewpoint—three chief tendencies are to be distinguished: one was peasant and social-reformist, the second proletarian and communistic, the third was bourgeois and Church reformist. Parallel to these ran a fourth tendency, which had national political aims: the establishment of Imperial

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

unity under a German Emperor ; its programme was set forth in the pamphlet, *Teutscher Nation Notdurft* (1523) ; the champions of this tendency were the Knighthood (the impoverished poor nobles), the peasantry, and a section of the bourgeoisie ; its opponents were—as in 1848—the local princes, the higher nobility. We cannot, however, treat of the national political movement in detail, as it lies outside the scope of our work.

The peasants demanded the inviolability of the village communes, democratic administration in Church and municipality, personal freedom. The proletarians and those theologians who adhered to the ideas of primitive Christianity advocated communism and took the side of the peasants. Anabaptism was the most extreme wing of this section. The demands of the middle classes may be summarized as an attempt to adapt Christianity to individualistic interests and the individualistic ethics which arises from them ; further, separation from the universal Church and establishment of a national Church.

The middle class knew well enough from

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

the Christian tradition that the life of industrial activity which had just come into existence, usury, exploitation, and monopolizing were sinful, but they felt themselves to be powerless, in face of the new economic forces, to live according to the patristic ethic and canonical law, and to be blessed by works. They were smitten with an uneasy moral feeling.

During periods of economic crisis and social insurrection they had forced on their attention the wealth and the financial and industrial competition of the churches and cloisters, as well as the tribute to Rome, and to these circumstances they ascribed a great part of the social evil. Lastly, they were among the representatives of the national idea in Germany, and for this reason they adopted an antagonistic attitude to the Papacy. Even in the time of Ludwig of Bavaria the towns were against the Papacy and in favour of a national Empire. The spiritual expression of the middle-class ferment was the Lutheran Reformation.

In the first place the Reformation may be regarded as an endeavour to overcome the moral difficulties into which large sections

of the bourgeoisie fell in consequence of the contradiction between the patristic and canonical tradition and the new economy, between the mediæval Christian conscience and the economic greed which was gaining the upper hand ; the Age of the Reformation did not feel well morally. In the time of Jesus the Judæic middle classes in Palestine passed through a similar crisis ; dominated by the spiritual influence of the Pharisees, they imagined their difficulties could be overcome by the strictness and variety of injunctions and prohibitions, by a code of religious ritual which was elaborated to the smallest detail ; the number of laws was as infinite as their burden was oppressive, and their effect was to heighten the feeling of the moral impotence of mankind. In this crisis, Paul, who as a fanatical Pharisee had felt the weight of the law with particular severity, rejected the entire Judæic legal code with its enervating conviction of sin. He discarded the crutches with which he had supported himself in his weakness, and prostrated himself before the spiritual appearance of Jesus, in order to draw new strength and freedom and dignity from the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

grandeur of the crucified, from His propitiatory sacrifice, and from His divine grace. The German bourgeoisie found their Paul in Martin Luther, who, however, as a hardy and native Teuton, living on the confines of civilization, could only absorb a portion of the Pauline soul, which was saturated with the ethics and mysticism of a rich civilization. Secondly, the Reformation was an attempt to create a national Church, in order to break away from the Papacy ; but here too the work accomplished was only fragmentary. From the national standpoint Luther stood on a much lower plane than Sickingen and Hutten : he was satisfied with the local princes, while the latter aimed at a national empire. With this very summary and piecemeal description of the Reformation we must content ourselves, as the purpose of our book is not the history of Christianity, but of communism. We therefore turn to the Peasants' War and the Anabaptists.

4. PRECURSORS OF THE PEASANTS' WAR

Two years after the termination of the Hussite Wars—that is, in the year 1438—

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

the first serious symptoms of the social ferment among the German peasantry manifested themselves. Under the title of *Reformatio Sigismundi* (the reform policy of the Emperor Sigismund), a pamphlet was circulated in 1438, in which the grievances and the demands of the German peasants were set forth. The theoretical ideas in this writing were those of the social thought of the Middle Ages. The programme demanded the abolition of serfdom, the restitution of the forests, meadows, and waterways which the nobility and the Church had appropriated from the village communes, and the dissolution of the commercial companies and guilds which exploited the masses of the people. The programme was based upon conclusions drawn from the Bible, which adumbrated the last Age, in which the poor and lowly should be exalted and the rich and mighty pulled down from their seats. The influence of the Wycliffites and Taborites is distinctly perceptible in this document. It goes without saying that the Emperor Sigismund, who had summoned the crusading armies against the Hussites, would have been the last to draw up such a programme

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of reform, but an imperial name still possessed a considerable attraction and could be made to further the agitation. About four decades later (1476) the young shepherd, Hans Bohaim, known as the Pauker of Niklashausen, became notorious in the district of Wurzburg through his addresses upon the approaching age of equality. Thousands of peasants flocked to listen to his speeches; eventually the excitement was so great that the Archbishop of Mainz persecuted him as a heretic and delivered him to the stake. In 1493 a secret peasant organization arose in Alsace, called the "Bundschuh," which aimed at substituting "the divine law" (or natural law) for human law, and liberating the labouring people from their burdens. The association was discovered and its leaders executed. In 1514 a league of peasants and urban proletarians, directed against the nobles and patricians, arose in Wurtemberg, known as *der arme Konrad* (poor Conrad). This association also was destroyed, partly through the treachery of the lords, partly by superior force.

Simultaneously with the appearance of a social revolutionary movement among the

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

peasants, a primitive Christian and communistic agitation arose among the handicraftsmen in the towns. Insurrections of this character occurred in Erfurt in 1509, in Ulm and Schwabisch-Hall in 1511-1512, in Brunswick and Cologne in 1513. The town preachers, belonging to the lower and badly paid clergy, and drawn from the poorer sections of the people, sought for a remedy for social crimes in the Bible, in the Mosaic law and social legislation, or in the gospel, in the community of goods of the first Christians. The preachers were the intermediaries between the theoretical communists and social reformers and the labouring classes in town and country—to the great anger of the patricians, the wealthy citizens, the higher nobility, and Church reformers like Luther, Melanchthon, etc. Thomas Zweifel, the town clerk of Rothenburg, has bequeathed to us a lamentation upon this state of affairs: “And thus the holy Gospel and Word of God has fallen into a sad disrepute. When one preaches of Christian and brotherly love, the common people want all things to be common, and that there should be no supremacy, government, or overlordship.”

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

And when the masters defend themselves against such conduct, the common people dare to reproach the authorities that " they will not allow the Word of God to be preached " (Kaser, *Politische und soziale Bewegung im deutschen Burgertum*, p. 219. Stuttgart, 1899).

5. COMMUNISTIC AND SOCIAL-REFORMIST TENDENCIES IN HUMANISM, EXPIRING SCHOLASTICISM, AND THE ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT

The end of the Middle Ages—thus the centuries of the peasant wars of Western and Central Europe—were marked by three intellectual movements which profoundly influenced European feeling, thought, and aims. These movements were: the Renaissance (re-birth of antique Art and Poetry), Humanism (the systematic study of the Greek and Latin languages and literature), the Reformation (national Church reform). The Renaissance and Humanism brought about the result that, side by side with the anti-Catholic criticism, antique modes of feeling and thought, freer investigation, and the authority of

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

reason, become important factors in life.

What the Middle Ages knew of Greek and Latin culture was subordinated to Church authority, and became the hand-maiden of theology.

On the other hand, since the fourteenth century, the learning and art of Antiquity were revered as an independent authority, and made an object of education. In particular the treasures of Greek literature in the original language were made accessible to Italian, German (Dutch), English, and French *savants* by cultivated Greeks, who fled from the victorious march of the Turks to Italy, and settled in Florence, the centre of the economic and intellectual civilization of the country, and diffused a knowledge of their language. Thomas à Kempis (b. 1380, d. 1471) sent six of his most diligent pupils to Florence, in order to learn Greek; the Brethren of the Common Lot¹ paid great attention to Humanism in their schools.

Among other things the close of the Middle Ages signified the decay of scholasticism and its philosophical authority—

¹ See *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages*.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Aristotle. Scholasticism was supplanted by free investigation, the growing repute of reason ; Aristotle's place was taken by Plato, who became the favourite author of the Humanists, by reason of the beauties of his style, the wealth of his philosophical and social ideas, and the noble elevation of his mind. A Platonic academy was founded in Florence, which was also attended by foreigners with a thirst for learning. Thanks to the newly invented art of printing, Western and Central Europe became acquainted with the treasures of the antique intellect, among which Plato's *Politeia* (Republic) and *Nomoi* (Laws) enabled the Humanists inclined to social criticism to become acquainted with communism. Two of the most celebrated Humanists, Erasmus of Rotterdam (b. 1467, d. 1536), and Sir Thomas More (b. 1480, executed 1536), were sympathetic towards communism. More is the author of *Utopia* (1516), of which we shall speak in detail later ; Erasmus, whose reputation and influence were very considerable, referred the theologians to the Greek original text of the New Testament and of the Church Fathers ; in his exegesis (biblical

interpretation) he gave an exposition of the doctrines of Jesus in the spirit of Plato, the Stoa, and the ethical theories of Cicero. First and foremost he made of theology a social and moral philosophy. He contended that a Christian ought to possess no property, as whatever earthly goods might fall to his lot would come from God, who has lent the goods of this world not to a particular man, but to all men in common (*Opera*, Leyden, 1705-1706, vol. ix. p. 1070). When More published his communistic *Utopia*, Erasmus hastened to apprise his humanistic friend, Ulrich von Hutten, of the fact. The Swiss Humanists arranged for a second edition of *Utopia* in Basle in 1518, and for a German translation in 1524, so lively was the interest in communism, and so great was their enthusiasm to spread communist ideas among the handicraftsmen.

It may be accepted as a general rule that those Humanists who remained faithful to the Catholic Church sympathized with communism, or at least with a fundamental reform of society upon social ethical lines, emphasizing the importance of being saved through works, whereas the Lutheran

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Church reforming Humanists were anti-communist, socially conservative, and lower middle class in their outlook. This was particularly the case with Melanchthon, the most eminent Latin and Greek scholar in Wittenberg. He was at great pains to explain away the passages pertaining to communist natural law in Latin literature and the patristics, as well as the communistic verses of the New Testament. In this respect he esteemed the individualistic Aristotle greater than the primitive community of Jerusalem, than Ambrose and Chrysostom (Melanchthon, *Opera* 1854, "Corpus Reformationis V," vol. xvi. p. 549 et seq.). As already observed, the Reformation sprang directly from the moral crisis which overtook the serious members of the middle class; consequently it was instinctively hostile to everything that was proletarian and communistic or that pertained to primitive Christianity and natural law. Luther could not endure the Epistles of S. James and the Revelation, as these are proletarian in spirit, and treat of the millennium, and lay emphasis upon works as redeeming factors.

Even the widely diffused scholasticism,

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

so far as it was dominated by Ockham's spirit, exerted a communistic influence upon German thought. Gabriel Biel (d. 1496), Professor of Theology at Tübingen, taught that private property was a consequence of the fall from grace; he also stoutly maintained the natural law conception of the primitive equality of mankind.

More lasting and momentous was the influence of the communistic Baptist movement, which arose simultaneously with the initial stages of Luther's Church reform activity, and with the social revolutionary peasant movement, deriving its theoretical strength from humanistic and communistic as well as primitive Christian and patristic sources. It arose in Thuringia, Saxony, Switzerland, and spread to south Germany, Austria, Moravia, etc. In history it is known as the Anabaptist Movement, as its disciples held the baptism of infants to be invalid, and advocated the baptism of adults—after the example of John the Baptist—as a sign of entry into the Christian community. Moreover baptism was only a symbol; what essentially interests us in this movement is its biblical communism. It embodied the traditions

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of the whole mediæval heretical movement, which we have dealt with in *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages*. Its adherents took the social ethics of the New Testament seriously, they endeavoured to put the Sermon on the Mount into practice, to revert to the Apostolic Age, and to inaugurate the kingdom of God. The overwhelming majority of its supporters belonged to the class of handworkers, while its leaders were often men of humanist and theological culture. All of them recognized the principle of community of goods, even if unanimity did not prevail regarding its realization or upon many details. There was a noteworthy difference of opinion about tactics : the Swiss Baptists with their leaders, Hans Denk, Konrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Balthasar Hubmeier rejected all force and political coercion, while many of the German Baptists, who were living in the atmosphere of the impending peasants' war, favoured the use of all methods. This was specially the case with Thomas Münzer, whereas Karlstadt and Sebastian Franck, who shared his zeal for social reform and were intellectually superior to him, were peacefully disposed *savants*.

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

The Swiss, as well as the German Baptists and communists, were equally hostile to the Church reformers, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin.

6. SEBASTIAN FRANCK AND THOMAS MÜNZER

Franck (b. 1500 at Donauworth, d. at Basle 1542) was a younger contemporary of Münzer. The difference in age amounted to some ten or twelve years. Both were theologians who were at first fired by Luther's example, but were later repelled by Luther's dogmatism and his *petit* bourgeois limitations, when they went their own way. Münzer became a revolutionary leader, and Franck a communist, social-ethical and religious mystical writer and historian.

In 1528 Franck resigned his position as a pastor, and supported himself by the labour of his hands, some time as printer, some time as soap boiler, writing books in his leisure. His communist testimony is embodied in his *Paradoxa* (1534), the most important of his works. The *Paradoxa* reveals an extensive acquaintance with the Church Fathers and the writings of German

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

mysticism. First he explains the meaning of the word *Paradoxon*. This word " means a pronouncement which is certain and true, but which the whole world and all who live in a human fashion regard as anything but true." Of such paradoxes there are two hundred and eighty. No. 153 deals with communism under the heading: " The common is pure, thine and mine are impure." Franck challenges the accepted idea that the common is impure, and that to be common signifies to be mean or bad. Our language is so debased that the concept " common," which originally signified the communal life of the people, is interchangeable with " bad," " morally base," and " low." Against this confusion Franck protests in his paradoxes and says :

" We ought indeed to have all things in common, like common sunshine, air, rain, snow, and water, as Clement (Epistle 5) indicates. . . . The common God has from the beginning made all things common, pure, and free, after His fashion. Therefore is it that the things that are common and commonly used alone, in which they resemble God, are pure, and

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

what is personal of personal usage and property sound harshly even to-day in all men's ears, which are naturally attuned to the sentiment that all things should be common and indivisible, which is written by the finger of God in their hearts. . . . The common, what it (the world) esteems as impure, God esteems as alone pure. Were it not for egoism, so testifies *Teutsche Theology* (chap. li.), there would be no property and no hell. Therefore the Holy Spirit had all things common in the first Church, in His pure community (Acts of the Apostles, ii. 4), wherefore it was called *Communio*, that is, something common of God. It is plain that this condition was still in force at the time of (the Church Fathers) Clement and Tertullian. See Tertullian, *Adversus gentes, de disciplina Christianorum*¹ (ii. 9), and *Adversus Marcionem de lapsu primi hominis*. (Against Marcion, *Of the Fall of the First Men*.) See Clement (Epistle 5). However, I opine that there was no strict prohibition, but that the matter was left to individual discretion, as may be inferred from Paul (2 Cor. viii. 9), who

¹ "Against the Heathen : of Christian discipline."

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

never gave a law to anybody. . . . How much nobler a thing is the commoner it is, and how much more common a thing is the nobler it is, see Tauler, *Fourth Sermon after Easter*, p. 259. There wilt thou find that egoism and property is against nature and the purpose of its creation.”¹

Franck did not participate in the great struggles of his time. He was occupied with his work and his books, of which he wrote more than a dozen.

Thomas Münzer was of quite a different temperament. Created for a time of *sturm und drang*, he was a man of action and of revolution. He was ever on the side of the revolting masses against the rulers and possessing classes, and against the easy living reformers.

Small of stature, he had a swarthy countenance and black hair, fiery glance, and rugged, popular eloquence. He was no party man, but anarchistic in his disposition, an independent, reckless character, following his own inspirations, and bold to the point of rashness. He was

¹ Sebastian Franck, *Paradoxa*. Lehmann-Zeigler edition, published by Diederichs, pp. 188-91. Jena.

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

born in Stolberg (Harz), received a good education, studied theology at Leipzig (1506) and Frankfurt, lived some time in Halle, and became acquainted with Martin Luther in Leipzig in 1519, when Karlstadt was publicly disputing with Eck. Carried away by Luther's example, Münzer first worked for the Reformation, and, on Luther's recommendation, received a chaplaincy in Zwickau, where, however, he came into contact with Baptist handworkers—the enthusiasts of Zwickau—and joined them. Contact with the Baptist and communist handworkers and labourers in the year 1520 to 1521 was decisive for Münzer's future. He turned to mysticism, read *Teutsch Theologia*, Tauler's writings, Joachim of Floris' *Commentary on Jeremiah*, progressing far beyond the Reformation, and henceforth stood for the fundamental reform of the whole of society through religious-mystical communism. Luther appealed from the Papacy to the biblical word, Münzer appealed from the Holy Scripture to the mystical-communist inner light, to the Divine Spirit, which fills mankind, and gave and gives everything in common.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

After this turning-point in Münzer's spiritual life a breach with Luther was inevitable. The four or five years of life which still remained to Münzer were full of unrest, strife, and struggle. He lost his pastorage at Zwickau, repaired to Prague, then to Nordhausen, and found for a time a resting place in Allstädt (near Halle), where he prosecuted with vigour his reforms pertaining to divine service and his communistic agitation. His sermons attacking the princes, the rulers, and the wealthy met with great approbation among the peasant and mining population. Thuringia and the district of Mansfeld were henceforth Münzer's proper field of agitation. His influence became so great that the Saxon princes incited by Luther did not venture to adopt coercive measures against the communist rebel leader.

The peasants war which was gathering strength in south Germany threw its waves as far as Thuringia, where the labouring population became impatient and called for deeds. Münzer preached patience, but organized a secret association "against those who persecuted the gospel"—the gospel of communism. Münzer derived

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

his communistic ideas not only from the Bible, the Church Fathers, and the mystics, but also from Plato's *Politeia*. In one of his sermons he says: "It is indeed a splendid faith, which will effect much good. It will indeed create a subtle people, as Plato the philosopher has speculated." In 1524 he announced to his community that a change in the world was at hand, which will bring power to the common people. This belief was widely spread in Germany at that time, and many princes who were religiously inclined shared this belief in secret. It was emphatically a revolutionary period.

After Münzer had prepared the soil in the district of Mansfeld he repaired to Mühlhausen in Thuringia, a small industrially active and prosperous town, where since 1523 the democratic and lower middle-class preacher, Heinrich Pfeiffer, had agitated the lower classes against the councillors—"the respectability" and the higher clergy—so that the patricians had been compelled to democratize the municipal administration. Thus Münzer found here a ripe soil, but a letter from Luther to the Council had the result

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of forbidding Münzer and Pfeiffer to preach. They then withdrew to Bebra, where they were received by the Baptist, Hans Hut. Münzer separated from his colleague, and journeyed to Nuremberg, in order to publish his polemic against Luther. He then sojourned at the German-Swiss frontier, where he mixed with the Baptists, and also had an opportunity to observe the first convulsions of the Peasants' War; in Hegau, in the vicinity of Switzerland, the peasants had already embarked upon a revolutionary movement in the summer of 1524. Upon his return to Mühlhausen, Münzer stayed in south Germany, preaching upon the Old Testament agrarian reform (the Jubilee Year), and all that he saw there confirmed him in his belief that a general rising of the masses in town and country could no longer be prevented. He hastened to return to his old field of agitation, in order to enlist the Thuringians and the Mansfeld people in the revolutionary armies, and to place himself at their head.

7. THE PEASANTS' WAR AND THE
TWELVE ARTICLES

In March 1525 the revolutionary movement was, in fact, general. From Allgau to the Harz, from Wasgau as far as Bohemia hosts of peasants, and town workers, and many lower burghers entered the struggle partly for democracy and agrarian reform, partly for communism.

The real revolutionary troops were the peasants, whose practical programme consisted of twelve articles, the essential portions of which are given hereunder :

The First Article

For the first it is our humble prayer and desire, also the will and opinion of us all that henceforth the power to choose and elect a pastor shall lie with the whole community, that it shall also have the power to displace such an one if he behaveth unseemly. The pastor that is chosen shall preach the gospel plainly and manifestly, without any addition of man or the doctrine or ordinance of men. For that the true faith is preached to us giveth us a cause to pray God for His grace that He implant

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

within us the same living faith and confirm us therein. For if His grace be not implanted within us we remain flesh and blood which profiteth not.

How plainly is it written in the Scripture that we can alone through the true faith come to God and that alone through His mercy shall we be saved. Therefore is such an ensample and pastor of need to us and in such wise founded on Scripture.

The Other Article

Furthermore notwithstanding that the just tithes were imposed in the Old Testament and in the New were fulfilled yet are we nothing loth to furnish the just tithes of corn, but only such as is meet. Accordingly shall we give it to God and His servants. If it be the due of a pastor who clearly proclaimeth the Word of God, then it is our will that our Church overseers such as are appointed by the community shall collect and receive this tithes and therefore shall give to the pastor who shall be chosen from a whole community suitably sufficient subsistence for him and his, as the whole community may deem just; and what remaineth over shall be furnished

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

to the poor and the needy of the same village, according to the circumstance of the case and the judgement of the community. What further remaineth over shall be reserved for the event that the land being pressed it should needs make war, and so that no general tax should be laid upon the poor, it shall be furnished from this surplusage. . . . The small tithe we will not give, be it either to spiritual or to temporal lord ; for the God the Lord hath created the beast for the use of man. For we esteem this tithe for an unseemly tithe of man's devising. Therefore will we no longer give it.

The Third Article

Thirdly the custom hath hitherto been that we have been held for villeins which is to be deplored, since Christ hath purchased and redeemed us all with His precious blood, the poor hind as well as the highest, nobody excepted. Therefore do we find in the Scripture that we are free, and we will be free. Not that we would be wholly free as having no authority over us, for this God doth not teach us. We shall live in obedience and not in the freedom

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of our fleshly pride, shall love God as our Lord, shall esteem our neighbours as brothers, and do to them as we would have them do to us, as God hath commanded at the Last Supper.

The Fourth Article

Fourthly was it hitherto a custom that no poor man hath the right to capture ground game, fowls, or fish in flowing water, which to us seemeth unbecoming and unbrotherly. For when God the Lord created man He gave him power over all creatures over the fowl in the air, and over the fish in the water.

The Fifth Article

Fifthly we are troubled concerning the woods; for our lords have taken unto themselves all the woods, and if the poor man requireth aught, he must buy it with double money. Our opinion is as touching the woods that they fall again to the whole community.

The Sixth Article

Sixthly our grievous complaint is as concerning the services which are heaped

up from day to day, and daily increased. We desire that this should be earnestly considered, and that we should be not so heavily burdened withal; but that we should be mercifully dealt with herein, that we may serve as our fathers have served, and only according to the Word of God.

The Seventh Article

Seventhly will we henceforth no longer be opprest by a lordship, but in such wise as a lordship hath granted the land, so shall it be held according to the agreement between the lord and the peasant. The lord shall no longer compel him and press him nor require of him new services or aught else for naught. But when the lord hath need of the peasant's services, the peasant shall be willing and obedient to him before others, but it shall be at the hour and at the time when it shall not be to the hurt of the peasant, who shall do his lord service for a befitting price.

The Eighth Article

Eighthly there are many among us who are opprest in that they hold lands and in that these lands will not bear the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

price on them, so that the peasants must sacrifice that which belongeth to them to their own undoing. We desire that the lordship will fix a price as may be just in such wise that the peasant may not have his labour in vain for every labourer is worthy of his hire.

The Ninth Article

Ninthly do we suffer greatly concerning misdemeanours in that new punishments are laid upon us. They punish us not according to the circumstance of the matter, but sometimes from great envy, from the unrighteous favouring of others. We should be punished according to ancient written law and according to the thing transgressed and not according to respect of persons.

The Tenth Article

Tenthly we suffer in that some have taken to themselves meadows and arable land which belong to the community. We will take the same once more into the hands of our communities, wheresoever it hath not been honestly purchased. But hath it been purchased in an unjust manner,

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

then shall the case be agreed upon in peace and brotherly love according to the circumstance of the matter.

The Eleventh Article

Eleventhly would we have the custom called the death due utterly abolished, and will never suffer or permit that widows and orphans shall be shamefacedly robbed of their own.

The Twelfth Article

Twelfthly it is our conclusion and final opinion, if one or more of the articles here set up be not according to the Word of God, we will, where the same articles are proved as against the Word of God, withdraw therefrom so soon as this is declared to us by reason and Scripture.

The twelve articles, or the grievances and resolves of the German peasantry, are compiled with great skill; they are wise, tactful, respectful, and embody general principles. It is a peasantry who are conscious of their dignity, their rights, and their duties. They demanded: democratic Church government; abolition of hierarchical despotism and of dues not justified

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

by the Bible ; freedom of person or abolition of serfdom ; restoration of communal rights in woods and waters ; statute labour to be reduced to the measure fixed in olden times ; for all other services they are to be adequately paid. Further, they demanded a graduated land tax ; abolition of all arbitrary punishments and the establishment of impartial tribunals ; finally the restoration of the inviolability of the village community, and the restitution of the meadows and arable land stolen by the nobles.

The course of the German Peasants' War was similar to that of the English Peasants' War. At the beginning of May 1525 the revolution had attained considerable success. However, the peasants were partly betrayed by negotiations, and partly incapable of achieving a decisive victory, owing to their defective organization, or their lack of unity and the absence of a supreme command. One after another the separate hosts of fighting peasants were defeated. The chief enemy of the peasant revolution was Bavaria. In the autumn of 1525 the German peasant movement was suppressed. That Luther incited the princes and the

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

authorities against the revolting peasants in a most passionate and unchristian manner is not to be surprised at. Luther possessed only a part, and not the best part, of the Pauline soul. He lacked the abounding love of mankind, the deep-seated moral culture of the apostle to the heathen, or even of any of the great German mystics.

And then revenge was wreaked upon the vanquished.

“Everywhere,” wrote a patriotic historian, “where the peasants were put down with force, they were henceforth chastised with scorpions instead of with whips; the cruelties incident to the revolt were exceeded tenfold by the cruelties of a reaction dehumanized beyond conception. The number of slain peasants was estimated at 130,000. The leaders, so far as they did not escape, were put to death under torture: ¹ many peasants were expelled from the country. . . . The German nobleman remained master of the field, and the peasantry had to bear their yoke for centuries longer. No wonder that

¹ Among them Thomas Münzer; Florian Geyer was assassinated.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

the people lapsed into pessimism, and the Saxon peasants mocked Luther : ‘ What is the wily parson saying about God ? Who knows what God is, or if there is a God at all ? ’ ” (Egelhaff, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*, pp. 245-48. Berlin, 1903).

8. SUPPRESSION OF THE ANABAPTISTS : FINAL EPISODE OF THE REVOLUTION

A victorious ruling class always does its work thoroughly. It exploits its success to the utmost, and the greater the danger in which it was placed, the more ruthlessly does it embark upon the persecution of the vanquished. After the peasant danger had passed, an exterminatory crusade was commenced against the Baptist movement. Thousands of Baptist communists were burnt, beheaded, or drowned. In the Austrian hereditary lands, in the German provinces, in the Swiss cantons, in the Dutch towns, the Baptists during the years 1527 to 1536 suffered the fate of the mediæval Cathari.

Even the pacific Baptists, the peaceable communistic settlements, were not spared ;

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

imprisonment, banishment, confiscation of property, and violent death were meted out to numerous victims, who went to their death with serene steadfastness. The persecutors encountered no opposition except in Münster (1534-1535), where Dutch and lower German Baptists made a last desperate stand, defending their lives with arms.

As in so many German towns in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the humbler guild handicraftsmen in Münster fought against the patrician town council, the spiritual overlordship, and the industrial competition of the cloisters. The peasant revolt of 1525 found an echo in Münster, and a revolt broke out, which was appeased by concessions from the Council and the local priesthood, but the Archbishop of Cologne intervened, and restored the old state of affairs. This intervention, which nullified the concessions, only strengthened the anti-clerical faction, and in the year 1531 Münster became evangelical. The chaplain, Bernt Rothmann, a theologian of the school of Melanchthon educated on Humanist lines, placed himself at the head of the evangelical movement, and around him all the dis-

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

contented burghers, handicraftsmen, and workers flocked.

To this economic, religious, and municipal agitation was added the Baptist element, which was reinforced by immigrations from the Julichschen and from Holland. The Dutch Baptists, the baker, John Mathys of Haarlem, and the tailor, Johann Bockelson of Leyden (the latter was of German origin), were distinguished by eloquence and a talent for leadership, and soon assumed the direction of affairs. Eminent among the natives was the cloth dealer, Bernhard Knipperdolling, who co-operated with the Dutch Baptists. The Baptists quickly gained the upper hand, whereupon the Bishop of Münster commenced hostilities against them, and the war started in February 1534. At first the Baptists succeeded in scattering a portion of the episcopal forces, and compelling another portion to retreat; but the Bishop did not relax his efforts, and undertook a systematic siege of the town. Meanwhile it was necessary to elect a new town council. The Baptists came out of the elections victoriously, and took over the administration of Münster.

War had now to be waged, and at the

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

same time the Baptist principles had to be put into practice as far as possible. We know only from hostile reports how far these tasks were accomplished. In this respect the Münster Anabaptists share the fate of the Cathari: we can know them only from the pictures which their opponents and accusers have drawn and painted of them; prejudice and misunderstanding were brush and palette.

After their electoral victory had raised the Baptists to power, their leaders, Jan Mathys, John of Leyden, Knipperdolling, and Krechting, assumed the direction of affairs. To protect the town, which was at war with the episcopal army, from traitors, the notorious anti-Baptist elements were expelled from Münster. Two things were thereby accomplished: purification of the town from the internal foe and economy in the means of life. As, in spite of this, opponents of the Baptists still remained in the town and attempted to get into touch with the enemy, they were executed. Under the circumstances, there could not be much talk of proper communism. All the money, gold, and silver of the inhabitants were handed over to the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

municipal coffers, partly voluntarily, and partly through an ordinance; the shopkeepers were induced by promises and by reference to the gospel to surrender their stores, and to have nothing to do with trade and huckstering. Manual labour and agriculture were honoured and promoted. The poor received sustenance from public resources. Common meal times, seasoned with readings out of the Bible, were instituted.

The distinguished Austrian poet, Robert Hamerling, in his epic poem, "Konig von Sion," makes John of Leyden preach :

" I have felt and seen it with my own eyes, in addressing the people, how at times the Spirit suddenly descends on them and carries them away, and all are sometimes seized at the same time : then men celebrate a pentecost : to have one feeling and one thought for ever. . . .

" And when only a single will moves them, the laws of priests and lawyers will not be wanted. Then we shall need no kind of coercion any more, no kind of private property, and also no marriage vows. Then all will be of one mind, one

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

feeling, one life. . . . Well then commune with yourselves, obey the inner monitor, and ask yourselves if in you is the urge and the power of life divine? We must build up in ourselves what we would destroy outside! Let us arouse the God within us before we overturn the altars! Test thyself! for only the pure will receive from freedom salvation . . . in Sion, as the word must be fulfilled, I renew all things.

“How should the Lutheran doctrine content us? It only half rejuvenates the world; it is lukewarm. Timorous in nature, it leaves the people in poverty, and flatters the princes of the earth.”

In the same sense Jan Mathys of Haarlem taught the people :

“For thousands of years,” he exclaims, “pale and hollow-eyed Want, more dreadful than death, has dwelt in the midst of the Nobles, an object of frightful terror: the multitude, only counted by God, of those condemned to the torments of Hunger. . . . ask you how is order to be brought into chaos, and how a hoary wrong is at length to be repaired?”

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

“ Brothers, I have pondered the matter ardently : Self-seeking (egoism) is death, and our salvation is selfless and inspired Love. . . . Come then, brothers and sisters, as far as love is kindled in your hearts, come joyously and let us live together, sharing in Sion the toils, and sharing the wages, and also the enjoyment. Now each bring what he calls his, and henceforth let each take what he needs from the common store.”

In Münster life was supposed to be directed upon the lines of the Old and New Testament. The community was called the New Israel ; the chief—the king ; the council—the elders of the twelve tribes ; Münster—the New Jerusalem. A kingdom of God was to arise on earth. The Baptists, basing themselves on the Old Testament, introduced polygamy : a man might marry several women. Adultery, extra-nuptial intercourse with maidens, drunkenness, and other vices were severely punished. The effect of the introduction of polygamy upon the opponents of the Anabaptists can be imagined. For them it was a proof of the loose morality of the

GERMANY'S SOCIAL UPHEAVAL, 1516-35

communists, and served to excite opinion against the latter.

The hatred of the bishop and of all good Christians was directed against this community. For about fifteen months the Baptists bravely held out against greatly superior forces, repelling various onslaughts. The Netherland comrades collected numerous forces in order to relieve Münster, but the Dutch authorities forcibly repressed all attempts at succour.

Exhausted in men and food supplies, betrayed within and hard pressed without by the episcopal servile army, Münster fell at the end of June 1535. Undaunted, John of Leyden gazed on the catastrophe. Hamerling puts this pregnant utterance into his mouth :

“ After tremendous battles,” he cries, “ the spirits of the vanquished will continue their struggles in the atmosphere—so the story runs—Sion’s struggle will be fought out again in the air—yes, refought in a greater spiritual battle, and who can tell to whom the final victory will fall ?

“ All the clash of lances and the rattle of swords on earth are vain turmoil ; in the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

clouds it is the struggles of minds which finally decide the fate of humanity.”

At the fall of Münster, John of Leyden, Knipperdolling, and Krechting fell into the hands of the victors. After unspeakable tortures, which lasted for more than six months, they were delivered to the hangman on the 22nd January 1536.

“ Blood-red is the ground in Münster’s streets and blood-red flows through Münster the river Aa, swelled with corpses.

“ On the market-place the last warrior of Sion has been cut down. The *Landsknechte* pulls the trembling heretics by the hair out of the houses and stabs them, or laughing thrusts them out of windows upon the spears of his wild comrades. The bishop’s bloody slaughter raged for days. The transgressor shall not even be strangled without trial.

“ No, first he must be tortured : then his flesh torn with glowing tongs, or burnt, where his limbs are not twisted on the wheel. . . .” (Hamerling, *König von Sion*).

And this was not sufficient punishment. By word and picture Christians have subse-

quently endeavoured to brand the memory of the Anabaptists with everlasting shame. The post-revolutionary white terror cleared away the last traces of social heresy and the Revolution.

9. EPILOGUE

The first German revolution was ended. The lords were victorious, and with their victory Germany entered upon a long, long period of economic, political, social, and cultural stagnation and retrogression; the flowers of urban civilization withered; the early capitalism remained an episode; the peasants relapsed into servitude, and in many districts were beaten and robbed of their common lands; the Reformation ossified, and often thrown back, it constituted one of the causes of the Thirty Years War, from which Germany—the Germany of Ottos and the Staufers, the Germany of the Hansa and of Fugger and Welser—emerged exhausted, disgraced, crippled, and dismembered. But order had triumphed; the class struggle was extinguished, all the rebellions defeated, and the power of the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

German people broken. The whole of German poverty from the year 1550 to the present day is the consequence of the triumph of the territorial princes and landlords over the first German revolution. German development was thrown back for centuries.

REFERENCES

Döllinger, *Weissagungsglaube und Prophetentum*, in Raumer's *Hist. Taschenbuch*, 1871; Heinrich Werner, Pamphlet *Onus ecclesiæ*, etc., Giessen, 1901; Kautsky, *Vorläufer*, vol. ii., Stuttgart, 1909; Herbert Schönebaum, *Kommunismus im Reformationszeitalter*, Bonn and Leipzig, 1919.

V

THE AGE OF UTOPIAS

I. NOMINALISM, RENAISSANCE, AND HUMANISM

THE age of the writing of Utopias, of descriptions of Ideal Commonwealths in remote and fictitious countries, extended from the beginning of the sixteenth until towards the end of the eighteenth centuries. Intellectually it is the age of discoveries, of the rise of natural science, of enlightenment, of the ascendancy of reason (Rationalism), and of moral philosophy. Appeal to reason took the place of ecclesiastical authority, and theology and scholasticism were supplanted by philosophy and the natural sciences. Mechanics was first in the order of the natural sciences, and mathematics was its helpmate. To the investigators the universe appeared to be a wonderful mechanism, which moved according to fixed mathematical laws—a universal machine,

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

a perfectly constructed clock. It goes without saying that a mechanism presupposes an engineer, an artificer. This engineer was God, whose works human reason reverently admires and seeks to investigate. Religion lost its denominational character : it was no longer Christian or Jewish or heathen, but *deistic* (from the Latin *deus* = God) ; its chief idea and content was the all-wise universal architect and divine engineer caring for all men. The conception of the world became to an increasing degree mechanical and mathematical. It corresponded in a remarkable manner with the needs of the manufacturing period that was then arising.

This movement was inaugurated at the outgoing of the Middle Ages by the victory of Nominalism over Realism. We shall soon see what this signified. The contest between the two tendencies in scholasticism proceeds on parallel lines with the struggle between the urban and the feudal mode of production, or the modern and the mediæval order. In the last resort this dispute was concerned with the position of reason. The Realists, who ascribed to ideas a supernatural origin and contended that they existed prior to the things which they

THE AGE OF UTOPIAS

characterize, favoured the subordination of reason to religion; the task of reason should not be free investigation but the establishment of religious truths; God and the world, faith and thought, should be synonymous terms. Against this it was contended by the Nominalists—whose most eminent leader was the Ockham who is already known to us—that reason has nothing to do with divine things; God, the soul, and immortality, or all metaphysical truths, are objects of faith; they belong to the realm of the irrational—that is, they cannot be apprehended by reason, which can neither establish nor contradict them; there can therefore be no purpose in saddling reason with problems which it cannot solve. Reason is an instrument for everyday secular use, for the sensuous world. Let it operate here freely, and serve the purposes of our earthly life, without being hampered by ecclesiastical authority.

The Realists have only one kind of truth: what is true in religion must also be true in secular affairs. Nominalists acknowledge two kinds of truths: that of faith and that of scientific investigation. Superficially, the Realists stood on a higher

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

plane, as they knew only a single order of truths, but these single truths were subordinated to religion. Scientific truths in flagrant conflict with religious doctrine were dealt with by the Inquisition, or had to be concealed until their authors died. This was the fate of Abailard, Copernicus, Galilio, Giordano Bruno. The Nominalists, who recognized two kinds of truths, remained faithful Christians, and continued to accept the divinely revealed truths without reasoning about them, but on the other hand they gave free scope to reason in all secular things. The discovery of Copernicus that the earth moved would not in the least have destroyed the faith of a Nominalist in the Holy Scriptures, as there were two orders of truths. The consequences of this scholastic tendency were very considerable. Reason, emancipated from Church control, could co-operate freely in the rise of natural science and the new economic order. Gradually, however, reason spread over all the territory allotted it by Nominalism, and moreover became an independent sovereign, summoning even faith to its bar. Rationalism gained ground. The miracles which reason performed in the realm of

THE AGE OF UTOPIAS

nature invested it with a high repute, and mankind turned to it more and more for support. Eventually, creative power was ascribed to it. Right reason, embodied in great educators, legislators, and philosopher kings, could create perfect communities of virtuous and happy peoples. It is not surprising that reason was worshipped during the French Revolution. However, let us not anticipate.

The victory of Nominalism was accompanied by the Renaissance or the rebirth of antique art and literature. This, however, was much more than the revival of antique art. The Renaissance is the revival of the European, or Western type of man: the discarding of the mediæval, Oriental, and mystical strain with its contempt for reason and the worldly beauties of life. Europe proceeded to take up the threads of development at the point where they were dropped by the antique world, and to regard the Middle Ages as a period of darkness. The European again became earthly, and resolutely bent upon worldly happiness. He fretted under the yoke of the mediæval conscience, and sooner or later threw it off. This was especially the case with the leading politicians and

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

artists of Italy, whereas in the northern countries, where the connection with the Roman Empire, the heir of antiquity, was anything but close, the Reformation checked or hindered the influence of the Renaissance. In Italy, where urban life and urban economy were older and more intensive, and the connection with antiquity was intimate, the moral crisis to which we referred when dealing with the Reformation was hardly felt. The Popes were secular rulers rather than spiritual shepherds. Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503), with his children Lucretia and Cæsar Borgia, were absolutely worldly. Cæsar Borgia, who ruled in the Romagna, was the prototype of Macchiavelli's *Prince* (1515)—in other words, a statesman free from any kind of ethical considerations. The puritanical and eloquent Dominican Savonarola, who conducted a campaign against these conditions, was executed in 1498. Alexander VI's successors: Popes Julius II (1503-1513), Leo X (1513-1521), Clement VII (1523-1534), were patrons of the Renaissance and Humanist learning; they employed the most famous artists of their country and their time: Leonardo da

THE AGE OF UTOPIAS

Vinci (d. 1519), Raphael (d. 1520), Correggio (d. 1534), Michelangelo (d. 1564). Art and science are greatly indebted to the Renaissance, which subdued Rome and rendered her accessible to the free spirit of antiquity, thus hastening the end of the Middle Ages.

The Humanists had closer affinities with the Nominalists than with the Renaissance leaders. Acquaintance with the Greek language and literature, especially with the divine Plato and the stoical philosophy, gave them, it is true, a freer outlook upon religion and ethics, but consciously or unconsciously they remained adherents to the twofold order of truths. They loved Plato, but Jesus still more; they revered philosophy and the fundamental Christian doctrines; they respected the authority of the Pope and that of reason. The Humanists were transitional figures; they looked back to the past as well as towards the future. Thomas More was one of the greatest of these remarkable personalities. He wrote a communistic Utopia, based upon reason and moral philosophy, and died on the scaffold as a Catholic faithful to the Pope. The second great Utopian, the Dominican monk, Thomas Campanella, also revered

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

reason and natural science at the same time as the papal authority and the sacraments.

2. MORAL PHILOSOPHY, MATERIALISM, AND NATURAL LAW

It may be regarded as a law of the intellectual development of the individual as well as of whole peoples, that, after losing dogmatic religion or even only being shaken in their belief in the religion in which they have been brought up, they resort to moral philosophy, to a rationalistic (based on reason) ethic as a substitute or support. Thus it was in Hellas : when Greek mythology lost its hold, the whole of philosophy became ethical and rational ; this was the special achievement of Socrates (b. 469, d. 399 B.C.). The popularity of the stoical philosophy among the Romans, commencing from the last century before Christ, was due to the same circumstance. A similar thing happened when mediæval theology was undermined : moral philosophy based on reason gained in repute, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries became the chief object of philosophical speculation. Even Christianity was justi-

THE AGE OF UTOPIAS

fied because its morality accorded with that of reason. Men believed that the truths of moral philosophy were so secure that they required no religious, that is, irrational supports, that moral capacity could be taught and acquired like arithmetic and writing, that men could be educated into morally behaving beings as into good arithmeticians, writers, doctors, engineers, etc. Once the omnipotence of reason is accepted, once it is admitted that thought and logic control our volition, this conclusion is thoroughly tenable. In the eighteenth century it passed as an axiom, as an unshakable truth, that everything might come by education. And education proceeded not only in the school, but also in life, in society, and in the State, by means of institutions, laws, and customs such as communism can create.

Thus as philosophy, under the influence of the triumphant progress of natural science, became sensualist and materialistic—that is, as it taught that our reason can have no innate ideas, but is an empty receptive plate, only receiving impressions through our senses and shaping them into thoughts, that our thoughts are only the intellectual reflection of the events of the external

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

world—the conclusion was inevitable that the external world, society, the state, the whole order of mankind, must be established upon right and reasonable lines if right thinking and right behaviour were desired. If you want good citizens—that is, those who place the common interest before their own interest—society must be based upon communism, upon common interest. If this be done, the intellectual reflection will be communistic: our thoughts and actions will be involuntarily communistic, as cause and effect.

We must not omit the fact that natural law was reinforced by the experience gained in the new countries discovered in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There the explorers and missionaries found tribal organizations and primitive communities which existed without private property and without a political government. Thus the nearer men were to the life of nature, the less they knew of private property and political coercion. Since then Utopias have been placed in strange, unknown countries, and invested with all virtues. We have already met with a similar phenomenon (see *Social*

THE AGE OF UTOPIAS

Struggles in Antiquity) as a consequence of the passage of Alexander of Macedonia through Asia. Most of the jurists and philosophers of the modern epoch were firmly convinced that originally—in a state of nature—communism in some form or another prevailed, and is therefore natural. We will only mention the most eminent international jurist of the modern period, Hugo Grotius (b. in Delft 1583, d. in Rostock 1645). In his work *Of the Law of War and of Peace*, he states: “Immediately after the creation of the world, God gave the human race the right to all things of a lower kind, and this happened once more when the world was restored after the Flood. Consequently, in the beginning each could take what he wanted, and could consume what he would. Such a condition could only last so long as men remained in great simplicity or lived in very strong mutual love. Examples of the first kind are to be found among some of the peoples of America, who have lived in this fashion for many centuries, without social evils. Examples of the other kind are the Essenes and, later, the first Christians in Jerusalem.”

Therefore, if communism was in accord-

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

ance with the state of nature, it was natural—in harmony with human nature—and reasonable. Thus it behoved men to place society upon a natural and reasonable basis. The evils of a society which rests on private property are inevitable: they are the effects of an economic order which is unnatural and based on error.

A comparison of this communism with that of the Middle Ages shows that the spiritual aspect has fallen into the background. In the Middle Ages the antagonism and the struggle were fought out in the religious-moral arena: between good and evil. The communists in the modern epoch perceived the antagonism to an increasing degree in the intellectual sphere: the struggle raged between truth and error, between knowledge and ignorance; it goes without saying that the moral antagonism was not neglected, but it is a consequence of the intellectual antagonism: from truth flows goodness, and from error flows evil.

In the following appraisal of the various Utopian writings we shall have the opportunity of examining their particular features more closely.

VI

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

I. SIR THOMAS MORE ¹

SIR THOMAS MORE (after the Humanist fashion transformed into Morus) was born in London in 1478. His father was a judge, who gave his son a learned education. Thomas attended the Latin school and then the University at Oxford, the centre of England's theological and Humanist learning. Yielding to his father's pressure, he studied jurisprudence in London and became a lawyer, but he also followed his inclination to philosophy, theology, and social investigation, studied Plato and Augustine, and soon gained the reputation of being one of the greatest Humanist scholars of his time. Like his great predecessors, Duns Scotus and Ockham, he had the idea of entering the

¹ REFERENCES.—Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Epistolæ*, 1642 ; Thomas Stapleton, *Tres Thomæ*, Cologne, 1612, p. 164 ; Thomas More, *Utopia*, published by Lupton, London, 1895 ; Karl Kautsky, *Thomas Morus*, Stuttgart.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Franciscan Order, and only the conviction, gained after severe self-examination, that he would not be able to keep the chastity vows, determined him to remain a layman.

He married, became a father, carried on his legal practice, and soon succeeded in attaining to a respected position in London. He became a Member of Parliament, and then a confidential agent of the London merchants, among other things composing their disputes with the German Hansa in London. In 1515 King Henry VIII sent him to Antwerp, in order to settle commercial questions between England and Flanders; More found time there to write a portion of his *Utopia*. In 1518 he entered the service of the State, becoming Lord Chancellor in 1529, when he had an opportunity of getting acquainted with the evils of English society; he deeply deplored the destruction of the village communes, the transformation of arable land into pasture, the expulsion of the peasants from their soil, in order to permit the landlords and the abbots to rear sheep and enrich themselves from the wool trade with Flanders.

It goes without saying that More was a

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

convinced disciple of natural law. The discovery of America and its social organizations seemed to constitute a proof of the rightness of natural law. He read with engrossing interest Amerigo Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* (New World) — a small pamphlet of eight pages, in which the famous explorer described his second voyage, upon which he had embarked from Lisbon on the 4th May 1501. The voyage passed the Canary Islands on the way to Cape Verde, "where men live in a natural fashion ; they might be called Epicureans rather than Stoics. They have no private property, everything being common. They exist without a king, without authorities, each being his own master." More had no doubt whatever about the moral perfection of men who lived in a state of nature ; a state of nature and a state of innocence were for him synonymous. In a letter to his friend, who was one of the most eminent English Humanists and teachers, John Colet, he eulogized the virtues of country life : "In the country—in contrast to the town—the aspect of the earth is joyous, and the sight of heaven is enchanting ; one perceives there only the blessed gifts

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

of nature and the holy traces of innocence." In his *Utopia* More refers several times to the "laws of nature" and "living according to nature."

Such a statesman was bound sooner or later to come into sharp conflict with the despotic King Henry VIII (1509-1547). This conflict had a bloody result when More—from his Catholic standpoint—was unable to approve the King's divorce. He was accused of high treason and executed in 1535.

2. UTOPIA ¹

More's *Utopia*, which appeared in 1516, is an application of the ethics and politics of the Church Fathers, and the philosophy of Humanism, to the great secular problem: the organization of human society in general, and of English society of the age of transition from feudal to bourgeois economy in particular. It is divided into two parts: the first is social-critical and examines

¹ The word *Utopia* is supposed to signify "Nowhere"; it is of Greek origin, but properly speaking ought to read *Atopia*, for only so can it be translated by "Nowhere." It is, however, possible that More intended to call his communistic country Eutopia (blessed country), pronounced Utopia.

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

the wounds of a society based on private property and of the body politic of England in the fifteenth century ; the other part is constructive and exhibits the structure and the conditions of the model communist society. *Utopia* is chiefly written in the form of a narrative. The principal figure is Raphael Hythloday, a world traveller and Humanist philosopher, enlightened, thoroughly familiar with the best products of Greek thought, an uncompromising and revolutionary communist : he is the discoverer of Utopia and the portrayer of its perfections. The second figure is More himself ; he agrees in every respect with the social criticism which Raphael enunciates, but not altogether with the practical possibilities of communism or with the rejection of compromises. The third figure is Peter Giles, a cultivated but conservative merchant, a good Christian and citizen as things go, who understands commerce very well, and is contented with the laws and conditions of his own country ; he defends the existing order ; his part, however, is very subordinate, as the existing order is theoretically untenable and cannot be defended ; Giles serves only as a foil

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

to Hythloday. Consequently, *Utopia* exhibits two tendencies of social thought: that of revolutionary communism and that of social reform. Hythloday is convinced that "where possessions are private, where money is the measure of all things, it is hard and almost impossible that the commonwealth should have just government and enjoy prosperity." More, on the other hand, comes to the conclusion that, although he cannot agree with everything that Raphael has said: "I must needs express and grant that there are many things in the Utopian commonwealth which in our country I rather wish than hope for."

3. SOCIAL CRITICISM

There is no trace of equity or justice in any country which gives great rewards and fees to gentlemen, goldsmiths (bankers), usurers, and such like who do nothing or are merely the flatterers or devisers of vain pleasures of the rich, and on the other hand makes no provision for the poor ploughmen, carters, ironsmiths, carpenters, and other workers, without whom no commonwealth could exist. The lot of the working

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

people is even harder than that of the beasts of burden ; poverty is the recompense of their toil when they are strong enough to be in employment, and destitution and misery when old age or illness renders them incapable of work. And the laws are against them. Keeping all this in mind it is impossible not to perceive that what we call a commonwealth to-day is but a conspiracy of the rich to procure their own well-being. Money and pride are the roots of all evil. All crime would die if money perished ; indeed poverty itself, which only seems to arise from lack of money, would disappear if money disappeared. The rich undoubtedly perceive all this and would be prepared to change the constitution of society, but Pride, the queen of all mischief, hinders them ; she measures her own felicity by other people's misery. Another source of mischief, peculiar to England, is the enclosure and the conversion of arable land into pasture. The sheep, once so meek and tame, have become wild and devouring ; they consume and destroy the peasant and his land. Where the finest wool is grown, there gentlemen and abbots leave

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

no soil for tillage ; they are no more satisfied with the revenue, leisure, and pleasure that husbandry used to afford, but desire untold wealth ; insatiable coveteousness causes them to depopulate the country and fill it with sheep ; and they do so by fraud and violence, legal or illegal. The decrease of tillage has for its effect a dearth of victuals ; and the rise in the price of wool makes it impossible for the poor clothmaker to continue his employment. The wealth of the country is being engrossed by a small number of persons.

The coveteousness of a few has greatly injured the well-being of this island. The great dearth of victuals causes men to restrict their household, to curtail hospitality, and dismiss servants. The nobles disband their retainers. The rising tide of poverty and unemployment leads to robbery, vagabondage, and all manner of crime. The unemployed must either beg or steal, and despite all severity of punishment crime does not diminish. The nation brings up thieves and vagabonds, and then punishes them. Is this justice ? Horrible punishments are meted out to thieves, while

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

provision ought to have been made to enable them to get their living, so that no man should be driven to the extreme necessity first to steal and then to be hanged for it.

4. REFORM OR REVOLUTION

But is there any use in proposing reform to kings? Or, in other words, may a communist enter a non-communist government? Raphael answers, No, reform proposals to non-communist rulers and governments have no effect. But More considers that the possibility of promoting the welfare of the realm by advising kings should not be excluded, "for you must not leave a ship in a tempest because you cannot rule the storm; nor must you tender advice derived from new ideals which no king, except a king-philosopher—who, however, needs no advice—would accept, but you must handle the matter subtly and diplomatically, so that if you are not able to achieve the best, you may at least prevent the worst; for it is not possible for all things to be well, unless all men are good, which cannot be expected for a good many

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

years yet." To which Raphael retorts : " Princes and governments do mainly care for warlike matters—for conquests, territorial expansion, great armies, and full treasuries. And their counsellors aid them in those schemes, therefore they are tolerated ; they flatter the royal self-conceit, praise the princely wisdom, and oppress and tax the people for the sake of the aggrandisement of the princes. What could a social philosopher achieve in the teeth of such royal councils ? He would simply be made a laughing-stock of, or worse, he would become either as bad as the government, or the people would think him so, and thus learn to despise communist philosophy. Would a king listen to the advice of a counsellor who told him that the people gave him the crown, not for his own sake, but for the welfare of all ? Or would he perceive the truth that his kingdom, small though it be, is already too big to be ruled by one man ? No, it is no good to be subtle in such matters." All attempts at palliating evil by craftiness and reform measures lead to naught. The only remedy is a radical change of the whole social system. Plato

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

acted rightly in refusing to make laws for a country where private property reigns supreme. Such countries may multiply laws until no lawyer could count them, and yet they will never enjoy prosperity, peace, and happiness. For, as long as private property exists, the greatest and best part of the nation will be condemned to overwork, poverty, and misery. Palliative laws may cure one part of the disease, but will at the same time aggravate the sore of another part, so that the help afforded to one will cause harm to another.

To this revolutionary conception of communism More objects that to withdraw the incentive of personal gain, and thus the motive of personal efforts, as must happen under a system of common property, will lead to the neglect of work and to general impoverishment, and when the pressure of poverty is felt, and there is no law to defend the means of production and life, will there not of necessity be continual strife, enmity, and bloodshed?

To this question, which has been addressed to communists ever since communist systems have been propounded, Raphael gives no direct answer, but refers

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

to the example of the Utopians, who are made virtuous, dutiful, and active by trained reason, a wise religion, and good laws. Raphael therefore points out that More's objection is taken from social conditions based on private property which never admits good laws, and is in conflict with wise religion and right reason, while the minds and characters of the Utopians have been trained by a communist system of life.

5. THE STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS OF UTOPIA.

Utopus, a king in the sense of Plato and the Humanists, conquered a rugged and rainless peninsula called Abraxa, and changed it into a prosperous island which henceforth bears his name and merits to be called Eutopia, the abode of felicity. The inhabitants, originally poor, rude, and rent by religious dissensions, are brought to a state of perfection in humanity, manners, virtue, learning, and material prosperity that surpasses anything that would be found among the other nations of the earth. The means that Utopus

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

applied were communism and education, the latter in the broadest sense of the word ; it includes not only schooling proper, but the training and experiences which the surroundings, occupations, customs, and laws afford. The island of Utopia consists of fifty-four shires, with a spacious and magnificent city in each as the centre of administration, public education, scholarship, handicrafts, markets, store-houses, and foreign commerce ; the hospitals are on the outskirts of the cities. The inhabitants have all the same language, manners, and laws, and this similarity promotes peace and harmony. None of the shires contains less than twenty miles of land, and none has any desire to extend its boundaries, for the people regard themselves as mere tillers of the soil rather than its proprietors. In the centre of the republic is the capital city, Amaurote, the seat of the National Assembly.

The Republic is a democratic federation of autonomous shires. The laws are few, yet sufficient ; the inhabitants know them well, and do not suffer subtle and crafty interpretations. The Central Government is a Senate or Council consisting of 162

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

members, three members for each shire, who meet annually at Amaurote to discuss the common affairs of the nation. The Senate has sometimes to settle unsolved questions of the local bodies; they also keep account of the demand and supply of the commodities, so that nothing shall lack in the commonweal. The real management of the country is, however, in the hands of the governments of the shires. Each shire consists of 6000 families or farms; each family of not less than forty members and two bondmen is under the rule of a *pater-* and *mater-familias*. Every thirty families elect annually their Phylarch or Syphogrant or head bailliff; every ten Phylarchies or 300 families elect their Chief Phylarchs or Tranibors. The Phylarchs of the shires, 200 in number, elect by ballot the Prince or Chief Magistrate of the shire. The latter is elected for life, removable only on suspicion of striving after tyranny. The Chief Phylarchs and the Chief Magistrate form the Council of the Shire; they meet, as a rule, every third day and invite two of the Phylarchs to their meetings. Public affairs cannot, under penalty of

transmitted. note
making

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

death, be discussed outside the Council or the election house of the Phylarch.

Agriculture is the basis of the commonweal. There is no person, male or female, who has no expert knowledge of it. Agricultural instruction, theoretical and practical, is compulsory. Every year a certain number of townspeople change places with farmers, so that city and village should keep in touch with each other. Besides husbandry every inhabitant learns one of the handicrafts necessary for the work of the commonweal—clothmaking, building, smithing, and carpentering; as a rule everybody is brought up in his father's trade. There is no other trade besides those mentioned—the life in Utopia being simple and knowing no luxury.

The chief function of the Phylarch is to see that the citizens shall perform their duty of labour. Idlers are expelled from the republic. The hours of labour are six per diem. Where all labour there is no overwork for any one. Only illness, old age, and devotion to study and science give exemption from labour. Any craftsman or farmer who, by devotion to learning in his leisure hours, shows that he could

99

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

be more useful to the community by study is promoted to the order of the scholars.

All toilsome and unclean work of the commonweal is done by the bondmen, who are either prisoners duly convicted of heinous offences which in other countries are punished with death, or poor labourers from foreign lands. The first are treated with severity, while the latter are gently treated, and are allowed to leave whenever they like, and are not sent away empty-handed.

Monogamy is strictly enforced, and adultery is punished with most grievous bondage. Also ante-nuptial chastity is strongly insisted upon. Matrimony is in their eyes so solemn and holy an institution that the man and woman who are about to enter it should know all about each other. They have therefore a custom that a virtuous matron shows the woman naked to the wooer, and a wise man exhibits the wooer naked to the woman. The Utopians are given the opportunity of having their meals in common. For this purpose there are in the residences of the Phylarchs large halls where wholesome food is prepared. Every meal begins with reading something

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

that refers to good manners and virtue. During the meals the elders hold conversation on serious, but not unpleasant, subjects, and the younger members are encouraged to express their opinions. The dinners are short, the suppers somewhat longer, and these are followed by music, and other harmless entertainments. At eight o'clock they all go to bed to rise at four. The morning and, generally, the leisure hours are devoted to public lectures, study, and play.

The Utopians regard war as gross and cruel injustice. Yet they undergo the discipline of war in order to be able to defend themselves or to help their friends to repel invasion or to deliver any people from tyranny. They likewise declare war upon any nation who, possessing vacant land in abundance, prohibit the immigration of the surplus population of Utopia who desire to cultivate it and to form a colony there; such a prohibition they regard as a violation of the law of nature.

The constitution of the commonwealth aims chiefly at saving time from the necessary labours, and giving it to the free cultivation of the mind. Herein they sup-

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

pose the happiness of this life to consist. Education of the children is general and compulsory. They study music, logic, arithmetic and geometry, astronomy and physical geography. Children who show special aptitude for learning are exempted from bodily labour, and are allowed to devote themselves to study ; they form the Order of the Learned.

Good and evil, virtue and happiness, soul and body, immortality and God's kindness to man are much discussed by the Utopians. Their principles are : the soul is immortal and created for happiness by God's kindness ; virtue is rewarded and vice punished after this life. These purely religious truths, which are beyond reasoning, they think meet to prove by arguments from reason. The chief discussion, however, turns upon happiness. They think that it consists of pleasure as differentiated from lust, for it is only good and honest pleasure which they believe to produce happiness. They are opposed to the Stoics, who attribute happiness to a virtue that implies self-torture and abnegation. Life according to nature and reason they interpret as meaning a life that produces

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

joy by good actions to others and to oneself. They distinguish between true and false pleasures. True pleasures are those which give intelligence to the mind, satisfaction to moral conscience, or which arise from the contemplation of truth and art, listening to good music, recollection of good deeds in the past, and hope of future happiness. False pleasures arise from vain-glory, titles, fineries, so-called precious metals and stones, gambling, hunting, and all cruel pastimes that cause pain to beast or man.

The Utopians enjoy complete freedom of religious worship. By this means Utopus healed the wounds caused to the nation by religious dissensions. It enabled them to discuss their religious differences, carefully to weigh each other's arguments, and to arrive at a certain unity as to the essence of religion. The great majority worship under various forms one sovereign spiritual power, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, the initial and final cause of all things. Atheists, however, are not regarded as good citizens.

Summing up Hythloday said: Utopia is the only commonwealth which deserves

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

that name. It is in reality a commonweal and public wealth. In all other places they speak of commonwealth while everybody is trying to secure his own private wealth at the expense of his neighbour. In Utopia, where nothing is private, everybody cares for the common affairs. In other countries where nobody is secure against poverty and hunger, though the national wealth may be very considerable, everybody is compelled to make provision for himself and disregard the common interests of all. Conversely, where all things are common, nobody has reason to fear lest he should starve, so long as the public storehouses are well supplied with commodities. Therefore it is the interest of everybody to care for the community. In such a republic everybody is rich, though nobody possesses anything. This form of a republic will endure for ever, for, by destroying pride and money, the Utopians have uprooted the main causes of ambition, sedition, and all those vices which in other countries lead to internecine struggles, civil wars, and finally to the destruction or decay of nation and Empire.

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

6. FRANCIS BACON'S NEW ATLANTIS

More's violent death (1535) may be regarded symbolically as the end of mediæval social thought in England and the beginning of the Reformation period. The contest between the old and the new Church lasted until the end of the sixteenth century, that is, until far into the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). During this period England laid the foundations of her colonial empire ; in 1584 Walter Raleigh founded the colony of Virginia ; in 1558 an English fleet, chiefly composed of merchant vessels, destroyed the Spanish Armada ; in 1600 the East India Company was formed. The spirit of the new time : natural science and moral philosophy, experimental and inductive logic (thought arising from experience) found many adherents. The herald of the modern epoch, Francis Bacon (Viscount Verulam, b. 1560, d. 1626), basing himself on the doctrines of the Italian investigators, Telesius and Galilio, established the experimental (based on experience) method in his *Novum Organum*, and in his *New Atlantis* created a Utopia of natural science. There is no doubt that

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

the latter writing came into existence under the influence of More's *Utopia*, but the two have scarcely anything in common. Bacon believed that the happiness of mankind could be secured by the application of natural science to production, and not by an alteration in the property relations.

The New Atlantis is an island in the South Sea. It is governed by a wise law-giver, who has established, by means of applied natural science, a flourishing and happy community. The centre of the New Atlantis society is "Solomon's House," or "The Six Days' University"; to-day we should call this a Polytechnic. This place of learning, situated in the capital of Bensalem, has for object the investigation of the causes and secret movements of things, and the enlarging as far as possible of the bounds of human knowledge and capacity. It contains preparations and instruments for physical and technological experiments; deep caves for the investigation of the recesses of the earth; high towers for the study of air and its phenomena; laboratories for the production of organic and inorganic matter, as well as for the study of medicine;

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

agronomical stations ; shops for mechanical arts and manufacturing processes ; furnaces for the production of high temperatures ; halls for experiments in light and sound. Likewise there are engine-houses, where the most various engines and instruments are manufactured. The investigators who are engaged there can imitate the flight of birds ; they have ships and boats for going under the water. This college also has its theorists who test, co-ordinate, and elevate into axioms the discovered facts. The inhabitants of this happy, scientific community revere the inventor and the discoverer. To the author of every great invention or discovery a memorial is erected, and a considerable reward granted. The religious service there consists in praising God for His marvellous works, and of imploring His aid and His blessing so that their scientific labours may flourish, and mankind be enabled to use the new achievements for good ends. From the laboratories, the inventions and discoveries, come the forces which raise production, augment wealth, and enable all the inhabitants to live a dignified existence.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

7. WINSTANLEY'S *LAWS OF FREEDOM*

As we have seen, the Elizabethan Age signified a material and intellectual strengthening of the mercantile and industrial sections, as well as of the nobility associated with them. Queen Elizabeth was wise enough to procure the support of these sections by compromises, and to avoid conflicts. The case was otherwise with her successor, James I (1603-1625), and the unfortunate Charles I (1625-1649). The latter king especially failed to understand the signs of the times, attempted to restore absolutism, regarded economic activities only as a source of taxation, and came into sharp antagonism with the new tendencies which flowed from the development of urban civilization, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and science. In 1642 the civil war broke out, whose leader, Oliver Cromwell, became a man of tremendous revolutionary energy, but of a middle-class cast of mind. In 1649 he caused King Charles I to be executed.

The revolutionary events favoured the revival of ideas associated with communism and natural law. Their adherents called

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

themselves the "true levellers," or the "Diggers," as they were not content with political freedom, or with the republic, but demanded the socialization of the land, and sought to provide every man with the liberty and equality necessary to cultivate a piece of land. The Diggers themselves set the example, and proceeded with axes and spades to cultivate fallow land. Their most important writer was Gerrard Winstanley (b. 1609).

It is clear from his writings that he was acquainted with the whole historical and social outlook of patristic-canonical natural law. Upon this theoretical foundation he formulated his criticism of the social conditions of his time: When God or reason created the world, communistic natural law prevailed; then man fell from his estate through egoism, through "Mine" and "Thine" (private property), through buying and selling, which ushered in the sad history of mankind. Only by transferring the land to common ownership could self-seeking be restrained and extirpated. In his work, *Law of Freedom*, published in 1652, he sketched a new social order which, based on communism and democracy,

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

should assure freedom and bread to everybody. The ideal commonwealth was to be governed in the following manner: At the head of it would be a Parliament chosen by the whole people; its task to consist in enacting laws in the spirit of natural law and reason and supervising their execution. Common ownership of the soil would be secured by law; general obligation to labour would be proclaimed, and trade strictly forbidden. All the old tyrannical and ecclesiastical laws and customs would be abolished. The fruits of the earth are to be reaped and carried into barns and storehouses. The commodities manufactured in the industrial workshops, and all articles of use, domestic animals, and other property shall likewise be administered on communist lines. Every family shall produce according to their capacities, and take what they need from the stores. The execution of these laws is placed in the hands of officials to be elected by the people. Men shall be chosen who are of a calm and peaceable disposition; further, those who have suffered much from former tyrannical governments and therefore abhor all oppression; likewise, those who under

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

the former tyrannical government have distinguished themselves by courage, candour, and readiness for sacrifice, and for this cause have been condemned to imprisonment and fines ; finally their ages shall be over forty years, for such men must also possess the necessary experience and knowledge of human nature. Each parish shall choose a number of peacemakers to settle disputes. It shall also choose overseers who will supervise the general obligation to labour and the delivery of the goods produced. The overseers shall be over sixty years old. Moreover, each parish shall also choose a taskmaster, who will set to work those comrades who have been condemned for laziness. Education must be general and compulsory. The children shall be educated to become producers rather than bookworms. Knowledge and experiment shall take the place of believing and imagining. Monogamic and moral family life and sexual purity must be strictly observed.

8. CHAMBERLEN AND BELLERS AS SOCIAL REFORMERS

The revolutionary and post-revolutionary period also produced a number of social

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

reformers, among whom Peter Chamberlen and John Bellers are distinguished by friendliness to labour.

In his *Poor Man's Advocate*, which appeared in 1649, Chamberlen advocated the doctrine that labour is the source of all wealth. The poorer classes or the workers everywhere constitute the strength of the country, for the latter perform all the necessary work of society, and as soldiers fight the battles of the various states. Consequently they have the same rights as the rich; moreover, they provide the rich with all that the latter enjoy. The rich must therefore be regarded as the stewards, and not as the owners of their possessions. The object of the creation of wealth is not the enjoyment of the rich, but the removal of all poverty. Chamberlen demanded the nationalization of the royal and ecclesiastical domains for the benefit of the poorer sections of the population.

John Bellers (b. 1655, d. 1725), a Quaker, in his pamphlet, *A College of Industry*, published in 1696, reminded the rich that their existence was dependent upon the labours of the poor. "The labour of the

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

propertyless is the money of the rich." He proposed to them that they should establish co-operative colonies for every three hundred propertyless persons ; these persons to be so selected that they could perform the whole range of agricultural labours. Each colony would require an outlay of £18,000, which should be raised by means of shares. " The poor thus in college will be a community like the example of primitive Christianity." The measure of value would not be money, but a definite quantity of labour.

Robert Owen and Karl Marx held a very high opinion of Bellers's knowledge.

9. MIDDLE - CLASS SOCIAL THEORIES : SOCIAL CONTRACT. HOBBS, LOCKE, SMITH, AND PALEY

Natural law which, as we have shown in *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages*, dominated the social thought of the Middle Ages, also formed the centre of the social theories of the modern epoch. The best minds pondered over the question : How did the transition from primitive communism to private property take place? That this

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

transition should have been effected simply by usurpation, by force and cunning, would be a moral condemnation of bourgeois society. Hence it became necessary to legitimize private property just as Wycliffe and Ockham had justified monarchy. And the lines upon which such justification proceeded were of a similar nature. Under the influence of the growing urban economy, where social relations arose through negotiations and contracts, the idea gained ground that in the degree that primitive conditions became more complicated and difficult (owing to increase of population, demand for commodities, and exchange with neighbouring peoples), men, who were still free and equal, agreed either openly or tacitly to share the earth, in order to assure freedom and existence to each contracting party, and also to set up a government which should maintain the order that was once agreed upon.

Private property and the State arose, therefore, not through force but by agreement (social compact). The consequence was a new law, which is as valid as the old natural law.

The English conservative political philo-

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

sopher, Thomas Hobbes, who wrote during the English Revolution (1651), held that originally everything was held in common, but this condition was a war of all against all, and therefore men agreed to introduce private property, found a State, and make its head sovereign. Since then the people have had no voice in the matter, having renounced their right to self-determination.

Locke, who was a supporter of the middle-class revolution, and recorded the victory of the upper middle class in 1689, while rejecting Hobbes's ideas concerning a sovereign king, held that private property arose even before the social compact, and therefore existed in a state of nature; thus it was doubly justified. He supported this contention by the following argument (*On Civil Government*, Part XI. London, 1691). What nature yields in treasures and fruits belongs indeed to all men in common, but it is only personal labour that gives value to natural products. As, however, a man only belongs to himself, and as it is his labour that gives value to natural things, the values thus created belong to the labouring man as his private property. "When man removed a thing

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

from the state of nature and made it useful, he mixed with it his labour, and joined to it something that was unquestionably his own, and thereby made it his property. This work draws the boundary line between the worked-up things and the community. This work adds to them something which they did not possess from nature—the common mother. Labour is therefore the title to property.” And as this creative activity was going on in the state of nature, private property prevailed at that time, and is consequently justified by natural law. Only, however, so far as it relates to what was produced by a man’s own efforts. Locke did not infer communist doctrines from this principle, but used it in support of middle-class property against feudal property. He contended that middle-class property was the product of labour, while aristocratic land ownership only derived from force. At a later date, however, Locke’s principle of labour as the creator of property was used as a socialist argument against the middle class.

The economist, Adam Smith, declared (*Wealth of Nations*, 1776, Book I, Chap. vi), that the early and rude state of common

ENGLISH UTOPIANS

property could only have assured the labourer the products of his labour, but it was private property which first increased the productivity of labour.

Archdeacon W. Paley, whose work, *Moral and Political Philosophy* (London, 1785) became a text-book of the English universities, held private property to be morally and logically reprehensible, while it was necessary for the good management of labour. He is the author of the famous fable of the pigeons, which is as follows (*Moral and Political Philosophy*, Book III, Chap. i) :

“ If you should see a flock of pigeons in a field ; and if (instead of each picking where and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted, and no more) you should see ninety-nine of them gathering all they got into one heap, reserving nothing for themselves but the chaff and the refuse, keeping this heap for one, and that the weakest, perhaps worst, pigeon of the flock ; sitting round and looking on all the winter, whilst this one was devouring and throwing about and wasting it ; and if one pigeon more hardy or hungry than the rest touched a grain of the hoard, all the others

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

instantly flying upon it and tearing it to pieces ; if you should see this, you would see nothing more than what is every day practised and established among men.

“ Among men you see ninety-nine toiling and scraping together a heap of superfluities for one (and this one too oftentimes the feeblest and worst of the whole set), a child, a woman, a madman, or a fool, getting nothing for themselves all the while, but a little of the coarsest of the provision which their own industry produces, looking quietly on while they see the fruits of all their labour spent or spoiled, and if one of the number take or touch a particle of the hoard, the others joining against him and hanging him for the theft.”

This unjust and illogical proceeding was nevertheless necessary, because private property has proved the best means of increasing the productivity of labour and raising general prosperity.

In this manner private property was founded and natural law set aside in England.

VII

THE ITALIAN UTOPIA

I. THOMAS CAMPANELLA

THE fate of Italy since the downfall of the Roman Empire until the last third of the nineteenth century was from the national standpoint even more melancholy than that of Germany. Alien rulers, native tyrants, papal ambitions, municipal separatism and rivalries kept the country in a state of distraction. Its immortal achievements in religion, literature, art, and science did not avail to protect it from Teutonic rage, French thirst for domination, Spanish craft, and later Austrian narrow-mindedness. The people frequently broke out in local rebellions and hatched conspiracies, which, however, produced no result.

In one of these unfortunate conspiracies the great Italian Utopian was involved, in order to liberate his south Italian home from the Spanish yoke.

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

Campanella, one of the most learned and eloquent men of his time, was born of poor parents in Calabria, the "foot" of Italy, in 1568. While very young he showed a great faculty for philosophic study, read the writings of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, arguing, however, against Aristotle, and after the fashion of Humanist scholars turned to Plato, in other words to social political studies upon communist lines. Later he defended Plato's *Republic* against the "malicious" and pedantic objections of Aristotle. In his thirst for knowledge, he became acquainted with the Jewish Gnosis, the so-called Kabala, which at that time enjoyed considerable repute, and likewise with the writings of the school of natural science. He entered the Dominican Order, which, however, did not prevent him from engaging in political activity. Campanella manifested the two-fold character of the Humanist: dogmatic faith and rationalist thinking, veneration of papal authority and of free research, astronomical and medical knowledge coupled with astrological and magical superstition, cloistral seclusiveness and political activity.

The most important political event of

THE ITALIAN UTOPIA

his small native district was the attempt to overthrow the Spanish domination over south Italy, and to establish an independent community. Campanella was the soul of the anti-Spanish conspiracy, which was to deal a decisive blow in 1599. The plan was, however, prematurely betrayed, and in 1600 Campanella was imprisoned. He spent about twenty-seven years in prison, and suffered the severest tortures. Owing to papal intervention, his imprisonment was later alleviated, so that he was able to apply himself to study in his cell. Out of prison arose his *Utopia*, "Civitas Solis" (The City of the Sun), which, together with his other writings, he handed to a German, who published them in Frankfort-on-Main, 1620-1623. After his release he journeyed to France, where he was received with great honour by King Louis XIII and his ministers. His last years were passed peacefully in the Paris Dominican Monastery, where he died in 1639.

2. THE SUN STATE

Plato composed his *Republic* and *Laws* as a patriot, aristocrat, and philosopher; he laid the chief emphasis upon the highest

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

development of political government, upon the philosopher kings, and the conscientious officials.

More wrote his *Utopia* as a statesman, an active politician, and a democratic and Catholic social critic. Campanella's *Sun State*, written avowedly upon the model of *Utopia*, is the work of an abstract thinker, of a monk and rationalist—consequently he also calls his *Sun State* “the idea of a philosophical community.” There is monastic, authoritarian severity in the political government, a dictatorship of philosophers, and institutions of social life framed according to human reason. More perceived the chief evil to consist in economic conditions based on private property. While Campanella sharply emphasizes the evils of private property and of individualism, he is nevertheless of opinion that the chief evil is to be found in the bad human material and defective education. He therefore puts the chief stress on the conscientious rearing of efficient, and therefore conscientious men, and upon good, all-round physical and intellectual education. Besides Plato and More, Campanella had Lycurgus in mind.

THE ITALIAN UTOPIA

The *Sun State* is composed in the form of a dialogue between the Grand Master of the Order of Hospitality and a much-travelled Genevese ; the latter has in the course of his travels visited the Sun State, become acquainted with its institutions, and now describes his experiences :

Upon an island in the Pacific Ocean there exist four town states, whereof three are organized according to European modes of living, whilst the fourth is the Sun State. The latter has to protect itself against the three, and is therefore encircled by seven strong walls. The Sun townspeople (Solarians) have a philosophical and communal mode of life. Everything is common property ; even the women are not the particular property of this or that man ; marriage is a political and not a private affair. Campanella contends that private property arose out of individual marriage life. Men who found favour with particular women would not let them go, and favoured the children which such women bare, by creating for them greater places of honour and greater wealth. It was this individual parental love which induced men to appropriate

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

property and to introduce the law of inheritance for the children they favoured, thus disrupting the original communism.

At the head of the Solarian community is a philosopher priest, a metaphysician whom they name Sol. He is the highest official in all secular and spiritual matters. By his side are three ministers: Power, Wisdom, and Love, whom they call in their language, Pon, Sin, and Mor. "Power" is the War Ministry. The Wisdom Ministry is concerned with all matters pertaining to the arts and sciences, education and instruction. It is the business of the Ministry of Love to rear a healthy, efficient, physically and intellectually pre-eminent race of men.

The education of human beings by means of schools and example cannot achieve much, if their dispositions be not consciously moulded upon eugenic principles. Consequently eugenics, or selection for breeding purposes, is of such great importance. Not until they operate upon efficient human material can education and instruction achieve the desired successes. In this respect men have hitherto been blinded by prejudice. They knew

THE ITALIAN UTOPIA

perfectly well that beautiful and useful species of animals and varieties of plants could be produced by selection, but in their own case they have left the pairing of the sexes to chance or to personal inclinations and interests. The purpose of sexual life is not lust and enjoyment, but the propagation of children for the good of the community. To assist this object the Ministry of Love issues the following instructions. Only physically and mentally well-developed men are permitted to procreate children; the less developed men might have intercourse with barren or pregnant women. The sexual age of woman commences at nineteen years, that of man at twenty-one years; sexual abstinence until the age of twenty-seven years is rewarded with special honours and celebrated in songs. Whoever experiences an irresistible sexual impulse before reaching the age for intercourse shall inform matrons, officials, or doctors of this fact in confidence, whereupon the latter will direct him to have sexual intercourse with a barren or pregnant woman. With those admitted to the married state, sexual intercourse may take place only twice a

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

week, after both spouses have bathed and prayed to God to give them beautiful and healthy children. In the bedrooms artistic statues of famous men are erected for the women to look at. The hour of coitus is fixed by the doctor and the astrologer ; until then the spouses sleep in separate chambers ; not until the specified hour does a matron open the doors, whereupon the man enters the bedroom of the woman allotted to him. The authorities, who are all priests, pair the men and women who are to enter the married state ; tall and beautiful women with tall and well-built men ; stout men with slender women and contrariwise ; tenacious brainworkers, whose sexual impulse is generally weak, are paired with beautiful and passionate women ; sanguine and quick-tempered men receive phlegmatic, cautious women ; imaginative men—matter-of-fact women. In a word, every care is taken to produce a breed of men with harmonious natures from the intermixture of temperament and character, the crossing of physical and intellectual tendencies, dispositions, and qualities.

During pregnancy the women are placed

THE ITALIAN UTOPIA

under medical supervision ; the doctor prescribes their diet and other mode of living. After childbirth, mothers suckle their children for two years or longer, if the doctor so orders. When the infants are weaned, the boys are handed over to male, and the girls to female nurses. Education then begins. Gymnastics (nude bodily exercises) for boys and girls ; both sexes receive the same education on the whole. Instruction is not given in closed rooms, but during walks, especially by the seven town walls, whose surface is covered with geographical, astronomical, zoological, botanical, mineralogical illustrations. The teachers must watch the special inclinations and talents of the children and report to the authorities which are concerned with particular choices of vocation. The chief object of education is to make the children productive workers ; agricultural and industrial instruction is general. All adult Solarians gladly perform their allotted tasks, as a healthy mind dwells in a healthy body trained to purposeful activity. As every one labours, the working time only amounts to four hours daily. All kinds of work and service are equally

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

esteemed. Clothing is simple and natural, as is also feeding.

Upon the foundations of the Sun State : common ownership, eugenics, and rational education, there arose a society inspired by a common feeling of solidarity and delighting in labour, which loves sciences, reveres God, and practises virtue. The Solarians seek eternal life in God and a happy earthly life through the community. Amongst them exists neither riches nor poverty, neither idlers nor slaves, but all things are in moderation and harmony.

3. OBJECTIONS AGAINST COMMUNISM

Campanella also devoted some attention to the objections which are usually brought against communism, and have been voiced by all opponents of common ownership since Aristotle.

OBJECTION I.—*Communism is against human nature.*

ANSWER.—Communitic communities are not only conceivable, but also practicable. The primitive community of Jerusalem among the Apostles was communitic ;

THE ITALIAN UTOPIA

as was also the primitive community in Alexandria under St. Mark. The clergy also lived in this manner until the time of Pope Urban I. Plato's State was praised by S. Clement, S. Ambrose, and S. Chrysostom.

OBJECTION 2.—*Communism destroys the incentive to labour.*

ANSWER.—Only where men are brought up in egoism, as a result of private property, is selfish interest an incentive to labour; for property poisons the springs of Christian charity and of common feeling; it brings with it ambition, usury, hatred of one's neighbour, envy of the great, as well as other vices. It is understandable that vicious men only find an incentive to labour in their egoism. But a communistic community like the Sun State, in which men are purposely reared and educated to enjoy labour, to diligence and virtue, and where every labourer receives his proper wages, and where all labours and services are equally respected and honoured, love of the community is the best incentive.

OBJECTION 3.—*Community of women is unnatural and immoral.*

ANSWER.—Only that is unnatural which

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

injures and destroys either the individual or the species: violent assault, robbery, adultery, sodomy, etc., are against nature because they hurt one's fellows, or prevent the growth of the race. Community of women, on the other hand, hurts nobody, destroys nobody, and does not hinder the development of the race. Therefore, it is not against natural law. It is also not immoral, for it is not the elemental consequence of sexual appetites and licentiousness. It is not dictated by carnal lust, but by a deliberately conceived political object; it is carried out according to the rules of eugenic science and philosophy. In the Sun State, therefore, there is no indiscriminate community of women; nobody there may have intercourse with any woman he likes at what time he likes; sexual intercourse there is rather subordinated to a political end; only it is not regulated according to ecclesiastical, but according to philosophical rules. An act which is not unnatural is only evil when its practice is dictated by lust, carnal appetite, and evil intent; on the other hand, it is moral when practised in a reasonable manner and for the welfare of the whole.

VIII

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

I. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

AFTER the conclusion of the Hundred Years Succession War between England and France (1329-1421) the French kings continued their policy of centralization. They protected to a certain extent the peasants and the town industries, and restricted the rights of the nobles, the Church, and the guilds as special corporations. Consolidation within led to policies of expansion without. Louis XII (1498-1515) laid claim to Milan, and in alliance with Ferdinand the Catholic conquered the kingdom of Naples, which, however, France was obliged to renounce. Francis I (1515-1547), a contemporary and rival of Charles V, waged war against the Swiss and the German Empire, and received a concession from the Pope, which left the choice of bishops and abbots to the French Crown. During his reign flourished the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

French Church reformer John Calvin (b. 1509, d. 1564), who was supported by many members of the middle class as well as by *savants* and nobles, but who was persecuted by the Catholic Party.

Calvin removed his field of activity to Geneva. Under the French kings, Henry II (1547-1559), Francis II (1559-1560), and Charles IX (1560-1574), bloody persecutions against the French Calvinists (Huguenots) broke out, which reached their frightful culmination in the massacre of S. Bartholomew in 1572. Over 20,000 Calvinists were murdered. Henry III (1574-1589) who favoured the reformed faith was murdered by the monk, Jacques Clement. With him the House of Valois became extinct, whereupon kings of the House of Bourbon (1589-1789) ascended the French throne. The first of these kings was Henry IV (1589-1610) who was a Calvinist, but abandoned the reformed faith and returned to the Catholic Church: "Paris is well worth a mass." His tolerance (Edict of Nantes, 1589) and sympathetic policy towards the peasants (every peasant ought to have a fowl in his pot on Sunday) contributed greatly to the economic

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

prosperity of the country. With his like-minded minister, Sully, he encouraged manufacture (silk, carpets, nails), invigorated industry and maritime commerce, and founded colonies in Canada. Both formed an elaborate plan to check the Hapsburg - Spanish European policy. Henry IV was murdered by a religious fanatic named Ravallac. His successors, Louis XIII (1610-1643) and Louis XIV (1643-1715), with their statesmen, Richelieu and Mazarin, introduced a régime of coercion, smashed the last remnants of feudal power, ushered in the long series of wars against Spain and Germany; oppressed the Huguenots in France, while encouraging Protestantism in Germany, in order to keep the Empire in a state of turmoil. French policy accentuated and prolonged the Catholic and Protestant war in Germany which broke out in 1618, and would have ended in 1635, had not France turned it into the Thirty Years War, that is, protracted it to the point of the utter exhaustion of the German nation. Louis XIV then became involved in war with Holland and England, Spain and Austria, until he suffered shipwreck in the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). At the Peace of Utrecht (1713) he lost most of his overseas possessions to England.

However brilliant the position of France under Louis XIV, especially at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, might have seemed, and great as were the efforts which his ministers—chief of all the famous Colbert—made to promote trade and industry, the economic life was ruined by the policy of conquest and the wars. The nobles flocked to Paris and Versailles, leaving their properties to the great farmers, whose sole concern was to extort higher ground rents; the heavy burden of taxation, ruthlessly imposed by the tax farmers and their numerous officials, oppressed the peasants; the revocation of the Edict of Nantes caused the diligent Huguenots to turn their backs on their homes and to emigrate; the extravagance of the Court ate up all that the wars had left the people; only the great bourgeoisie, the speculators, the tax farmers, and the usurers enriched themselves; their sons were enabled to purchase for large sums of money the juridical and official positions. At the death of Louis XIV the French peasantry was

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

impoverished ; the nobles were courtiers, eager to make money easily ; the upper section of the bourgeoisie was rich and partially ennobled. The long wars had shaken belief in the blessings of honest toil and business conduct ; everybody wanted to get rich quickly. It was a time of financial swindlers. A certain John Law could turn France's head with his share certificates and banknotes, and plunge the country into a severe financial crisis (1720).

The latter part of the reign of Louis XV (1715-1774) coincided with the beginning of the industrial revolution, when the revolutionary call to freedom became distinctly audible. French thought turned away from all State interference in production and distribution, and all restrictive tradition, and demanded that free scope should be allowed to nature and natural law. Away with ecclesiastical authority (Voltaire) ; away with the vestiges of all feudal and absolutist privileges ; away too with the obsolete village communities ; away with the old guilds and industrial restrictions ! The free citizen shall produce under the protection of human law and the laws of nature. And in the midst of the intoxi-

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

cation with middle-class theories of freedom, social and communist critics arose and revealed the evils of private property.

An epoch of great and bold thinkers approached. From about 1750 to 1793 the French spirit illumined the civilized world. It announced the Revolution.

The ideas of Rousseau, of the Physiocrats, and of the Encyclopædists flashed on the horizon.

I divide these social-critical intellectual activities into the following three groups: more or less communistic social critics; middle-class social critics, who indeed perceived the evils of private property, but either accepted them as inevitable, or sought to alleviate them by reforms; finally into Utopian writers, who fled from reality into the realm of Utopia. This classification cannot be strictly maintained, as the first and third groups have many characteristics in common, but it will suffice as an indication.

2. SOCIAL CRITICS: MESLIER, MORELLE, MABLY

While Corneille, Racine, and Molière were writing their plays for the Court and the nobility, Lafontaine spinning his fables,

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

Bossuet preaching, making the epoch of Louis XIV the Golden Age of French literature, a poor pastor had been labouring since 1692 in the village of Etrepigny (Ardennes), fulfilling his duties as a shepherd of souls, although in his heart he despised the whole of Christianity as utter nonsense, and condemned society and the State in the most bitter fashion from the standpoint of communism and natural law. Either out of love for his poor peasant parish, or owing to lack of courage, or the conviction that the time was not yet ripe for revolutionary truths, and therefore nothing would be gained by martyrdom, he kept his revolutionary opinions to himself, and bequeathed them in manuscript as his testament. This peculiar clergyman was Jean Meslier (born in the Champagne 1664, died in Etrepigny 1729 or 1733), whose literary remains, *Le Testament de Jean Meslier*, were not completely published until 1864, when they were issued in Amsterdam in three volumes, after having been known for more than a hundred years in the form of truncated extracts edited by Voltaire. The complete Amsterdam edition represents the work of a man who passion-

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

ately hated Christianity. Religion and the Church appeared to him only as a means of keeping the people stupid and obedient. With unsurpassable acumen he deals with monarchy, aristocracy, priestcraft, militarism, officialdom, the tax farmers, and the money changers. No radical freethinker or republican could have excelled in acuteness the criticism which Meslier passes upon these institutions and persons. The criticism was directed in the first place against the France of Louis XIV, but it also applied generally to every monarchy, religion, and coercive régime. What interests us, however, are his opinions about private property and communism. Upon these subjects he expresses himself as follows :

Another evil which exists and is applauded almost everywhere is the special alienation of the goods and riches of the earth, instead of their being commonly owned and enjoyed. The inhabitants of each parish ought to regard themselves as a united family of brothers and sisters, and take care that they all work and produce useful things, in order to provide the necessary means of life for all. The

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

direction of affairs in the individual parish should not rest in the hands of those ambitious for power, but in the hands of the wisest and most benevolent. The separate parishes ought to unite with each other, so as to preserve peace and render mutual support. . . . From the division of the goods and riches of the earth, from private property arose the antagonisms between rich and poor, satiated and hungry, high and low. . . . If one looks at the injustices, at the luxury of the one and the poverty of the other, at superfluity and want, which class divisions do not correspond which virtue and vice, it is impossible to believe in the existence of a God, for it is inconceivable that a God could tolerate this inversion of justice (*Testament*, Book II. pp. 210 et seq.).

The first Christian communities lived according to communism, but sophistic priests have substituted the communion (communism in imaginary things) for communism in earthly goods.

The monks, however, appreciate, so far as themselves are concerned, the communism in earthly goods, and are protected against any kind of want. Pascal

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

is manifestly of the same opinion when he observes in his *Pensées* that the alienation of the soil, as well as the evils that arise from this, are to be traced to the fact that everybody tries to appropriate things that ought to be commonly held. And the divine Plato desired to establish a republic, in which " Mine " and " Thine " would not exist.

Inequality is a violation of natural law. " All men are equal by nature, they have the same right to live and move, to enjoy their natural freedom, and share in the good things of the earth, while usefully working with each other in order to produce the necessary means of life, but as they live in society, and as human society could not be regulated and kept in order without a certain degree of dependence and subordination, men ought to submit to this, but the subordination must not degenerate into inequality " (vol. ii. pp. 170-71).

The salvation of mankind lies in the peoples uniting against the tyrants, and in recognizing and following the law of nature, which ordains the community of goods and requires everybody to labour.

A profounder influence than that of Meslier was exercised upon communist

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

thought by Morelly, the author of the once famous *Code de la Nature*. Almost nothing is known about Morelly's life. He came from Vitry-le-François, and is supposed to have been the son of an official, and to have been engaged as a private tutor. In 1753 he published his natural law romance, *The Shipwreck of the Floating Isles* (*Naufrage des îles flottantes*), a heroic poem in fourteen cantos, in which he described a society based upon communism and free love, and predicted shipwreck for the floating isles which symbolized the institutions of private property. Two years later (1755) his *Code de la Nature* appeared, which for a long time was falsely ascribed to Diderot. His chief ideas are :

Social poverty arises from the circumstance that the moral philosophers and politicians either do not understand the principles of nature, or draw incorrect conclusions from them. Nature is an admirably intelligent machine, which endows men with the same wants and strength, and places them in an environment which—if the intentions of nature were understood and followed—would have infallibly maintained them happy and virtuous. Man is

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

born neither good nor bad ; he has no innate ideas or inclinations ; he comes into the world as a completely indifferent being. He is aroused from this indifference by his natural needs, which are always greater than his personal strength, so that the isolated individual is not in a position to satisfy them.

From this disparity between wants and ability to satisfy them arose the most beneficent consequences for man. It compelled him to work, to think, and to unite with his fellows, in short to be sociable. The variations of human needs and capacities render sociality still more pressing. To enable human needs to be satisfied, nature gave men the earth with its treasures and its fertility. The earth and its fulness belong to all in common. It is the common basis of their existence. Upon this basis is reared society, which in the variety and range of its activities, its intelligences, and its arrangements, would represent an admirable equilibrium, an undisturbable harmony of interests, if philosophers, legislators, and politicians had studied and followed the laws of nature. This, however, they have not done. They have turned the earth into private property, created divisions and

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

fissures and class antagonisms, whereby the intentions of nature are defeated, and the wants and forces which with wise forethought she has created are emasculated. From this cause flow all the evils from which society suffers, and which are not to be removed by human laws and political constitutions, whether they be democratic, aristocratic, or monarchic. The sole means of salvation is return to the laws of nature, whose character is as follows :

No one in society should have the exclusive ownership of anything except those things that a person really needs for his daily work or his pleasures.

Each citizen is an equal citizen of society, and should be fed, kept, and employed at the public expense.

Each citizen contributes for his share according to his strength, his talents, and his age, which are taken into account in fixing his duties according to social and economic laws.

This social economy is of the following nature :

Each people should be divided into families, tribes, races, and communities, and, if necessary, into provinces. Each

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

tribe is to consist of an equal number of families. All the commodities which they produce are to be deposited in the public storehouses, whence they will be distributed to all citizens at specific times. Commodities which will not keep long shall be distributed at the market-places. The superfluous comestibles of each parish or province shall be stored against times of need. Trade with neighbouring peoples may only take place by means of barter, and is to be publicly supervised.

Each citizen capable of work, between the ages of twenty and twenty-five years, must without exception be engaged in agricultural labour.

Government shall rest in the hands of a supreme senate, which will be annually chosen from heads of families over fifty years of age.

Marriage is contracted for a period of ten years, and requires the sanction of the town senate.

Better known is the life story of Gabriel B. Mably (b. in Grenoble 1709, d. 1785). He received a careful education, studied theology, but turned to public affairs and became a secretary in the Foreign

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

Ministry. He wrote a good deal upon ancient and French history, as well as upon diplomatic questions. At first defending the old order, he subsequently developed a critical attitude, and in 1768 published his ingenious polemic, *Doutes proposés aux philosophes économistes*, against Count Mercier de la Rivière, the head of the economists, who regarded private property, supported by a despotic government, as the best and most natural order. Against these theories Mably championed communistic natural law, praised the Lycurgean legislation, Plato's *Republic*, and emphasized their superiority to private property and inequality. Mably was considerably influenced by Morelly. In another work, he opines: "Whenever I read in a travel book of a desert island whose climate is mild, whose water is healthy, I feel anxious to go there and found a republic, in which everybody will live equally free, equally rich, equally poor (propertyless), and equally brotherly. Our first law would run: Nobody shall possess private property. We would carry the fruits of our labour into the public storehouses, in which would consist the public treasury and the

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

heritage of every citizen. Fathers of families would annually select administrators whose duties it would be to give to each person the necessities of life and direct him to perform the work required of him by the community" (quoted by Villegardelle-Koppen, *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen*, p. 84. Berlin, 1846).

Mably concedes, however, that men brought up in the present society are too much dominated by their own interests to be able to make the general interest the motive of their actions. Rapacity is today stronger than the feeling of social duty. Consequently, Mably proposes for the time being only to introduce reforms, which would restrict the rights of property, curb greed, and favour only those forms of property which are acquired by personal effort. Right of inheritance is to be restricted, property in the soil and movable capital are to bear the heaviest taxes, but the workers are only to be slightly taxed. The differences in the salaries of officials are to be abolished, and equal pay is to be introduced as far as possible, inasmuch as with collective labour and the co-operation of forces, natural inequality of effort

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

almost entirely disappears, and an average unit of effort results.

3. MIDDLE-CLASS CRITICS: ROUSSEAU, LINGUET, NECKER, BRISSOT

During the last half of the eighteenth century France was so steeped in natural law ideas that even political philosophers who were far removed from communism adopted a critical attitude towards private property. The most famous, if not the most consistent of them, was Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). In his treatise upon *Inequality among Men*, he says :

“ The first man who enclosed a piece of land, saying, ‘ This is mine,’ and found simple people who believed him, was the real founder of middle-class society. How many crimes, wars, and murders, how much misery and suffering would have been spared our race if another man had torn up the palings, filled up the trenches, and cried to his comrades : ‘ Beware of believing this impostor ; you are lost if you forget that while its fruits belong to everybody, the earth belongs to nobody.’ ”

In *Emile* (1762) several passages of a

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

socially critical nature may be found. Every social enjoyment, he says there, is paid for by labour and labour alone. To work is the duty of a social man. Every idle citizen, be he rich or poor, powerful or powerless, is a rascal (*Emile*, Book III).

The conservatist jurist, N. H. Linguet (1736-1794), laments in his *Théorie des lois civiles* (vol. i. pp. 171-200), which appeared in 1767, that middle-class society destroys the natural freedom of man. . . . The moment a man is born, he is fastened to that immense chain called society. . . . The first glance from his cradle falls on beings like himself, who are loaded with chains and are delighted to see a companion who will share their slavery. Rapacity and force have taken possession of the earth, and have formed a compact to grant a share in this possession only to those who follow their banner. . . . "Justice is the eternal and persistent will to grant everybody his rights," so say the lawyers for example. But the poor man has nothing but his poverty. Consequently the laws cannot grant him anything else. Their aim is rather to protect those who have abundance against the attacks of those who

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

lack even the most necessary things. . . . In this consists the proper purpose of laws, which are dictated by the rich, and it is the rich who derive the greatest benefit from them. Laws are, as it were, the fortresses built by the rich in a hostile country where nothing but dangers threaten them. Wars are a consequence of laws, for wars originate from a love of property, and upon what is property based but laws? *The aim of a society based on private property to free the rich from work.* The free labourer is worse off than the slave. . . . The latter does receive his food when he does not work. But what becomes of the free labourer when he can find no employment? Who troubles about him if he dies of hunger and misery?

Many other daring criticisms of this kind are to be found in Linguet. Nevertheless he remained a conservative to the end. He held that if men wanted society, they must take gross inequality and its evils into the bargain.

Jacques Necker, the Finance Minister of Louis XVI (b. 1732, d. 1804), closed his treatise upon the *Corn Trade* with the following words: "If one casts his eye over society and its conditions, the general idea

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

immediately comes into his head that all bourgeois institutions are created for the benefit of property owners. It is shocking to open the legislative code and stumble upon nothing but proofs of this truth. It might be said that a small number of men have divided up the earth and subsequently made laws to afford them protection against the masses, just as they have enclosed forests to protect themselves from wild beasts." In another part of the book Necker dealt critically with the relation between capital and labour, as well as with the concentration of property and the diminution of the number of proprietors.

We would further quote from J. P. Brissot (b. 1736, executed 1796). In his work entitled *Recherches philosophiques sur la propriété et le vol*, which was published in 1780, the following passage occurs: "When equality was banished, the hateful distinction between rich and poor became more sharply pronounced. Society divided into two classes: to the first belong the middle-class proprietors, to the second the mass of the people. And terrible punishments are threatened in order to bolster up the terrible rights of property. Any

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

attacks upon these rights are called stealing, and yet we know that in the state of nature the thief is the rich man or the person who lives in superfluity ; in a state of society, on the other hand, a thief is he who steals from the rich. How opinions alter ?

Yet Brissot was no revolutionary, even no Jacobin, but a Girondist (a moderate republican), and as such was sent by the Jacobins to the guillotine.

4. UTOPIAN DESCRIPTION BY VAIRASSE D'ALLAIS

The first French description of a communistic Utopia was given by Denis Vairasse of Allais (south France) in his *Histoire des Sevarambes*, which appeared first in English in London in 1675, and then in French in Paris in 1677 to 1678. Vairasse had an adventurous youth ; he served in the French army, then (1665) in the English fleet, lived for a time in London, and then settled in Paris as a teacher of languages ; he also compiled a French Grammar (1681-1683). His above-named Utopian history was soon translated into German and Dutch. It describes with many imaginative and romantic de-

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

tails the happy conditions of the Sevarambians, who lived upon an Australian island, and were organized by a wise Parsee named Sevaris, a sun-worshipper. The happy inhabitants of this island called themselves Sevarambians, obviously after the name of their political founder. The principles according to which Sevaris carried out the social reorganization of this people were as follows :

The evils of human society flow from three great sources: pride, greed, and idleness. Pride creates the inequality of station among men—noble and commoner, ruler and servant. Greed divides society into rich and poor, and brings about the injustices which are consequent upon this antagonism. Idleness leads to extravagances, conspiracies, neglect of the treasures of nature and of the human intellect. To dry up all these sources, Sevaris abolished all distinctions of status, except those that arose from the moral qualities of men. Then he abolished private property; all commodities and wealth; all the land and soil were declared to be the property of the State. “In this manner he got rid of rapacity, litigation, taxes, duties, the

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

scarcity and the poverty that brought so much evil into the world. Since the enforcement of this law all the Sevarambians are rich, although they may call nothing their own. All the goods of the State belong to them, so that everybody may esteem himself as happy as the richest monarch in the world" (*Histoire des Sevarambes*, Part I. pp. 276-78. Amsterdam, 1711).

A community of goods involves a general obligation to work. Sevaris introduces a measure on these lines, and ordains that the day should be divided into three parts: eight hours work, eight hours recreation, eight hours sleep. Only old people, pregnant women, sick persons, and young children are exempted from labour. But as idleness is considered the greatest disgrace, even those exempted from work seek for some kind of occupation.

The greatest importance is attached to the education and training of the children. From the seventh to the twelfth years they receive elementary instruction, and are physically and intellectually strengthened; then they attend agricultural and industrial establishments, where the hours of labour are fixed at four daily. They are brought

SOCIAL STRUGGLES

up to be temperate, to have respect for the laws, for age, and for religion. As a rule the Severambians are monogamous, although the officials form an exception, as they may have several wives. The form of government is heliocratic (the ruler being the deity worshipped as the Sun). Its President is chosen by lot from among the highest officials. On the other hand, the remaining officials are directly elected by the people.

The Severambians dwell under communal conditions in Osmasians (large buildings). Each Osmase has its storehouses, where the finished articles are delivered, and whence each comrade takes, upon official direction, the necessary means of life.

5. IMITATIONS OF THE GREAT UTOPIANS

We can see that Vairasse exhibits little originality in his fundamental ideas, borrowing from More and Campanella. But what appeared later in the way of Utopias and Utopian travel narratives—and they were published in great numbers in France and England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—are mostly insipid imitation or fine poetry. The variations relate firstly to marriage ; some champion mono-

FRENCH UTOPIAS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

gamy or periodical marriages, others champion free love ; secondly, opinions differ regarding the form of government—some advocate monarchy or democracy, others anarchy. Nothing new appeared until Bellamy's *Looking Backward*—a genuine product of the industrial conditions in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

For the sake of completeness we will here indicate most of these Utopias. In 1676 Gabriel de Foigny published the anarchist-communist description, *Terre Australe Connue* ; in 1710 Jacques Masse his *Voyages et Aventures*, upon deistic and communist lines ; in 1746 Berington the *Memoires de Gaudence de Lucques*, borrowed from Campanella and Vairasse ; in 1768 Fontenelle the *Republique des Philosophes*, a communist society without religion and based on slavery ; in 1770 appeared *Histoire Naturelle et civile des Galligenes*, free love and communism ; in 1781 (?) Restif de la Bretonne (a compositor) published *Decouverte Australe*, ethical-communist features.

Fénelon's *Télémaque* (1698), in which the antique (Greek) life is idealized, likewise produced imitations which have a Utopian strain.

A P P E N D I X

AMERICAN RELIGIOUS-COMMUNIST SETTLEMENTS

WHILE the authors of Utopian narratives were satisfied with painting more or less entertaining social pictures, heretical-communist traditions continued to survive in Christian circles, especially in Germany and England, bringing manifold persecutions upon their adherents, so that they were prevented from living according to their ideals in their own homes. The times of the Inquisition and of the Stake were, however, past—this is one of the finest achievements of middle-class enlightenment—so that the communist sectaries could emigrate, and put their doctrines to the practical test in America. The United States became the refuge of remnants of the heretical-communist movement of the Middle Ages, so far as it felt the inward urge to live according to its ideals.

In addition, there were later the colonies of the followers of Owen, Fourier, and Cabet, but these enterprises belong to our fourth volume, as they were not founded until the first half of the nineteenth century, and moreover owe their intellectual origin to another phase of thought—the critical Utopism which corresponded with the first period of the industrial revolution.

APPENDIX

One of the oldest religious communist colonies is that of the Shakers. It originated in 1776 in Watervliet (New York State). Its foundress was the Englishwoman Ann Lee, who came to America in 1774. In course of time the Shaker communities increased, but the number of their members never amounted to more than five thousand. They live monastic and ascetic lives, and are characterized by celibacy, strict morality, ecstasy, and temperate recreations. They accumulated great wealth. Each community is divided into "families," whose property is administered on communist lines.

Next in importance is the colony of Harmony (Pennsylvania), founded by religious and communist Swabian peasants, who emigrated in the year 1803 under the leadership of the dictatorially inclined George Rapp (b. 1770, d. 1847), and established the above-named communist settlement in Pennsylvania. Community of goods, equality, and unity prevailed among the Rappists, as the settlers called themselves after their leader. In 1814 they sold their flourishing settlement for 100,000 dollars, and removed to Indiana, where they established a new one, which thrived equally and became very wealthy. As the climate did not suit them, in 1824 they sold the colony to Robert Owen for 150,000 dollars, acquired a new settlement, which they called Economy, and also raised to great prosperity, although they were joined by many adventurers who carried on a disruptive activity and caused splits.

Until 1807 they regarded marriage as permissible, but afterwards introduced celibacy. The rapid progress of Pennsylvania since 1870, owing to the petroleum industry, made an end to the communist

APPENDIX

idyll. At the present time the Rappists form a joint stock company, which owns valuable territory, oil wells, factories, etc.

Very similar is the colony of Zoar, whose members were also Swabian peasants who suffered considerably in their Wurtemberg home on account of their religious communist convictions. With financial assistance afforded them by the English Quakers, they emigrated to America under the leadership of Josef Baumler, settled in Ohio, and in 1819 decided to live as communists and celibates; after 1831 marriage was introduced. Zoar also enjoyed great economic success and existed until 1898. On the dissolution of the colony each member received 1800 dollars as his share.

Similar settlements were Bethel and Aurora (in Missouri and Oregon), founded by a certain Dr. Keil (b. 1812, d. 1877). The majority of their members were of German origin. They lived under communist conditions, but marriage was permitted. Both settlements led a peaceful and happy life until the death of their leader. Some years later they were dissolved.

Noteworthy too is the settlement of Amana (Iowa), which was founded by communist sectaries from central Germany. As early as the beginning of the eighteenth century the sect had been organized in central Germany, and had embraced the communist ideal, but not until 1842 did some thousands of its members emigrate to America.

In 1901 Amana numbered 1767 members, living in seven villages and engaged in agriculture and industry. In 1901 its property was valued at 1,647,000 dollars. The commodities manufactured in their workshops (they own mills, smithies, soap-

APPENDIX

boiling works, and textile factories) are of exceptionally fine quality, and easily find a market. They also employ wage workers. The workshops are airy ; each worker is provided with a seat for resting ; hurry and speeding-up are unknown there ; work proceeds steadily with several intervals daily. The colloquial language is still German. Amana combines communism with monogamy. The mode of life is very simple and genuinely primitive Christian.

On the whole it may be said of such colonies that their prosperity is dependent upon the fidelity of their members to their primitive Christian ideal, as well as upon the efficiency of their leaders.¹

¹ Hillquit, *History of Socialism in America* ; Tugan-Baranowsky, *Kommunistische Gemeinwesen der Neuzeit*, Gotha, 1920. Regarding Utopias in general, see George Cornwall Lewis, *On the Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, vol. i. London, 1852 ; Robert von Mohl, *Geschichte der Staatswissenschaften*, Erlangen, vol. i. 1855.



INDEX

- Amana, communistic settle-
 ment, 220.
 America, 87, 145.
 Aristotle, 104.

 Bacon, Francis, 167, 168.
 Ball, John, 44, 45, 46, 49, 53.
 Baptist movement, 107, 111,
 124, 125, 126, 127, 133.
 Bellamy's *Looking Backward*,
 217.
 Bellers, John, 174.
 Biel, Gabriel, 105.
 Black Death, 35.
 Borgia, Cæsar, 140.
 Borgia, Lucrezia, 140.
 Brissot, J. P., 212.
 "Bundschuh," 98.

 Cade, Jack, 54, 56, 57, 58.
 Calle, Guillaume, 31.
 Calvin, Jean, 194.
 Calvinism, 11.
 Campanella, Thomas, 182,
 183, 184, 190.
 Chamberlen, Peter, 173, 174.
 Charles IV, German Emperor,
 65, 66.
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 37.
 Communism, 112, 190, 191.
 Community of women, 191.
 Correggio, 141.

 Da Vinci, Leonardo, 140, 141.
 Deism, 136.
 "Diggers," 171.

 "Economy" (communistic
 settlement), 219.
- Edward III, 26, 27, 47.
 Erasmus of Rotterdam,
 102.
 Fénelon's *Télémaque*, 217.
 Fontenelle, 217.
 Franck, Sebastian, 107, 108,
 109, 110.
 Froissart, 45-46.
 Fugger, 88, 133.

 Germany in fourteenth and
 fifteenth centuries, 85, 86,
 87, 88.
 Geyer, Florian, 82, 123.
 Grotius, Hugo, 145.

 Hamerling, Robert, 128-29.
 Hansa, The, 11, 86.
 "Harmony" communistic
 settlement, 219.
 Henry IV of France, 194, 195.

 Hobbes, Thomas, 177.
 Huguenots, 195.
 Humanism, 141, 142.
 Huss, John, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69.
 Hussite Wars, 70, 71, 72, 73,
 74.

 Jan Mathys of Haarlem, 126,
 128, 129.
 Jacquerie, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29,
 30, 31.
 Jerome of Prague, 67.
 John of Leyden, 126, 127,
 128, 132.

 Karl V, 88.
Konrad, der arme, 98.

INDEX

- Langland, William, 37, 38.
 Linguet, S. N. H., 210.
 Locke, John, 177.
 Lollards, 36.
 Louis XIV, 195, 196.
 Luther, Martin, 32, 33, 82,
 83, 84, 104, 105, 106,
 123.
 Mably, G. B., 206, 207, 208.
 Machiavelli, 140.
 Marcel, Etienne, 28, 29.
 Materialism, 144.
 Melanchthon, 99, 104, 125.
 Meslier, Jean, 199, 200, 210.
 Michelangelo, 141.
 Moral philosophy, 142.
 Moravian Brothers, 80, 81.
 Morelly, 203.
 More, Thomas, 102, 147-66.
 Münster, Anabaptists in,
 124, 125.
 Münzer, Thomas, 110, 111,
 112, 113, 114.
 Natural Law, 142.
 Necker, Jacques, 211-12.
New Atlantis, 167.
 Nominalism, 135.
 Ottokar II, 61.
 Paley, William, 179.
 Peasants' War, English, 47.
 Peasants' War, German, 96.
 Peyt, Jakob, 23.
 Philip of Valois, 24, 25, 26,
 27.
 Plato, 102.
 Prokop, Andreas, 34, 74.
 Raphael, 141.
 Raleigh, Walter, 167.
 Rapp, George, 219.
 Rationalism, 135.
 Realists, 136.
Reformatio Sigismundi, 97.
 Reformation, 10, 32, 94.
 Renaissance, 100, 139.
 Richard II, 51.
 Rothmann, Bernt, 125.
 Rousseau, J. J., 209.
 Savonarola, 140.
 Sevarambia (Utopia), 213-
 14.
 Shakers, 219.
 Shakespeare, 54.
 Sickingen, Franz von, 82.
 Smith, Adam, 178.
 Social Contract, 175.
 Sun State, 183.
 Statute of Labourers, 36, 47.
 Tabor, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80.
 Thirty Years War, 133, 195.
 Tyler, Wat, 49.
 Urban antagonisms, 13.
Utopia, 59, 147.
 Vairasse, Denis, 213.
 Winstanley, 170.
 Wycliffe, John, 32.
 Zannekin, Nikolaus, 23.
 Ziska, 73, 74.
 Zoar, communistic settle-
 ment, 220.
 Zweifel, Thomas, 99.



PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

HN Beer, Max
8 Social struggles and
B433 socialist forerunners

