For Britain the nineteenth century was one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, in her history. During those hundred years the population soared, trade expanded, a colossal Empire was developed, towns sprang into importance, great men passed across the scene, wealth came to thousands. It was a time when the British people gathered the fruits from seed sown in the later part of the eighteenth century, and among those fruits were many new and startling ideas, philosophical, theological, political, economic and scientific. The particular idea which we are to examine, Socialism, was as revolutionary as any to the minds of the people of the times - as revolutionary as the Darwinian theory, or as dangerous as the teaching of Jesus had seemed to the Jews eighteen hundred years before. But before we can proceed to its examination we must endeavour to define it, and here comes a difficulty. For there are many definitions of Socialism, some of them scarcely compatible with one another and to seek for traces of many of them in the nineteenth century is hopeless, for the ideas contained in them are of recent growth, and too advanced even for the end of the century. The most useful definition, for our present purpose at all events, is that given by H. G. Wells - "Essentially, Socialism is no more and no less than a criticism of the idea of property in the light of the public/
"public good". Now, a movement conforming to this definition is clearly observable through the whole of the nineteenth century, and the fact that many of those who gave practical expression to it did not recognise it as Socialistic does not in the least detract from its reality. In fact, the rise of Socialistic views may be said to be due (a) to the direct teaching of Socialists of various types, and (b) to the gradual spread of Socialistic legislation and organisation and their ready acceptance by all classes of the people; and of these two the second has been infinitely the greater factor, far greater than most people realise, so gradual and so wholesome has been the change. Additional point is given to this distinction by the fact that the word "Socialism" itself does not appear to have been used before 1835, while socialistic tendencies, which we shall have to examine, appear long before that date.

We will discuss first this unconscious socialisation which was such an outstanding feature of the century, but before doing so it is essential to consider the state of England and of the English people at the opening of our period.

When the nineteenth century dawned the country was in the throes of vast changes which eventually resulted in the transition of England from the more or less somnolent and static state in which it had existed since the middle ages to a state of great energy and expansion; from a land of villages, tiny communities centring round the manor as the pivot /
pivot of their communal life, to a land of towns with the
factory as the vital centre of the lives of the people.

The Industrial Revolution, as this change is generally
called, may be said to begin in 1733 with the invention
of the flying shuttle by Kay, but its roots go further back
than that. The expanding trade of the country, facilitated
by the expansion of credit during the seventeenth century
and by the Whig policy of the eighteenth century, made it
imperative that production be increased. Now the weaving
industry was the staple one of the country and it was in
this trade that the need for expansion was greatest, but
the hand-loom weaving then practised in the home or in
small communities could not meet the needs of trade. The
weavers were held back, for the spinners could not keep up
with their demands for yarn, and the flying shuttle only
accentuated the difficulty. In 1765 Hargreaves with his
"spinning jenny" did much to restore the balance and
Arkwright in 1769 completed the work. So far so good.
These inventions increased output in a way not incompatible
with the old style of organisation. True, the increasing
demands for manufactures might lead some to devote more time
to weaving instead of its being a spare-time occupation
alternating with small farming; and one man, more prosper-
ous than the others, might instal several looms and employ
his neighbours to work for him. But still the village
was the centre of life, each man was his own master or
employed by one who took a kindly interest in his welfare.
The real blow to the old system came in 1785 when Cart-
wright invented the power loom, for this signalised the
beginning /
beginning of the factory as we know it. Formerly water was
the only power used but now steam power made it possible to
build factories with hundreds or thousands of looms, indeed
made this essential for economical working. Moreover,
the cost of machinery made it impossible for the small man
to instal, while the economies of mass production brought
down the price of cloth so that he could no longer make a
living wage by his older method. He had to abandon his
independence and become a wage worker.

The Agrarian Revolution which was taking place at
approximately the same period had important repercussions
on the industrial situation also. The growing interest in
farming led to improved methods which could not, however,
be properly carried out while the old system of open fields
was in operation, and the Enclosure Movement proceeded
apace. By 1800 literally thousands of private Acts had
been passed, and the general Enclosure Acts of 1801 and 1845
completed the process. Now there does not appear to be any
doubt that the movement was necessary. But for it, and
for the increase in yield made possible by the discoveries
of the farming enthusiasts, it is quite definite that
England could not have supported at her growing population.
At the same time a great deal of suffering was caused by the
harsh spirit in which the enclosures were carried out. At
first a private Act could be passed without those most
interested - the smallholders - knowing anything at all
of the matter. Later, advertisement of the petition, (which
was a necessary preliminary to the procuring of a private
Act), was made obligatory; but even then the hardship was
not /
not much lessened, since opposition was expensive, and usually ineffective anyhow. Again, only those who could show an undoubted title to their lands were entitled to compensation in the re-distribution following upon the Act. Many had merely a prescriptive right, others had lost such titles as their ancestors may have had, and since England did not have a system of public records similar to that introduced into Scotland in the early seventeenth century, they could produce no evidence of ownership and were thus deprived of their holdings. Thus the independent man who had eked out an existence between his farm and his weaving now found his livelihood gone, the former taken from him (or at all events much diminished through the loss of the many small but valuable pertinents of his holding for which there was no compensation) and the latter no longer economically possible.

When the century opened the full effect of these changes was being felt. The population was shifting to the towns where they lived in frightful conditions. They worked long hours in overheated and insanitary factories. Women and children, even the youngest, toiled in mines carrying and dragging enormous weights. Meanwhile the government, backed by the orthodox political economy of the day, looked on and did nothing. Laissez faire was their policy and fast did they abide by it.

But these conditions were the soil into which new ideas were sown and firmly rooted. Says Arthur Jones in his "The Period of the Industrial Revolution", "The general law "is/
"is as true in history as in dynamics". By bringing together great masses of people and working and herding them like cattle the manufacturers created just the right atmosphere for the breeding of doctrines which resulted in the rise of these same masses to political power. While people were scattered over all the face of the country in small groups and while communication between group and group was difficult, men tended to think as their fathers had thought. New ideas did not easily penetrate to them; in any case they were rather impervious to novelty. Now all this was changed. Men were working, eating, sleeping and talking in large masses. They were driven like slaves and had no time for amusement; they had little enough to eat and scarcely any comfort, but they could still think. "Great bodies of men, perhaps for the first time in human "history, though worthy, hard-working and sober, could fall "into hopeless indigence, could see their families starve, "could inhabit cellars, could be pressed by all the miseries "of want and be assailed by all the horrors of despair, "without their plight being known to, cared for, or realised "by those others who, in the same town and as a result of "the same causes were rising into affluence". So says Gilbert Stone in his "History of Labour", and it was a dangerous condition in which to keep human beings. In such a sorry plight they turned eagerly to listen to anyone who could show them a way out, and so began, slowly and hesitatingly, almost blindly, a feeling and groping for a means to alleviate distress. From France came disturbing news. Twenty years before the autocracy had been overthrown /
thrown, and the oppressed were now top dogs. Liberty and Equality was the slogan. Liberty and Equality! What a glimpse of paradise to the slaving factory-worker. Even the persecution of Paine could not keep the ideas from spreading. But any attempt by the workers to demand an improvement of their condition was severely stamped out by the government. In 1800 the primitive trade unions of the day were dissolved, along with the Corresponding Societies which had done something to educate the working people in the bigger towns. Any kind of agitation was met with imprisonment and transportation and every endeavour was made to crush absolutely the growing movement for liberation.

One must not forget, of course, that the country was at war with France and could not risk a civil war at home - for discontent was so deep as to produce a state in which civil war might have started had the discontented classes been allowed to meet and organise - and the horrors of the French Revolution still lingered in the minds of the people. It was a brutal age and insurrection would have had widespread and horrible repercussions. We can see parliament's viewpoint; but it is hard to believe that the governments could be so indifferent to human suffering and misery or could be so short-sighted as to imagine that a majority of the people could be kept permanently in subjection by whip and lash methods. Yet it is undoubtedly true that this was so. Gilbert Stone says "In the pre-Reform Parliaments it is no exaggeration to say that, apart from occasional philanthropists and humanitarians (usually "business men or lawyers) nobody cared what became of the "people /
"people as long as the people behaved themselves".

As the years went on the position became worse instead of better. To begin with there was an enormous increase in population. During the first thirty years of the century the population almost doubled itself. Between 1801 and 1845 Manchester's population grew 109% and Liverpool's 100%. Now by the immutable law of supply and demand wages began to fall. There does not appear to be any doubt that in the early years of the factory system wages were quite good. The conditions under which they were earned and in which the earners lived were horrible, but there was at least pecuniary gain. Now that disappeared. The phenomenal growth in population (the reason for which no one appears to be able to find) meant that there was greater competition for jobs and so down went wages. And, indeed in an age when child labour was so much exploited the adult worker was hard put to it to find employment at all. So the discontent grew and grew and still agitation was ruthlessly stamped out. The Peterloo affair was but one of several such incidents. On that occasion Jones tells us, "An unarmed crowd demonstrating at Manchester in 1819 was attacked by Yeomanry, who were publicly thanked by the Regent and the ministry as though they were the heroes of Waterloo instead of Peterloo". This was followed up by the notorious Six Acts which were the last word in repression - "An Act to prevent delay in the administration of justice in cases of misdemeanor", "An Act to prevent the training of persons to the use of arms", "An Act for the more effectual prevention and punishment of blasphemous and seditious libels", "An Act to authorise justices of the peace in certain disturbed counties to seize and detain arms".
"arms collected and kept for purposes dangerous to the public peace", "An Act to subject certain publications to the duties of stamps upon newspapers", "An Act for more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies". The truth is that the ministry was now thoroughly scared, but they still insisted on violence and muzzling of the steadily increasing stream of criticism, instead of using gentler methods and of temporising. Naturally such tyranny merely drove the agitation into secret channels, as the Cato Street conspiracy of 1820 showed.

About this time, however, a change comes over the nature of the agitation. As the people's agitation grew, so it became more intelligent. No more was it a semi-instinctive reaching towards the light, it was a well-directed movement working purposefully. The improvements in communication facilitated this since it enabled the interchange of views between town and town. Thanks to Macadam and Telford, England now had roads on which it was possible to travel with speed. In 1803 Trevithick invented the locomotive, and in 1825 the first railway was opened and before long the country was a network of lines. A steamboat had been used as early as 1802 and this method of transport also was greatly extended as years went on. In 1835 the electric telegraph was to knit still closer together the country and, eventually, the world.

The result of all this was to facilitate an exchange of ideas between the forces working for reform in various centres and thus there gradually came to be a nation-wide recognition of the fact that if changes were to come, franchise /
franchise reform was essential. The parliament had never been really representative. Now it was less so than ever. The House of Commons was mostly made up of landed gentry and while the village had been the centre of life there was, perhaps, a reasonable identity of interest between villager and squire. Now the great majority of people were workers and neither had a vote nor had any sympathetic persons in Parliament to voice their discontent. Nor were the newly-rich middle class in any better condition. England was still ruled by an oligarchy. Sidney Webb tells us that in 1831, 150 persons returned a majority of the House of Commons. Many "boroughs" had members returned by one or two persons only, as in Old Sarum which returned the Pitts, while in some places ("rotten boroughs") one could buy the borough and then elect one's self. The result was that the country had no real say at all in government. To quote Stone again "Measures could be, and were, passed to which nine out of ten of the people of the country were most bitterly opposed. "Proposals which were received with acclamation by the working people as a whole could be rejected by overwhelming majorities and on appeal to the hustings the party which "had so outraged public desires could be returned to power."

There was, therefore, a growing body of opinion demanding reform and the question was raised many times in Parliament always to be rejected. But now working class and middle class joined hands and pushed forward vigorously a great campaign for electoral reform. Time and time again Parliament refused to listen. Higher and higher grew the excitement. At last came the Bill of 1831 and feeling ran higher than ever. Macaulay, in a brilliant speech, warned
the house that the country was on the brink of Revolution, but after many alarms an amendment against the government was carried. With great adroitness Grey persuaded the King to dissolve Parliament in a dramatic appearance in the House of Lords. Then after the general election, back went the reformers stronger than ever and put through a second Bill which, however, the Lords rejected. On the third attempt the Tory Peers withdrew and the Bill went through. Too late, however, the working classes discovered that they had won nothing. The Bill enfranchised the middle classes only, and they proved as unfeeling and impervious to the pleadings of their late allies as had the older legislators. The agitation went on in many ways but best remembered now in this connection is the work of the Chartists. Unfortunately a good deal of ignorance and mismanagement pervaded the movement and its ignominious end in 1848 marks the close of the first phase of socialistic activity. Sidney Webb in his "Socialism in England" says "With the collapse of the "Chartist movement in 1848, all serious agitation of a socialistic character came to an end and for thirty years "popular aspirations in England took the forms of a develop- ":ment of trade unions, the progress of co-operative dis- ":tributing stores and building societies, in conjunction "with much purely political agitation for the parliamentary "franchise". We must, therefore, turn aside to examine these highly important institutions which now sprang into importance.

Co-operation owes its being to Robert Owen, although it has never taken the form desired by him. "For that remarkable /
remarkable man, the founder of social ideas in the nine-
teenth century, obsessed by a social creed, never forgot
the success of his factory management at New Lanark and
believed till his death that self-governing, self-supporting
communities, colonies of simple communists, inspired by an
ideal of mutual aid were the only form of co-operation worth
striving for". ("Co-operation", by Joseph Clayton). This
was a socialistic ideal based on the earlier Utopias, which
Owen nevertheless believed to be workable. But it was not
so. His New Lanark settlement was a great success, but no
other scheme was. The fact is that in New Lanark he was
the autocratic ruler, the people being his own workers who
had to submit - to their own great good be it freely ad-
mitted. Elsewhere the absence of a guiding spirit
capable of management, or petty jealousies, or the activit-
ies of rogues soon broke up the communities. Nor were the
earlier attempts to create productive or distributive
co-operative societies any more successful, though many were
the attempts. The birth of the Co-operative Movement as
we know it to-day came in 1844 when the Rochdale pioneers
opened their humble store, which grew and prospered and
inspired others to begin in a similar way. Socialism
owes much to the Co-operative movement, more perhaps than it
realises. Firstly, it is socialism transferred from theory
to practice, proving to all its members the value of collect-
tive action, the benefits of organisation, the compatibility
of private welfare with collective ownership. Secondly,
it contributed greatly to the education of the working
people. From the outset the majority of the distributive
societies set aside proportions of their profits for
educational /
educational purposes and did much good in those early days when few children of the humbler classes had any chance of education and grew up almost quite illiterate. The co-operative educational policy could not remedy that, but it did at least keep its members in touch with problems of the day, mainly by means of its many cheap publications. Thirdly, it gave its members a chance of saving money which they did not have before and so helped to raise the standard of living. It is outside the province of this sketch to trace the many vicissitudes of the movement; we must be content to note its rise and spread and the contribution it made to Socialism. But we must not leave the subject without remarking that Owen, the founder of the movement was more than a co-operator. He undoubtedly exercised a vast influence on the thought of the century and probably had more to do with the spread of Socialism than any other individual. Besides co-operative activity he was keenly interested in trades unionism; he ran several newspapers which had a great vogue and these, along with his books, preached Socialism, not perhaps to the extent of nationalisation of production (his ideal was small-scale communities) but at all events a considerable advance on the rabid individualism of the day.

Turning next to Trades Unionism we find that it was not, like Co-operation, a production of the nineteenth century. We see traces of it in the Gilds of the Middle Ages, although it was then a vastly different thing both in structure and in purpose from the trades union of later days. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the unions began to grow in something like the present form, i.e. they /
they were composed solely of workmen; but at first they were either recreational in character, or else took the form of sick or funeral clubs. One may surmise with Clayton that where artisans thus met, matters of mutual interest like wages and hours would be discussed, but such discussion was not the primary object of the association. Soon, however, the more powerful unions began to assert themselves and the government took fright with the Anti-Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800 as a result. The unions did not disappear. They either remained as purely benefit societies or else took the more melodramatic form of secret societies. In 1824 the king of wire-pullers, Francis Place, managed to get the Anti-Combination laws repealed but the unions became too militant in their new-found freedom and an Act in 1825 clipped their wings, though still recognising the legality of association for the purpose of regulation of wages and hours of work. Next came several grandiose attempts to form one vast union of all workers, the irrepressible Robert Owen being as usual in the foreground with his plan for the "Grand National Consolidated Trades Union". But they all collapsed through inherent defects in management, Government opposition and the hostility of employers. Then comes a lull and it is only after the collapse of Chartism that we find a renewal of trade union activity. This time the foundations were better laid, and led by "The Junta" the movement went on from strength to strength. Stable unions were founded and, ably managed and working in set opposition to violence, did an incredible amount of good in improving the worker's lot. They were able to secure public /
public confidence so much that in 1875 they secured full legal recognition for collective bargaining. The last phase of trades unionism was the "New Unionism" of 1885-90 which marked the entry of the movement into politics. Like Co-operation the movement did not take the form its early leaders had wished but it has been a more potent force than any other in spreading new ideas among the workers. Its values may be classified as (1) A practical exposition to the artisans (and indeed to all classes) of the benefits of collective as opposed to individual action; (2) An educative force of great value (It raised men to posts in which education was essential and thus made it possible for them to teach their fellows the ideals of the movement); (3) A means of securing skill in organisation which otherwise the members could not easily have obtained; (4) A point of focus for the working class movement, enabling it to obtain direct parliamentary representation and so bring the workers' viewpoint before the nation.

The other forms of working class activity - Building Societies, Friendly Societies and so on, have made great strides since the passing of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852 which regularised such Societies. They too, have been valuable object-lessons in collective action and organisation, but it must suffice to give them passing mention only.

Returning now to what we may call direct socialistic teaching the story is soon completed. In 1848 Marx and Engels appear on the scene with their "Communist Manifesto" which does not appear, however, to have created any very great /
great interest at the time. Their greatest influence was an indirect one, through French and German refugees later in the century. John Stuart Mill, starting with a rather critical attitude to socialism, became more and more converted, and by the time the final edition of his "Political Economy" was published had very little objection beyond the fact that socialists wished to eliminate competition. The Christian Socialists were next on the scene preaching the compatibility of Socialism with Christianity and they must have influenced a wide circle and given currency to the socialist idea in circles where it had never penetrated before. In addition they give valuable support to the growing Co-operative movement. In 1880 we mark the founding of the Democratic Federation, later the Social Democratic Federation. The Socialist League was a secession from the earlier body in 1884, with William Morris as the leading spirit, and in 1888 came the Fabian Society. But though we can quickly tell the story of the appearance of these bodies it is no easy matter to estimate their vast influence. They numbered many brilliant men among their membership - the Fabians for example had H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, to name only four - and they all lectured and pamphleteered and crusaded, carrying the messages of their beliefs to wider and ever wider audiences. All the while the movement for Franchise reform went on with a steadily increasing momentum and in 1867, 1868 and 1885 came new Reform Bills which paved the way to the placing in the hands of the people the power for the wise wielding of which the /
the work of many great men had prepared them, slowly and surely.

Having thus briefly summarised the causes of the rise of socialistic ideas one is entitled to enquire how far the "criticism of the idea of property in the light of the "public good" did actually progress during the century. The fact is that no less than a revolution took place during the 100 years. In 1890 Sidney Webb could say "the "development of Socialistic institutions has been so gradual "and has met with such universal acceptance that the great "majority of citizens are still quite unaware of the extent "to which individualistic principles have been abandoned". And again "Society is reforming itself on Collectivist, "not on Individualist principles and although the advocates "of each particular change intend no further alteration the "result is nevertheless an increasing social momentum in the "same general direction".

The whole period is a succession of example after example of the truth of these words. Strongly entrenched as was the government behind the Laissez faire principle at the beginning of the century it nevertheless had to abandon the principle in 1801 and pass the first Factory Act. No doubt it regarded this as a fall from grace not to be repeated but before 1900, thirty eight of such Acts were on the Statute Book, passed by successive governments, each restricting more and more the individual's rights in his property. The tide had turned and could not be stemmed. It was the same in all other branches of legislation. The Mining Acts re-gulated mining as the Factory Acts had regulated factories.
Public Health Acts compelled property owners to make their houses conform to certain standards, various statutes regulated certain trades in the public interest, and so on. In 1835 came a most important measure - The Municipal Corporations Act, which set the machinery of local government in action. Socialists were not slow in seeing the possibilities in this measure; they were soon well represented on local authorities and as years went on municipal socialism became a greater and greater factor in civic life. Municipal gas, water, tramways and every conceivable kind of industry flourished, a powerful cog in the wheel of socialist argument for nationalisation of production. Moreover, the money for public services was obtained by a rate on property, thus constituting a form of nationalisation of land for which Socialists had long agitated. Education was next attacked and soon the Government was forced to accept responsibility for that. The Companies Acts were measures which had their effect on Socialism, for they marked the recognition by the capital-owning class of the benefits of collective action. Moreover, they had a decided influence in improving the state of the workers, though exactly why it is now hard to say. Cole in his "History of the British Working Class Movement" puts forward the theory that the employer could now secure capital easily and did not need to hoard his profits in order to extend his business, thus being content with less. Whether for this reason, or for the fact that the company managers did not drive as hard in order to earn profits for the shareholders as they would have done to earn them for themselves, or whether the employing /
employing classes having tasted the benefit of collective organisation could not reasonably withhold it from the employed, or whether from a combination of all of these causes, the fact remains that the immediate effect was an improvement in working wages and conditions. The Estate Duty Act of 1874 was a flagrant flouting of the old sacredness of property theory - a direct confiscation by the government of private wealth.

These measures, along with the many factors we have already examined reacted and interacted upon each other to produce in the people of the end of the century a collectivist frame of mind as opposite as could well be imagined from the Adam Smithites of 1800. It is always hard in history to separate cause and effect and in the complex synthesis which wrought this revolution, it is doubly so. The employer might groan, but he had to submit to regulation and was surprised to find it did not ruin him. In a short time he approved of regulation - of every industry but his own -, and positively demanded a municipal water supply. The landed proprietor (now sadly diminished in importance from the halcyon days when he and his brother squires were little monarchs) nodded appreciatively when the Income Tax and Estate Duty struck at the wealthy "nabobs" who threatened to drive him from the face of the countryside. But the greatest approval came from the workers who had risen from near-slavery to be a body of responsible men with a big say in the government. Democracy was rising, and it had come through their own efforts, through lessons of organisation learnt in the bitter school of experience. The trade union, the /
the co-operative society, the town council were the training grounds which were to equip men for the Palace of Westminster. William Morris was heartily sick of all of these semi-socialistic forms of activity and of the modest attempts at philanthropic legislation which he considered but half-measures, but he had to admit "I am driven to the conclusion "that those measures .... like everything that under any "reasonable form does tend towards socialism (present "conditions being understood) are of use toward the educa-
"tion of the great mass of the workers; that it is neces-
"sary in the present to give form to vague aspirations "which are in the air about them and to raise their aims "above the mere business-like work of the old trades unions "of raising wages with the consent (however obtained) of the "employers; .... I think that taking up such measures, "directly tending toward Socialism, is necessary also in "getting working people to raise their standard of liveli-
"hood so that they may claim more and yet more of the "wealth produced by Society ..... Lastly, such measures, with "all that goes towards getting them carried, will train "them into organisation and administration". So that even this most ardent of poetic revolutionaries (a type singu-
:larly blind to any real progress around them, so intense is their desire for the promised land) was forced to admit the value of the existing conditions, their improvement on all that had gone before.

The British people delight in constitutional change. If they happen to do something unconstitutional they try to find a precedent or manufacture an excuse. On the continent /
continent people are more impulsive, less logical, more easily swayed by demagogues. France and England clearly illustrate this difference. The events of 1788 made a great blaze, but when the smoke cleared away the people found themselves in a not-too-greatly changed condition. A spark or two which spread to England smouldered quietly away for many years, making less noise and stir but a cleaner job. The struggle was scarcely less bitter than in France but it was a stern wrestle of powerful combatants, not a passionate, indecisive affair. And when it was over a complete change was found to have resulted - a negation of all that had gone before, a reversal of the basis of society. Individualism had gone. Collectivism ruled in its place.