"Social Democracy and the Problem of Political Demobilisation"

submitted by
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Democracy in Britain, having survived two world wars and an intervening period of social unrest and strain, presents to all outward appearances a picture of vigour and efficiency. To the political enthusiast the national machine is indeed healthy. But even the careful observer seems to find a grudging admission that democracy has at least struggled through. In the social sphere we have escaped revolution of the right and the left and the people seem reasonably well-fed and content. Politically, our parliamentary system appears to be as robust as ever.

On closer analysis, however, there are several discouraging, not to say alarming, signs. One notices the centralising and proletarian trend in our state. Fundamental works of social reconstruction are being attempted by direct political action. The result may be an increase of efficiency, but efficiency alone is not a sufficient justification.

In the past our society was composed of a number of autonomous but interrelated units—religious, cultural, political and economic. Political activity was not more important than the rest. It was recognised that certain activities of men, especially the strictly spiritual ones, were supra-political. For our century, however, these conceptions have had their meaning. Almost every social activity is now promulgated or regulated by the State.

While this has made the political machinery top-heavy and powerful, it has rendered society inert and lifeless. This is no longer a popular sense of responsibility, and without the sense democracy can be due to its nature, ineffectual. Thus there is no longer an equilibrium between our
social and political activity. This situation is
not so very far removed from totalitarianism,
the dictatorship of a party and the dictatorship
of mass-organization are not poles apart, but
it is relevant to remember that it was the
catchword of democracy which heralded the
first modern totalitarian state in France, that
of the French revolution.

The problem, then, of the relationship
between sociology and politics is of vital
practical importance, but its true significance
cannot be adequately realized unless one probes the
philosophical basis of society and the origins of
political authority. This will constitute the first
part of our inquiry. Secondly we will examine
the type of political evolution which is at
present predominant in this country — namely the
delegation of power to the ministerial and
departmental sphere. Finally we will appraise
an alternative type of revolution wherein, through
popular and voluntary institutions, the people
are given a more intimate share in the business
of their country. Instead of being a problem to
be solved, revolution can become an answer to
our needs.

I

regarded from both a rational and an
historical standpoint, the kernel of society is
the family. A man is born not immediately in
the state, but by being born into a family, the
individual becomes a member of a particular
society, a state, which is a community of families.
A man is not only an individual; he is also
a social being. The rights of individual families
may clash; hence since the wider society, th
state, to reconcile the interests of individuals and promote the common good. This is a self-evident point of natural law which, as Kant saw, is a need for authority without which no state can function. The state has a social duty to protect rights and promote the common good; to accomplish this, there must be adequate political authority. In the Christian tradition, the idea of authority received early covert. St. Paul is unequivocal in his words to the Romans: "Every soul must be submissive to its lawful superior; authority comes from God only, and all authority that holds sway over us is of this ordination. Thus the one who opposes authority is rebel against the ordinance of God." This is simply a restating of Christ's own words: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." While the need for authority in society, and in this essay the authority under democratic rule, has always been recognized, the origin of this authority has rarely been spelt upon among political theorists. It is relevant to our present purpose to examine the divergent views on the issue. We must recall, however, that any view of the origin of political authority that cleaves hard out of accord is theoretically fanciful and politically disastrous. It is theoretically fanciful because it ignores the question of metaphysical causality. But in the sphere of practical politics it results in the split of political parties, the alienation of individuals, the resignation of the community of God, and every
was a lie into himself and insisted that his freedom consisted in pursuing what he thought to be his own good irrespective of the right of others. And in the political sphere, totalitarianism was produced by the removal of the moral basis of governmental authority and the establishment of the majority people as the source of right of political authority. In other words, one extensity has generated another.

Liberalism, starting from a conception of freedom which was only a portion of the truth, is a theory of political authority which inevitably resulted in absolute tyranny. The sovereign state of Rousseau has become the authoritarian reign of national socialism and the later "people democracy" of Eastern Europe. The exclusion of good and the objective morality of Christianity from political life leads logically to the predominance of force over right. The absence of freedom proceeds in ethical historical continuity to the rejection of freedom.

Clearly, a true conception of democracy must reside somewhere between these two extremes and must be based upon a recognition of the divine origin of authority. This is not a rejection of the validity of the argument for the Divine right of kings. The upholder of this theory transferred the attributes of state authority in general to the one form of monarchic government in particular, insisting that monarchy was directed by God, and independent of the popular will. That is why Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, attacking the theory of James I, could still write "heaven and political polities were in Deo a quo non sinit us homo et licites procedat," and quote Psalm 8.
"Per me regem... per me principem..."

For does the Christian ethos appeal in the opposite direction to the sovereignty of the people. If the sovereignty in every state is in the will of the majority of its citizens and hence permissibly with the people ruling by a majority of votes, then pure democracy would be the only legitimate form of government. Recognition of the divine origin of authority does not militate against democracy as one knows it; it merely reveals that democracy is only one of many possible forms of governent, although it is not without significance that Mr. Thomas Jefferson reveals a preference for a constitutional government.

Authority thus is an attribute of the idea. It cannot be explained by any theory of artificial "compact" which is both unphilosophical and untheoretical. It stands to the will from God via the people. This is a national will and it is not contradicted by history. In a ruler with power in time of war he can still receive popular acceptance or rejection on return of peace.

We are now in a position to review the question of social democracy and political revolution in a fuller perspective. We can conclude from the above observations that the state exists for the people; it is a means to an end of common good. The modern state, however, has been for the "passage to exist for the sake of the ship," as often put it. Still worse we have witnessed in many countries the capture of the state machinery by a political party which has become synonymous with the state, and which has proceeded to recognize the whole life of the community according to its programme and ideology.
unless there is some effective form of political revolution in this country, the social order will exist for us. So if it very nature the nation-centred state is a vast organisation, neutral and impersonal, which can be operated by whatever party or combination of parties happen to predominate at the moment, if this political force has drive and initiative and can offer the means concrete economic and ideological programmes, there is nothing to stop it confining itself in a position of dictatorship, broadening the activity of politics and narrowing the range of citizenship. This is just what has already happened in Russia by revolutionary method.

It can happen in Britain by evolutionary means.

The problem we have to face is that of making our democracy sufficiently visible in its social respect to withstand the ironclad tendencies of modern political method and at the same time preserve the principles of personal liberty and toleration upon which our democracy has been built. It is not our constitution which needs to be reformed, political action is already too efficient and far-reaching. It is the life of society which must be reordered; we must have a hope and a purpose.

This mission cannot be accomplished by politics alone. Our history gives us that dream of one state for the freedom which society possessed was not that of democracy in the modern sense, but of individual liberty and corporate self-sufficiency springing from a spiritual conception of life. It is these social realities which have given our parliamentary institutions a stability which has not been noticeable elsewhere.
the artificial creation of continental rationalism and idealism. And a necessary part of the British parliamentary system was a recognition of the limited nature of its purpose and scope. This recognition was possible because society had a common conception of its duties and purposes and its rights and responsibilities. The party system could never have been conducted without this basis of common outlook and unity of the people. This interpretation does not entail a denial of the importance of civil and religious strife in our history. There is a wide difference between a conflict in which the adversaries are Catholic and Protestant or Tory and Whig, and one in which they are Catholic and Marxist or Conservative and Communist. The latter are mutually exclusive.

The totalitarian state see themselves heir witnesses to the fact that the social structure is a vital element in any national movement. For they are not content to confine their activities to legislation and taxation. They use always a ruthless and clumsy attempt to organize the social and cultural life of the community. Their purpose, of course, is completely practical and their methods are not of the sort which rational and democratic people can copy. But we must recognize the importance of a healthy and vital social structure. The press, the cinema, and the radio do not all permit recognition that importance. Mass-produced entertainment based on financial profit and appealing to what is wanted rather than what ought to be, is the very way of sterilizing our society.

Yet this is evidence that even in our country there has been a tipping of the scale in favour of social action. One can discern a certain
movement from politics to sociology. The payment of
a living wage by employers, in contrast, is no longer
the political or economic question which it was in
the last century. It has now taken on a sociologi-
and psychological complex, and, in spite of the de-
strictification of society, even has its ethical
appearances, but the 20th century social
resources are still not in a satisfactory condi-
tion for social equality to be accomplished through a
political medium and is taking more and more to
mean more social uniformity. This is no solution to
the problem. Man is more than an animal. Society
is more than a collection of men. The intent
of a fool are presumably reasonably well fed
and warm. And economic relief can be bestowed
by the western dictatorship.

Society itself must have a hand in
its own salvation. The people must be prepared
to accomplish more things for themselves, and
discontinue the futile habit of allowing politicians
to "do it for them." Liberty does not mean either power
or economic security. It means self-development and
self-fulfillment, essential elements of social democ-

ty, but ones which are rather unpopular at the present
time. This is a conception of liberty which we
cannot afford to sacrifice, for it was hard-earned
throughout the centuries and has become an integral
part of our social tradition. Moreover, it is a
conception of liberty which is not necessarily
synonymous with the modern political democracy
for it had its origin in an age which was
essentially aristocratic, when an society was a
network of rural communities, each ruled by the
squire and the parson - itself a reflection of the
temporal and spiritual authority of the feudal
state.

In short, social awareness must be made a reality if our society is not to succumb to the totalitarian appeal. But it must be achieved at a social level. Political action alone cannot accomplish a social revival. If it attempt to do so, it may produce justice and it may gain efficiency, but it will certainly not be social. It will be some-thing in the nature of government charity, a gift from an omnipotent state. Any can be a part of our social organism, he affected by one political party. For the very success of one party argues that its victories have been due to the fact that our national political allegiances transcend party political parties have worked within a common rationale, and have not been mutually exclusive. If, however, we place all our money on one party, we will plant the seed of destruction for the whole system.

How, then, must our society be re-ordered? We have already suggested that the solution lies in some form of devolution from political control. We must now consider the type of devolution which is in fact taking place at the present time. Is it occurring on social requirements or is it functioning otherwise? Upon the answer to these questions depends our solution to the situation.

II.

In the sixth book of his " Laws, Plato remarks: 'in all matter involving a mass of petty detail, the law-giver must leave gaps; rules and up-to-date amendments must be made from year to year by persons who have constant experience from year to year in these things and must be taught by practice until a satisfactory code is
finally agreed upon to regulate such proceedings."

This quotation is a remarkable witness to the fact that in Ancient Greece legal and political experience had already revealed the need for a certain amount of delegation in the business of government. If the issue was relevant in the ancient world, how much more important in the modern, when legislation has reached unprecedented intensity? In its technical aspect the problem can be stated quite briefly. 

The legislature has the power to make laws, and in our own country the fluidity of a constitution has resulted in the fact that this power is supreme. Parliament is in practice, if not in theory, omnipotent. Hence it follows that Parliament can give to the Minister of the Crown or other persons or bodies the right to make rules and regulations. This is called the power of delegated legislation and it is absolutely legal. Looking at the issue dispassionately, one must recognize that Order, Rule, and Regulations are a legitimate part of our Government as it now exists.

And the advantages of delegation come quickly to mind. Bills would be very cumbersome and wasteful of Parliamentary time if they covered every contingency which might arise. It is sufficient if the legislative lays down the general principle and authorizes the Minister of the appropriate Government Department to fill in the details after the bill has become law. At the same time this system is flexible and efficient in that statutory rules can be adapted to changes of circumstances and to local needs and conditions in a way which formal legislation
cannot hope to emulate. Finally, statutory instruments, to use the parliamentary phrase under which they are classified, can be passed promptly and efficiently with any emergency, civil or military, without being hampered by the deliberative procedure of the legislature.

The support of delegated legislation are quite to point out the safeguards which are attached to its use. In the first place there is a specific duty of control by Parliament. In some cases the statutory instrument cannot come into force until it has been approved by an affirmative resolution in both Houses. In other cases, it must be laid before Parliament which may within a certain number of days revise the substance of the instrument by a negative resolution. Finally, to re-emerge against an abundance of ordinance reflecting the vigilance of Parliament, a scrutiny committee has been appointed in both Houses.

Moreover, there is a certain legal limitation to any arbitrary procedure which might result from delegated legislation. For although the competence of Parliament presents any court of law questioning the validity of a statute, the same does not apply to orders and directions which are valid only if they comply in substance and in form with the provisions of the parent act.

In the face of these provisions it may seem that a sufficiently strong case has been made to warrant the acceptance of delegated legislation with all its implications; and which would exhaust the resources of the legislative braintrust is devolved upon the administrative, and the practical appears to be adequately safeguarded. So the problem resolved? It would be an extremely superficial
view which gave an affirmative answer. For it will be noticed that each separate defence of this form of political revolution rested on a strictly utilitarian basis. Efficiency in the service of the appeal. In this way modern political men were more to the spirit of Machiavelli than they imagined. Politics have become a matter of mere technique, but this is a conception much more crude and primitive than the type of government which they are seeking to replace. Yet precisely because delegated legislation rests upon the appeal of utility, it is apparently immune from criticism. It is difficult to attack efficiency because it is difficult to defend inefficiency. But this disability is removed if it can be demonstrated that utility is only a small fish in a large pond, that there are other and more fundamental issues at stake.

In the meantime, however, we can come to grips on the narrow ground of technique at least with the question of parliamentary and legal safeguards. In it is obvious that in some cases the bonds are indeed powerless to fine them. There was the Borden act of 1921 where there could be no appeal to bonds at all. The decision of the Minister is "final and not subject to an appeal in any court," still more revealing was the Banning and Valuation Act of 1925. Here section 67 authorizes the Minister to take any steps he wishes for the purpose of operating certain provisions of the Act. Moreover it was expressly stated that he could modify the provisions of the Act itself.
It is evidently an encroachment on the area of common law and any implication of its jurisdiction. It is in fact a good example of power delegated to a government department, in this case a nationalised industry, in the interest of efficiency, and culminating in a legal anomaly.

Instances of this kind could of course be multiplied, but it is not our purpose to pursue a rumination of 'The Uses of Desperation.' The point we wish to make is this, although it is still an accepted constitutional doctrine that the Minister of the Crown does not tamper with the administration of justice, Parliament has indirectly reduced the sphere of influence of judicial independence by the character of modern legislation which it is producing. The new conception of the role of Government as a promoter of social justice has altered the nature of our law. What we might have imagined would be an invigorating influence on social democracy has become in fact a concentration of power at a political level which shares authoritarian social power and of recent times a dictatorship. Much exists between the function of government and the function of law which has vital bearing on our social life. The conception of politics and the which has the support of the statistian and libertarian tradition recognises that the state exists to promote the common good; while common law is based upon the protection of individual rights. The 20th century State, however, has departed from this original purpose, and in so far as it is more and more with individual issues. Can the law also reverse its role, and the co-ordinate the movement of Parliament? Can the law protect the
common good? Hardly. The common law rests upon an individualistic conception of society and lacks the means of enforcing public right in such. Moreover, if the eclectic character of modern legislation conflicts with the true nature of governmental activity, it is nevertheless completely constitutional. This perhaps is the essence of the problem. How can we reverse this trend without adopting revolutionary approach which would if its nature be even more remote from social democracy?

To there is a danger that the democratic form of government is being limited to its freedoms—freedom of associating to secure free election on the political level, and freedom of speech on the social level. But social democracy cannot be attained solely by political means, and freedom of speech is only one portion of man's rights.

Freedom of action in respect, other than these is being severely restricted. One of the prerequisites of law to existing in voluntary power is that it should be known and understood by the individual. A person ought to be able to determine, with the help of his lawyer or necessaries, the legal consequences of his actions. Yet it is precisely a state of uncertainty which is, delegated legislation on such scale in producice. The confusion and the detail of regulations enacted by government departments and the impossibility of predicting ministerial interpretations seem substituting from the social efficiency of the form of political development which have been created in this country. Their constitutions
as to diversity and their decisions given in so many ways, that certainty as to the state of administrative law becomes negligible; in short, the lack of a consistent technique of interpretation is at once a limitation of personal freedom and a negation of the efficient procedure which is the main justification of delegated legislation. Both on administrative and on social grounds, therefore, "administrative" is of dubious character.

Yet its effects on public opinion have not yet been realized. The Act of Parliament is sanctioned by a majority in a legislature which has been elected by the people, but delegated legislation is a much more remote procedure; a government department does not engender the same respect as does Parliament. Therefore, in the eyes of the electorate, administrative regulations have not the same quality as direct provisions of Parliament. And the taxation procedure by which they can be questioned causes a feeling of frustration which might well result in a disrespect for all law. Political revolution then, while possibly creating order, has potentially lowered the status of law; for since administrative law is of equal validity with common law, the latter has grown less significant as its scope narrows.

In short, one is moved to the conclusion that Parliament, which affects the delegation of power, is not only unconcerned with the legal implications, but in fact is determined to exclude supervision by the courts of law. The formula that an administrative provision "shall have effect as if enacted in this Act" was used until Jaffé's book proved a decision Home of Lords decision favourable to the law courts, since then there
have been even more comprehensive declarations, such as "the validity of an order purporting to be made under this section shall not be questioned in any court of law," and "a certificate by the Minister shall be conclusive evidence that all requirements of this Act have been complied with."

How then, can we be protected from arbitrary rule? The only safeguard not existing in parliamentary self-same Parliament which sanctions the delegation which we have outlined above. Parliament must make a political decision in order to object to an anomaly. Yet this procedure must necessarily create more "red-tape." An individual complains to his member of Parliament, who asks a question of the appropriate Minister, who gets the information from the Department concerned, thus causing more work for the official engaged therein. Consequently we must conclude that the chief safeguard against abuse of delegation is itself so complicated in detail as the procedure which delegation seeks to avoid.

Moreover, there is a tendency for an unsatisfactory ministerial answer to go unchallenged instances of this multiply weekly. And the executive in a sense can claim authority for such arbitrary procedure. For it is the nature of present-day democracy that the electorate vote for a specific programme and entrust the party which has offered it to them to carry it out. In other words, the "vox populi" actually amounts to a direct mandate to the executive, whose power in this considerably enhanced. And the next step is almost imperceptible; the party in power proceeds to give the electorate an additional programme which they think good for them.

No
over the institution of a continuing committee adequately
solve the problem. If the abundance of Order
and Direction is too much for Parliament to
cope with, what guarantee have we that a
committee can examine all the details and at
the same time allow its members to fulfill their
normal parliamentary duties?

We must conclude, therefore, that the
system of political devolution which is now
most prominent, namely the delegation of power
by Parliament to the administrative departments,
is not adequately safeguarded either at a political
or at a legal level. In fact the sheer quantity
of legislation now being moved through Parliament
is not compatible with individual freedom and in
the final analysis it is personal freedom which
is the basis of social democracy. It is especially
dangerous that present-day legislation should have
such power when men no longer conceive of human
devils as deriving authority from adherence to the
Divine Law.

The only justification which can be
offered for the extent and nature of delegated
legislation is that of efficiency. But why must
we suppose that a centralized state has a
monopoly of efficiency? And why must we
suppose that efficiency itself is the sole criterion
of government? Utility in a modern ideal, like
there is something which is much more important:
just as in present day economics the need is
between security and freedom, so in politics the
issue is between efficiency and freedom. Deming
on its social level is a neglected story at
present. In order to secure for its a vital and
dynamic growth, it must be given more work to
so. Things which are now accomplished on the high
way of government action, working through bureau-
cracy, should be done much further down the ladder near
the people community. Of course this must be politi-
cal devolution! Otherwise a top-heavy state will stifle
all spontaneous social action, but this devolution
must be re-produced by methods other than
delegation to a government department. Such a proced-
ure is actually centralistic, whereby the administrative
becomes synonymous with the government.

How then must our society be reordered? We
have already suggested that any answer to the
problem must entail devolution from the State
towards the community. We must now consider
precisely what form this will take.

In the first place we can see any
process of devolution apart from authority delegated
to the administrative machinery. The tradition of royal
commissions occupies an honourable place among our
institutions. Here we have a good example of action at
a non-political level which is nevertheless not
unconnected with politics. The scope of a commission
of this type is limited to enquiry and research and it
is important to put effort to its conclusion.

But we should not dismiss the system of royal
commissions as irrelevant either to political
devolution or to social democracy. It achieves an
impartial verdict on a specific issue, it is
unprejudiced within the limits of human nature
and it is revised from the bench of political
controversy; moreover, the drains and voluntary
composition of a royal commission is a vindication
of a latent social awareness which has still
survived into the 20th Century.
Similarly, the use of advisory committees is a device which can be included in political devolution. Usually these bodies are virtually independent of ministerial and parliamentary control, and when they are expressly provided for by statute they constitute an essential part of government in that they must be consulted before ministerial action is taken. A good pre-war example of such a committee was the Import Duties Advisory Committee, set up by the Import Duties Act of 1932. Even further removed from responsibility to the legislature, and yet any criticism to statutory sanction, are institutions like the Milk Marketing Boards scattered all over the country. These can hardly be classified as government departments; they are much more autonomous.

If these examples of de-centralization do not provide a complete answer to our needs, it is not because they are intrinsically worthless, rather, as they naturally limited in scope. They do not affect the lives of the people on a sufficient popular level. If there is to be any hope for our social democracy, the ordinary people must become conscious of their worth to society; they must be an end to the feeling of insignificance and lack of responsibility. The wife of the family, which is prior in reason and in chronology to the state, must have a greater share in its own development. Parents must have an intimate control over the destiny of their children. The very fact that much self-evident truths have to be defended as the present time is an indication of what for we have veered from the natural order of things. State inspectors and
psychologists must not be allowed the extraordinary powers they now possess. The Minister of Education must yield back to the parents their lawful authority. At the very least, parents should feel that they are respecting in the choice of their child’s education. This can only be achieved by removing the monopoly of state schools by restoring the status of voluntary and denominational schools, which in England at any rate are being supplied with special discrimination. In other words, among the humble classes of the community, social vitality can only be restored by the authority which is now held by state officials devolving upon the parents.

This is not an impossible ideal. The universities of Britain are a living example of the vitality of the voluntary principle. Subsidized by state and local Government funds, they are nonetheless autonomous in principle and practice. Students receiving grants are free to study where and what they will, limited only by their own ability. In its relations with the universities, the state has in fact retained its proper function. It is a mistaken conception of the role of the state which supposes that because it finances therefore it should control.

If the voluntary principle is essential in the sphere of culture, it is equally important in the world of economics. It is not sufficient for democracy that the sum total of a worker’s democratic responsibility should consist in the election of his political representatives once every five years. He should have some vital interest in the occupation to which he is devoted. In this connection the Trade Unions...
as no longer relevant. They are in the very reverse of revolutionary movement. In their original conception trade unions were independent and spontaneous creations of the workers; they existed to defend the interests of their members against whatever threat was most palpable. In the past that threat was capital and the issue was clear: how the threat is the state and the issue is blurred. For the trade unions are no longer autonomous. They have adopted themselves to a political party and adopted a specific ideology. By applying its political action they have polluted both themselves and the community. They have lost their own independence and can no longer protect the worker from state interference. And they have produced a situation where politics are being identified with purely economic considerations, and democratic ideals are being subordinated to those of organized industry. Instead of revolution there has been a disguising of revolutionary tendencies towards political and administrative concentration.

If the trade unions do not answer the needs of social democracy, what does? Nothing that exists at present. And if our own suggestions are to avoid the pellmell of nationalization we must confine them to the basic principle. These can be stated briefly. The state should not take upon itself the task of subordinate existence. Each industry and profession should have its own organization. There must be a voluntary and spontaneous movement both by employers and by workers to pool themselves together; this must be done according to occupation and not as in the past, according to class. Each industry can
he plans and organized and controlled by a few
of men appointed from the employers and workers
of that industry itself. This will promote efficiency
because a specific industry will be run by men
who know its needs. But what is more important
it will affect a moral regeneration, because a
worker will have a feeling of interest and
responsibility for his own occupation, upon the
success of which depends his livelihood. These
associations in fields will have local and regional
branches, and their work will be correlated by
a national board. The site of the state will be
that of watching, managing, and restraining
according to circumstances. It must regulate but
not prevent; we cannot afford to inhibit
the Italian corporations under the Fascist regime.

This need for a share in the organization
of industry is a need which is being vitally felt
by present-day workers in state enterprises. A feel-
ing of frustration and impotence is inevitable when
the proletariat under every régime is taken on
a high level of the state board or department.
The desire for responsibility is evident in many
recent pronouncements of the Fascist Union. The
only danger is that in accomplishing revolution
on the lines described above, the idea should,
form. The whole enterprise is a charitable
gift from a paternal government, a handing over
of some of its power in the manner of fancy
children handing over toys to play with. But the point
is that the power should never have been the
state's; it is now. Society must now create its
own organization simply because nationalization
was not, as we are not referring only to industry; the
elimination of the Tripartite System was part of

in the absence of social service) has disturbed our social balance and threatens to stifle our voluntary institutions which have the traditions of years of vigorous growth behind them. People are now adopting the attitude that nothing more can be done; my instinctive social initiative long ago was proved by "them." Local government itself is tainted with this outlook. How many of us from councils simply reflect in miniature the mentality of the central government! Here the problem is twofold. There must be decentralisation from Whitehall and it becomes more and more upon local councils; for local patriotism and diligence are traditions which we cannot afford to waste. There must also be a change of outlook on the part of the people who represent us in our local institutions; if they are to adopt a remote and authoritarian attitude, what can be the shape of things to come?

Political decentralisation of the type outlined above will have beneficial results not only in our social activity but also on politics. In a democracy in its social aspect is spiritually right, how can our political life of the country be healthy? Just as there is a vital relationship between society and the culture which it produces, so there is a logical link between society and local political institutions. We must not be misled by the apparent efficiency of representative government in modern Britain. The administration of the late Roman Empire was technically and superficially efficient, but its social root was afeather. Similarly there is at present a gap between our social and political life. The parliamentary system flourished in Britain because it responded to the element of freedom and responsibility in the social life of the
community. Now, however, politics are simply a veneer upon social utility that has collapsed. This is not evident at the time when the electorate elects it representatives. Elections in this country are conducted at a very low democratic level; a political programme is offered which appeals to disillusionment, the material appetites of the people; and each party strives to offer the tiniest economic benefits. There is rarely any recognition of the importance of spiritual or ethical values.

If our social order becomes more robust, it will produce a political democracy with a correspondingly broader basis. The sociological and parliamentary respect of democratic life are vitally connected. If a man is frustrated in his work, unsettled in his recreation, and stripped of any moral responsibility, he is less likely to feel any compelling political awareness. It is a return of responsibility which is most essential. In reality the activity of government and increasing that of popular and voluntary institutions we should continue; keep in mind the recreation of responsibility in social life. In the individual exercise of responsibility must be widespread in society and not confined to a powerfully close or a paid bureaucracy, however efficient these may be.

Responsibility is essentially a moral conception and until it bears fruit in society our democracy will be dangerous. To only from responsibility on the idea of duty be engendered and it is one of the curses of our century that men insistently demand their rights, but take no account of their obligations. The notion that every right carries with it a duty is no longer remembered, or if it is remembered, it is conveniently
disregarded, but there must be a recognition that personal and social morality is the necessary foundation of all political constitution. A society which is not imbued with a religious vitality is little more than an animal herd. Even the totalitarian regime recognises this, as we have already indicated. But their way is not ours; we do not want any alien ideology imposed upon us. The religion upon whose fiction we are now living, but whose roots are not neglected, can and must be respected. It is unhistorical to maintain that Christianity played an essential part in our social and political evolution. Without the Incarnation subsequent events could not have happened; and the cultural and institutional inheritance which is now Europe's traces back it origins to Christ's entry into the world.

And it is only from Christianity that we can develop that humility which is a prerequisite to any theory or practice of Government; a humility which recognises that ours is not the final authority, that there is a law of God to which Government and people must adhere. It is only by acknowledging this ultimate law beyond our own human laws that a social democracy can achieve a balanced and peaceful growth. "The difference," said John of Salisbury in the 12th century, "between the prince and the quietist is that the prince keeps the laws and governs his people in accordance with light." Within the limits of this Christian conception of government, revolution from politics towards social responsibility can be affected.