George Bernard Shaw States The Case for Socialism
(From N. Y. Times September 12)

SOCIALISM, reduced to its simplest legal and practical expression, means the complete discarding of the institution of private property by transforming it into public property, and the division of the resultant public income equally and indiscriminately among the entire population. Thus it reverses the policy of capitalism, which means establishing private or “real” property to the utmost physically possible extent, and then leaving distribution of income to take care of itself.

The change involves a complete moral volte-face. In socialism private property is anathema, and equal distribution of income the first consideration. In capitalism private property is cardinal, and distribution left to ensue from the play of free contract and selfish interest on that basis, no matter what anomalies it may present.

Socialism never arises in the earlier phases of capitalism, as, for instance, among the pioneers of civilization in a country where there is plenty of land available for private appropriation by the last comer. The distribution which results under such circumstances presents no wider departures from a rough equality than those made morally plausible by their association with exceptional energy and ability at the one extreme, and with obvious defects of mind and character or accidental hard luck at the other. This phase, however, does not last long under modern conditions.

RISE OF LANDED CLASS

All the more favorable sites are soon privately appropriated; and the later comers (provided by immigration or the natural growth of the population,) finding no eligible land to appropriate, are obliged to live by hiring it at a rent from its owners, transforming the latter into a renter class enjoying unearned incomes, which increase continually with the growth of the population until the landed class becomes a money-lending or capitalist class also, capital being the name given to spare money.

The resource of hiring land and spare money is open to those only who are sufficiently educated to keep accounts and manage businesses, most of whom spring from the proprietary class as younger sons. The rest have to live by being hired as laborers and artisans at weekly or daily wages; so that a rough division of society into an upper or proprietary class, a middle or employing and managing class and a wage proletariat is produced. In this division the proprietary class is purely parasitic, consuming without producing.

As the inexorable operation of the economic law of rent makes this class richer and richer as the population increases its demand for domestic servants and for luxuries of all