CHAPTER XX

Is it communistic or socialistic?

While to some the proposal here submitted may appear alarmingly radical, and while, in fact, it appears in Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto, it may be illuminating to refer briefly to that document. To set the framework of vehemence and immoderate vulgarity which color a large part of *Das Kapital,* we might first quote:

> The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed from time immemorial. Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives. Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common . . .

The Manifesto ascends to more moderate language when it offers ten points as the Communists' prescription for the common good, which Marx describes as "the proletariat organized as a ruling class"! Of the ten measures, the first is the "abolition of property in land, and application of all rents of land to public purposes." The second, "a heavy, progressive or graduated income tax." The third, "abolition of all right of inheritance."

Succeeding measures are of little interest until we arrive at the tenth: "Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labor in its present form." The last appears to be good, sound common sense and citizenship, and this it shares with part of Recommendation 1.

It is hard to determine why our tax-establishing bodies adopted Marx's Recommendation 2 (income tax) so heartily when the second part of Recommendation 1 (public collection of land rental) would have been so much more sensible; and why they virtually adopt the third recommendation (inheritance tax) without considering the difference between *the inheritance of rightful property* and *the inheritance of improper privilege.* Of course the first recommendation advocates two propositions, inasmuch as property in land and rents of land are separate things. In this sense, an owner could retain *property in land so long as he paid the rental.*

Nor is the public collection of land rental a socialist's idea, as the English socialists have shown us, for in the many years during which they were in power they made no suggestion of a move to collect the rental of the land.

The Fabian Socialists took over the "tools of production" and passed one of the most injurious measures, the Town and Country Planning Act, that ever legislative buffoonery concocted, punishing the developer, coddling the landlord. In common with all foolish legislation, the Act has had to be frequently amended.

Without too clear a knowledge of Communism and Socialism, the writer has gained the impression that the Communists proclaim, "From each according to his ability. To each according to his need." They do not practice this, of course, for they know that the needs of the needy would soon outstrip the ability of the able; the able would soon be discouraged by their realizing that the "needy" would be politically selected, that every malingerer would soon become "needy," and that more and more of the able would be reduced to neediness if incentive were destroyed. And the absolute power of a few individuals will always develop.

And of the socialists' "ownership by the people of the tools of production," this at once implies political operation: never a success anywhere.

These are off-the-cuff personal appraisals and seem so obvious that I would not spend much time or effort elaborating them.