

Excerpts from Liberalism and Social Action

John Dewey

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The History of Liberalism

Liberalism has long been accustomed to onslaughts proceeding from those who oppose social change. It has long been treated as an enemy by those who wish to maintain the *status quo*. But today these attacks are mild in comparison with indictments proceeding from those who want drastic social changes effected in a twinkling of an eye, and who believe that violent overthrow of existing institutions is the right method of effecting the required changes. From current assaults, I select two as typical: "A liberal is one who gives lip approval to the grievances of the proletariat, but who at the critical moment invariably runs to cover on the side of the masters of capitalism." Again, a liberal is defined as "one who professes radical opinions in private but who never acts upon them for fear of losing *entrée* into the courts of the mighty and respectable." Such statements might be cited indefinitely. They indicate that, in the minds of many persons, liberalism has fallen between two stools, so that it is conceived as the refuge of those unwilling to take a decided stand in the social conflicts going on. It is called mealy-mouthed, a milk-and-water doctrine and so on.

Popular sentiment, especially in this country, is subject to rapid changes of fashion. It was not a long time ago that liberalism was a term of praise; to be liberal was to be progressive, forward-looking, free from prejudice, characterized by all admirable qualities. I do not think, however, that this particular shift can be dismissed as a mere fluctuation of intellectual fashion. Three of the great nations of Europe have summarily suppressed the civil liberties for which liberalism valiantly strove, and in few countries of the Continent are they maintained with vigor. It is true that none of the nations in question has any long history of devotion to liberal ideals. But the new attacks proceed from those who profess they are concerned to change not to preserve old institutions. It is well known that everything for which liberalism stands is put in peril in times of war. In a world crisis, its ideals and methods are equally challenged; the belief spreads that liberalism flourishes only in times of fair social weather.

It is hardly possible to refrain from asking what liberalism really is; what elements, if any, of permanent value it contains, and how these values shall be maintained and developed in the conditions the world now faces. On my own account, I have raised these questions. I have wanted to find out whether it is possible for a person to continue, honestly and intelligently, to be a liberal, and if the answer be in the affirmative, what kind of liberal faith should be asserted today. Since I do not suppose that I am the only one who has put such questions to himself, I am setting forth the conclusions to which my examination of the problem has led me. If there is danger, on one side, of cowardice and evasion, there is danger on the other side of losing the sense of historic perspective and of yielding precipitately to short-time contemporary currents, abandoning in panic things of enduring and priceless value.

The natural beginning of the inquiry in which we are engaged is consideration of the origin and past development of liberalism. It is to this topic that the present chapter is devoted. The

conclusion reached from a brief survey of history, namely, that liberalism has had a chequered career, and that it has meant in practice things so different as to be opposed to one another, might perhaps have been anticipated without prolonged examination of its past. But location and description of the ambiguities that cling to the career of liberalism will be of assistance in the attempt to determine its significance for today and tomorrow.

The use of the words liberal and liberalism to denote a particular social philosophy does not appear to occur earlier than the first decade of the nineteenth century. But the thing to which the words are applied is older. It might be traced back to Greek thought; some of its ideas, especially as to the importance of the free play of intelligence, may be found notably expressed in the funeral oration attributed to Pericles. But for the present purpose it is not necessary to go back of John Locke, the philosopher of the "glorious revolution" of 1688. The outstanding points of Locke's version of liberalism are that governments are instituted to protect the rights that belong to individuals prior to political organization of social relations. These rights are those summed up a century later in the American Declaration of Independence: the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Among the "natural" rights especially emphasized by Locke is that of property, originating, according to him, in the fact that an individual has "mixed" himself, through his labor, with some natural hitherto unappropriated object. This view was directed against levies on property made by rules without authorization from the representatives of the people. The theory culminated in justifying the right of revolution. Since governments are instituted to protect the natural rights of individuals, they lose claim to obedience when they invade and destroy these rights instead of safeguarding them: a doctrine that well served the aims of our forefathers in their revolt against British rule, and that also found an extended application in the French Revolution of 1789.

The impact of this earlier liberalism is evidently political. Yet one of Locke's greatest interests was to uphold toleration in an age when intolerance was rife, persecution of dissenters in faith almost the rule, and when wars, civil and between nations, had a religious color. In serving the immediate needs of England—and then those of other countries in which it was desired to substitute representative for arbitrary government—it bequeathed to later social thought a rigid doctrine of natural rights inherent in individuals independent of social organization. It gave a directly practical import to the older semi-theological and semi-metaphysical conception of natural law as supreme over positive law and gave a new version of the old idea that natural law is the counterpart of reason, being disclosed by the natural light with which man is endowed.

The whole temper of this philosophy is individualistic in the sense in which individualism is opposed to organized social action. It held to the primacy of the individual over the state not only in time but in moral authority. It defined the individual in terms of liberties of thought and action already possessed by him in some mysterious ready-made fashion, and which it was the sole business of the state to safeguard. Reason was also made an inherent endowment of the individual, expressed in men's moral relations to one another, but not sustained and developed because of these relations. It followed that the great enemy of individual liberty was thought to be government because of its tendency to encroach upon the innate liberties of individuals. Later liberalism inherited this conception of a natural antagonism between the individual and organized society. There still lingers in the minds of some the notion that there are two different "spheres" of action and of rightful claims; that of political society and that of the individual, and

that in the interest of the latter the former must be as contracted as possible. Not till the second half of the nineteenth century did the idea arise that government might and should be an instrument for securing and extending the liberties of individuals. This later aspect of liberalism is perhaps foreshadowed in the clauses of our Constitution that confer upon Congress power to provide for "public welfare" as well as for public safety.*

What has already been said indicates that with Locke the inclusion of the economic factor, property, among natural rights had a political animus. However, Locke at times goes so far as to designate as property everything that is included in "life, liberties and estates"; the individual has property in himself and in his life and activities; property in this broad sense is that which political society should protect. The importance attached to the right of property within the political area was without doubt an influence in the later definitely economic formulation of liberalism. But Locke was interested in property already possessed. A century later, industry and commerce were sufficiently advanced in Great Britain so that interest centered in production of wealth, rather than in its possession. The conception of labor as the source of right in property was employed not so much to protect property from confiscation by the ruler (that right was practically secure in England) as to urge and justify freedom in the use and investment of capital and the right of laborers to move about and seek new modes of employment—claims denied by the common law that came down from semi-feudal conditions. The earlier economic conception may fairly be called static; it was concerned with possessions and estates. The newer economic conception was dynamic. It was concerned with release of productivity and exchange from a cumbrous complex of restrictions that had the force of law. The enemy was no longer the arbitrary special action of rulers. It was the whole system of common law and judicial practice in its adverse bearing upon freedom of labor, investment and exchange.

The transformation of earlier liberalism that took place because of this new interest is so tremendous that its story must be told in some detail. The concern for liberty and for the individual, which was the basis of Lockean liberalism, persisted; otherwise the newer theory would not have been liberalism. But liberty was given a very different practical meaning. In the end, the effect was to subordinate political to economic activity; to connect natural laws with the laws of production and exchange, and to give a radically new significance to the earlier conception of reason. The name of Adam Smith is indissolubly connected with initiation of this transformation. Although he was far from being an unqualified adherent of the idea of *laissez faire*, he held that the activity of individuals, freed as far as possible from political restriction, is the chief source of social welfare and the ultimate spring of social progress. He held that there is a "natural" or native tendency in every individual to better each his own estate through putting forth effort (labor) to satisfy his natural wants. Social welfare is promoted because the cumulative, but undersigned and unplanned, effect of the convergence of a multitude of individual efforts is to increase the commodities and services put at the disposal of men collectively, of society. This increase of goods and services creates new wants and leads to putting forth new modes of productive energy. There is not only a native impulse to exchange, to "truck," but individuals are released by the processes of exchange from the necessity for labor in order to satisfy all of the individual's own wants; through division of labor, productivity is

* Probably in the minds of the framers of the Constitution not much more was contemplated by this clause than the desirability of permitting Congress to make appropriations for roads, rivers and harbors. In subsequent practice, the power has not been used much beyond provision of limited social services for those at an economic disadvantage.

enormously increased. Free economic processes thus bring about an endless spiral of ever increasing change, and through the guidance of an "invisible hand" (the equivalent of the doctrine of preestablished harmony so dear to the eighteenth century) the efforts of individuals for personal advancement and personal gain accrue to the benefit of society, and create a continuously closer knit interdependence of interests.

The ideas and ideals of the new political economy were congruous with the increase of industrial activity that was marked in England even before the invention of the steam engine. They spread rapidly. Their power was furthered when the great industrial and commercial expansion of England ensued in the wake of the substitution of mechanical for human energy, first in textiles and then in other occupations. Under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, the old argument against political action as a social agency assumed a new form. Such action was not only an invasion of individual liberty but it was in effect a conspiracy against the causes that bring about social progress. The Lockeian idea of natural laws took on a much more concrete, a more directly practical, meaning. Natural law was still regarded as something more fundamental than man-made law, which by comparison is artificial. But natural laws lost their remote moral meaning. They were identified with the laws of free industrial production and free commercial exchange. Adam Smith, however, did not originate this latter idea. He took it over from the French physiocrats, who, as the name implies, believed in rule of social relations by natural law and who identified natural with economic law.

France was an agricultural country, and the economy of the physiocrats was conceived and formulated in the interest of agriculture and mining. Land, according to them, is the source of all wealth; from it comes, ultimately, all genuinely productive force. Industry, as distinct from agriculture, merely reshapes what nature provides. The movement was essentially a protest against governmental measures that were impoverishing the agricultural and enriched idle parasites. But its underlying philosophy was the idea that economic laws are the true natural laws while other laws are artificial and hence to be limited in scope as far as possible. In an ideal, society, political organization will be modeled upon the economic pattern set by nature. *Ex natura, jus.*

Locke had taught that labor, not land, is the source of wealth, and England was passing from an agrarian to an industrialized community. The French doctrine in its own form did not fit into the English scene. But there was no great obstacle against translating the underlying ideal of the identity of natural law with economic law into a form suited to the needs of an industrial community. The shift from land to labor (the expenditure of energy for the satisfaction of wants) required only, from the side of the philosophy of economics, that attention be centered upon human nature, rather than upon physical nature. Psychological laws, based on human nature, are as truly natural as are any laws based on land and physical nature. Land is itself productive only under the influence of the labor put forth in satisfaction of intrinsic human wants. Adam Smith was not himself especially interested in elaborating a formulation of laws in terms of human nature. But he explicitly fell back upon one natural human tendency, sympathy, to find the basis for morals, and he used other natural impulses, the instincts to better one's condition and to exchange, to give the foundation of economic theory. The laws of the operations of these natural tendencies, when they are freed from artificial restraints, are the natural laws governing men in their relations to one another. In individuals, the exercise of sympathy in accordance with reason

(that is, in Smith's conception, from the standpoint of an impartial spectator) is the norm of virtuous action. But government cannot appeal to sympathy. The only measures it can employ affect the motive of self-interest. It makes this appeal most effectively when it acts so as to protect individuals in the exercise of their natural self-interest. These ideas, implicit in Smith, were made explicit by his successors: in part by the classical school of economists, and in part by Bentham and the Mills, father and son. For a considerable period these two schools worked hand in hand.

Economists developed the principle of the free economic activity of individuals; since this freedom was identified with absence of governmental action, conceived as an interference with natural liberty, the result was the formulation of *laissez faire* liberalism. Bentham carried the same conception, though from a different point of view, into a vigorous movement for reform of the common law and judicial procedure by means of legislative action. The Mills developed the psychological and logical foundation implicit in the theories of the economists and of Bentham.

I begin with Bentham. The existing legal system was intimately bound up with a political system based upon the predominance of the great landed proprietors through the rotten borough system. The operation of the new industrial forces in both production and exchange was checked and deflected at almost every point by a mass of customs that formed the core of common law. Bentham approached the situation not from the standpoint of individual liberty, but from the standpoint of the effect of these restrictions upon the happiness enjoyed by individuals. Every restriction upon liberty is, *ipso facto*, a source of pain and a limitation of a pleasure that might otherwise be enjoyed. Hence, the effect was the same in the two doctrines as far as the rightful province of governmental action is concerned. Bentham's assault was aimed directly, not indirectly, like the theory of the economists, upon everything in existing law and judicial procedure that inflicted unnecessary pain and that limited the acquisition of pleasures by individuals. Moreover, his psychology converted the impulse to improve one's condition, upon which Adam Smith had built, into the doctrine that desire for pleasure and aversion to pain are the sole forces that govern human action. The psychological theory implicit in the idea of industry and exchange controlled by desire for gain was then worked out upon the political and legal side. Moreover, the constant expansion of manufacturing and trade put the force of a powerful class interest behind the new version of liberalism. This statement does not imply that the intellectual leaders of the new liberalism were themselves moved by hope of material gain. On the contrary, they formed a group animated by a strikingly unselfish spirit, in contrast with their professed theories. Their very detachment from the immediate interests of the market place liberated them from the narrowness and shortsightedness that marked the trading class—a class that John Stuart Mill adverted to with even more bitterness than did Adam Smith. This emancipation enabled them to detect and make articulate the nascent movements of their time—a function that defines the genuine work of the intellectual class at any period. But they might have been as voices crying in the wilderness if what they taught had not coincided with the interests of a class that was constantly rising in prestige and power.

According to Bentham, the criterion of all law and of every administrative effort is its effect upon the sum of happiness enjoyed by the greatest possible number. In calculating this sum, every individual is to count as one and only as one. The mere formulation of the doctrine was an attack upon every inequality of status that had the sanction of law. In effect, it made the well-

being of the individual the norm of political action in every area in which it operates. In effect, though not wholly in Bentham's express apprehension, it transferred attention from the well-being already possessed by individuals to one they might attain if there were a radical change in social institutions. For existing institutions enabled a small number of individuals to enjoy their pleasures at the cost of the misery of a much greater number. While Bentham himself conceived that the changes to be made in legal and political institutions were mainly negative, such as abolition of abuses, corruptions and inequalities, nevertheless (as we shall see later) there was nothing in his fundamental doctrine that stood in the way of using the power of government to create, constructively and positively, new institutions if and when it should appear that the latter would contribute more effectively to the well-being of individuals.

Bentham's best known work is entitled *Principles of Morals and Legislation*. In his actual treatment "morals and legislation" form a single term. It was the morals of legislation, of political action generally, with which he occupied himself, his standard being the simple one of determination of its effect upon the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number. He labored incessantly to expose the abuses of the existing legal system and its application in judicial procedure, civil and criminal, and in administration. He attacked these abuses, in his various works, in detail, one by one. But his attacks were cumulative in effect since he applied a single principle in his detailed criticism. He was, we may say, the first great muck-raker in the field of law. But he was more than that. Wherever he saw a defect, he proposed a remedy. He was an inventor in law and administration, as much so as any contemporary in mechanical production. He said of himself that his ambition was to "extend the experimental method of reasoning from the physical branch to the moral"—meaning, in common with English thought of the eighteenth century, by the moral the human. He also compared his own work with what physicists and chemists were doing in their fields in invention of appliances and processes that increase human welfare. That is, he did not limit his method to mere reasoning; the latter occurred only for the sake of instituting changes in actual practice. History shows no mind more fertile than his in invention of legal and administrative devices. Of him and his school, Graham Wallas said, "The fact that the fall from power of the British aristocracy in 1832 led neither to social revolution or administrative chaos at home, nor to the break up of the new British Empire abroad was largely due to the political expedients—local government reform, open competition in the civil service, scientific health and police administration, colonial self-government, Indian administrative reform—which Bentham's disciples either found in his writings, or developed, after his death, by his methods."*

The work of Bentham, in spite of fundamental defects in his underlying theory of human nature, is a demonstration that liberalism is not compelled by anything in its own nature to be impotent save for minor reforms. Bentham's influence is proof that liberalism can be a power in bringing about radical social changes:—provided it combine capacity for bold and comprehensive social invention with detailed study of particulars and with courage in action. The history of the legal and administrative changes in Great Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century is chiefly the history of Bentham and his school. I think there is something significant for the liberalism of today and tomorrow to be found in the fact that his group did not consist in any large measure of politicians, legislators or public officials. On the American principle of "Let George do it," liberals in this country are given to supposing and hoping that some

* Article on Bentham in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. II, p. 519.

Administration, when in power, will take the lead in formulating and executing liberal policies. I know of nothing in history that justifies the belief and hope. A liberal program has to be developed, and in a good deal of particularity, outside of the immediate realm of governmental action and enforced upon public attention, before direct political action of a thoroughgoing liberal sort will follow. This is one lesson we have to learn from early nineteenth-century liberalism. Without a background of informed political intelligence, direct action in behalf of professed liberal ends may end in development of political irresponsibility.

Bentham's theory led him to the view that all organized action is to be judged by its consequences, consequences that take effect in the lives of individuals. His psychology was rather rudimentary. It made him conceive of consequences as being atomic units of pleasures and pains that can be algebraically summed up. It is to this aspect of his doctrines that later writers, especially moralists, have chiefly devoted their critical attention. But this particular aspect of his theory, if we view it in the perspective of history, is an adventitious accretion. His enduring idea is that customs, institutions, law, social arrangements are to be judged on the basis of their consequences as these come home to the individuals that compose society. Because of his emphasis upon consequences, he made short work of the tenets of both of the two schools that had dominated, before his day, English political thought. He brushed aside, almost contemptuously, the conservative school that found the source of social wisdom in the customs and precedents of the past. This school has its counterpart in those empiricists of the present day who attack every measure and policy that is new and innovating on the ground that it does not have the sanction of experience, when what they really mean by "experience" is patterns of mind that were formed in a past that no longer exists.

But Bentham was equally aggressive in assault upon that aspect of earlier liberalism which was based upon the conception of inherent natural rights—following in this respect a clue given by David Hume. Natural rights and natural liberties exist only in the kingdom of mythological social zoology. Men do not obey laws because they think these laws are in accord with a scheme of natural rights. They obey because they believe, rightly or wrongly, that the consequences of obeying are upon the whole better than the consequences of disobeying. If the consequences of existing rule become too intolerable, they revolt. An enlightened self-interest will induce a ruler not to push too far the patience of subjects. The enlightened self-interest of citizens will lead them to obtain by peaceful means, as far as possible, the changes that will effect a distribution of political power and the publicity that will lead political authorities to work for rather than against the interests of the people—a situation which Bentham thought was realized by government that is representative and based upon popular suffrage. But in any case, not natural rights but consequences in the lives of individuals are the criterion and measure of policy and judgment.

Because the liberalism of the economists and the Benthamites was adapted to contemporary conditions in Great Britain, the influence of the liberalism of the school of Locke waned. By 1820 it was practically extinct. Its influence lasted much longer in the United States. We had no Bentham and it is doubtful whether he would have had much influence if he had appeared. Except for movements in codification of law, it is hard to find traces of the influence of Bentham in this country. As was intimated earlier, the philosophy of Locke bore much the same relation to the American revolt of the colonies that it had to the British revolution of almost a century earlier. Up to, say, the time of the Civil War, the United States were predominantly agrarian. As

they became industrialized, the philosophy of liberty of individuals, expressed especially in freedom of contract, provided the doctrine needed by those who controlled the economic system. It was freely employed by the courts in declaring unconstitutional, legislation that limited this freedom. The ideas of Locke embodied in the Declaration of Independence were congenial to our pioneer conditions that gave individuals the opportunity to carve their own careers. Political action was lightly thought of by those who lived in frontier conditions. A political career was very largely annexed as an adjunct to the action of individuals in carving their own careers. The gospel of self-help and private initiative was practiced so spontaneously that it needed no special intellectual support. Finally, there was no background of feudalism to give special leverage to the Benthamite system of legal and administrative reform.

The United States lagged more than a generation behind Great Britain in promotion of social legislation. Justice Holmes found it necessary to remind his fellow Justices that, after all, the Social Statics of Herbert Spencer had not been enacted into the American Constitution. Great Britain, largely under Benthamite influence, built up an ordered civil service independent of political party control. With us, political emoluments, like economic pecuniary rewards, went to the most enterprising competitor; to the victor belong the spoils. The principle of the greatest good to the greatest number tended to establish in Great Britain the supremacy of national over local interests. The political history of the United States is largely a record of domination by regional interests. Our fervor in law-making might be allied to Bentham's principle of the "omnicompetence" of the legislative body. But we have never taken very seriously the laws we make, while there has been little comparable in our history to the importance attached to administration by the English utilitarian school.

I have mentioned two schools of liberalism in Great Britain, that of the economists and of the utilitarians. At first they walked the same path. The later history of liberalism in that country is largely a matter of a growing divergence, and finally of an open split. While Bentham personally was on the side of the classical economists, his principle of judgment by consequences lends itself to opposite application. Bentham himself urged a great extension of public education and of action in behalf of public health. When he disallowed the doctrine of inalienable individual natural rights, he removed, as far as theory is concerned, the obstacle to positive action by the state whenever it can be shown that the general well-being will be promoted by such action. Dicey in his *Law and Opinion in England* has shown that collectivist legislative policies gained in force for at least a generation after the sixties. It was stimulated, naturally, by the reform bills that greatly broadened the basis of suffrage. The use of scientific method, even if sporadic and feeble, encouraged study of actual consequences and promoted the formation of legislative policies designed to improve the consequences brought about by existing institutions. At all events, in connection with Benthamite influence, it greatly weakened the notion that Reason is a remote majestic power that discloses ultimate truths. It tended to render it an agency in investigation of concrete situations and in projection of measures for their betterment.

I would not, however, give the impression that the trend away from individualistic to collectivistic liberalism was the direct effect of utilitarianism. On the contrary, social legislation was fostered primarily by Tories, who, traditionally, had no love for the industrialist class. Benthamite liberalism was not the source of factory laws, laws for the protection of child and women, prevention of their labor in mines, workmen's compensation acts, employers' liability

laws, reduction of hours of labor, the dole, and a labor code. All of these measures went contrary to the idea of liberty of contract fostered by *laissez faire* liberalism. Humanitarianism, in alliance with evangelical piety and with Romanticism, gave chief support, from the intellectual and emotional side, to these measures, as the Tory party was their chief political agent. No account of the rise of humanitarian sentiment as a force in creation of the new regulations of industry would be adequate that did not include the names of religious leaders drawn from both dissenters and the established church. Such names as Wilberforce, Clarkson, Zachary Macaulay, Elizabeth Fry, Hannah More, as well as Lord Shaftesbury, come to mind. The trades unions were gaining power and there was an active socialist movement, as represented by Robert Owen. But in spite of, or along with, such movements, we have to remember that liberalism is associated with generosity of outlook as well as with liberty of belief and action. Gradually a change came over the spirit and meaning of liberalism. It came surely, if gradually, to be disassociated from the *laissez faire* creed and to be associated with the use of governmental action for aid to those at economic disadvantage and for alleviation of their conditions. In this country, save for a small band of adherents to earlier liberalism, ideas and policies of this general type have virtually come to define the meaning of liberal faith. American liberalism as illustrated in the political progressivism of the early present century has so little in common with British liberalism of the first part of the last century that it stands in opposition to it.

The influence of Romanticism, as exemplified in different ways by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Carlyle and Ruskin, is worthy of especial note. These men were politically allied as a rule with the Tory party, if not actively, at least in sympathy. The Romanticists were all of them vigorous opponents of the consequences of the industrialization of England, and directed their assaults at the economists and Benthamites whom they held largely responsible for these consequences. As against dependence upon uncoordinated individual activities, Coleridge emphasized the significance of enduring institutions. They, according to him, are the means by which men are held together in concord of mind and purpose, the only real social bond. They are the force by which human relations are kept from disintegrating into an aggregate of unconnected and conflicting atoms. His work and that of his followers was a powerful counterpoise to the anti-historic quality of the Benthamite school. The leading scientific interest of the nineteenth century came to be history, including evolution within the scope of history. Coleridge was no historian; he had no great interest in historical facts. But his sense of the mission of great historic institutions was profound. Wordsworth preached the gospel of return to nature, of nature expressed in rivers, dales and mountains and in the souls of simple folk. Implicitly and often explicitly, he attacked industrialization as the great foe of nature, without and within. Carlyle carried on a constant battle against utilitarianism and the existing socio-economic order, which he summed up in a single phrase as "anarchy plus a constable." He called for a regime of social authority to enforce social ties. Ruskin preached the social importance of art and joined to it a denunciation of the entire reigning system of economics, theoretical and practical. The esthetic socialists of the school of William Morris carried his teachings home to the popular mind.

The Romantic movement profoundly affected some who had grown up in the strictest sect of *laissez faire* liberalism. The intellectual career of John Stuart Mill was a valiant if unsuccessful struggle to reconcile the doctrines he derived, almost in infancy, from his father with a feeling of their hollowness when compared with the values of poetry, of enduring historic institutions, and of the inner life, as portrayed by the Romanticists. He was keenly sensitive to the brutality of life

about him and its low intellectual level, and saw the relation between these two traits. At one time, he even went so far as to say that he looked forward to the coming of an age "when the division of the produce of labour... will be made by concert on an acknowledged principle of justice." He asserted that existing institutions were merely provisional, and that the "laws" governing the distribution of wealth are not social but of man's contrivance and are man's to change. A long distance lies between the philosophy embodied in such sayings and his earlier assertion that "the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the freedom of action of any person is self-protection." The Romantic school was the chief influence in effecting the change.

There was in addition another intellectual force at work in changing the earlier liberalism, which openly professed liberal aims while at the same time attacking earlier liberalism. The name of Thomas Hill Green is not widely known outside of technical philosophical circles. But he was the leader in introducing into England, in coherent formulation, the organic idealism that originated in Germany—and that originated there largely in reaction against the basic philosophy of individualistic liberalism and individualist empiricism. John Mill himself was greatly troubled by the consequences that followed from the psychological doctrine of associationalism. Mental bonds in belief and purpose which are the product of external associations can easily be broken when circumstances change. The moral and social consequence is a threatened destruction of all stable bases of belief and social relationship. Green and his followers exposed this weakness in all phases of the atomistic philosophy that had developed under the alleged empiricism of the earlier liberal school. They criticized piece by piece almost every item of the theory of mind, knowledge and society that had grown out of the teachings of Locke. They asserted that relations constitute the reality of nature, of mind and of society. But Green and his followers remained faithful, as the Romantic school did not, to the ideals of liberalism; the conceptions of a common good as the measure of political organization and policy, of liberty as the most precious trait and very seal of individuality, of the claim of every individual to the full development of his capacities. They strove to provide unshakeable objective foundations in the very structure of things for these moral claims, instead of basing them upon the sandy ground of the feelings of isolated human beings. For the relations that constitute the essential nature of things are, according to them, the expression of an objective Reason and Spirit that sustains nature and the human mind.

The idealistic philosophy taught that men are held together by the relations that proceed from and that manifest in an ultimate cosmic mind. It followed that the basis of society and the state is shared intelligence and purpose, not force nor yet self-interest. The state is a moral organism, of which government is one organ. Only by participating in the common purpose as it works for the common good can individual human beings realize their true individualities and become truly free. The state is but one organ among many of the Spirit and Will that holds all things together and that makes human beings members of one another. It does not originate the moral claim of individuals to the full realization of their potentialities as vehicles of objective thought and purpose. Moreover, the motives it can directly appeal to are not of the highest kind. But it is the business of the state to protect all forms and to promote all modes of human association in which the moral claims of the members of society are embodied and which serve as the means of voluntary self-realization. Its business is negatively to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of individuals coming to consciousness of themselves for what they are, and positively to

promote the cause of public education. Unless the state does this work it is no state. These philosophical liberals pointed out the restrictions, economic and political, which prevent many, probably the majority, of individuals from the voluntary intelligent action by which they may become what they are capable of becoming. The teachings of this new liberal school affected the thoughts and actions of multitudes who did not trouble themselves to understand the philosophical doctrine that underlay it. They served to break down the idea that freedom is something that individuals have as a ready-made possession, and to instill the idea that it is something to be achieved, while the possibility of the achievement was shown to be conditioned by the institutional medium in which an individual lives. These new liberals fostered the idea that the state has the responsibility for creating institutions under which individuals can effectively realize the potentialities that are theirs.

Thus, from various sources and under various influences, there developed an inner split in liberalism. This cleft is one cause of the ambiguity from which liberalism still suffers and which explains a growing impotency. There are still those who call themselves liberals who define liberalism in terms of the old opposition between the province of organized social action and the province of purely individual initiative and effort. In the name of liberalism, they are jealous of every extension of governmental activity. They may grudgingly concede the need of special measures of protection and alleviation undertaken by the state at times of great social stress, but they are the confirmed enemies of social legislation (even prohibition of child labor), as standing measures of political policy. Wittingly or unwittingly, they still provide the intellectual system of apologetics for the existing economic regime, which they strangely, it would seem ironically, uphold as a regime of individual liberty for all.

But the majority who call themselves liberals today are committed to the principle that organized society must use its powers to establish the conditions under which the mass of individuals can possess actual, as distinct from merely legal, liberty. They define their liberalism in the concrete in terms of a program of measures moving toward this end. They believe that the conception of the state which limits the activities of the latter to keeping order as between individuals and to securing redress for one person when another person infringes the liberty existing law has given him, is in effect simply a justification of the brutalities and inequities of the existing order. Because of this internal division within liberalism, its later history is wavering and confused. The inheritance of the past still causes many liberals, who believe in a generous use of the powers of organized society to change the terms on which human beings associate together, to stop short with merely protective and alleviatory measures—a fact that partly explains why another school always refers to "reform" with scorn. It will be the object of the next chapter to portray the crisis in liberalism, the impasse in which it now almost finds itself, and through criticism of the deficiencies of earlier liberalism to suggest the way in which liberalism may resolve the crisis, and emerge as a compact, aggressive force.