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R. H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, E. P. Thompson, and the Critique of Capitalism

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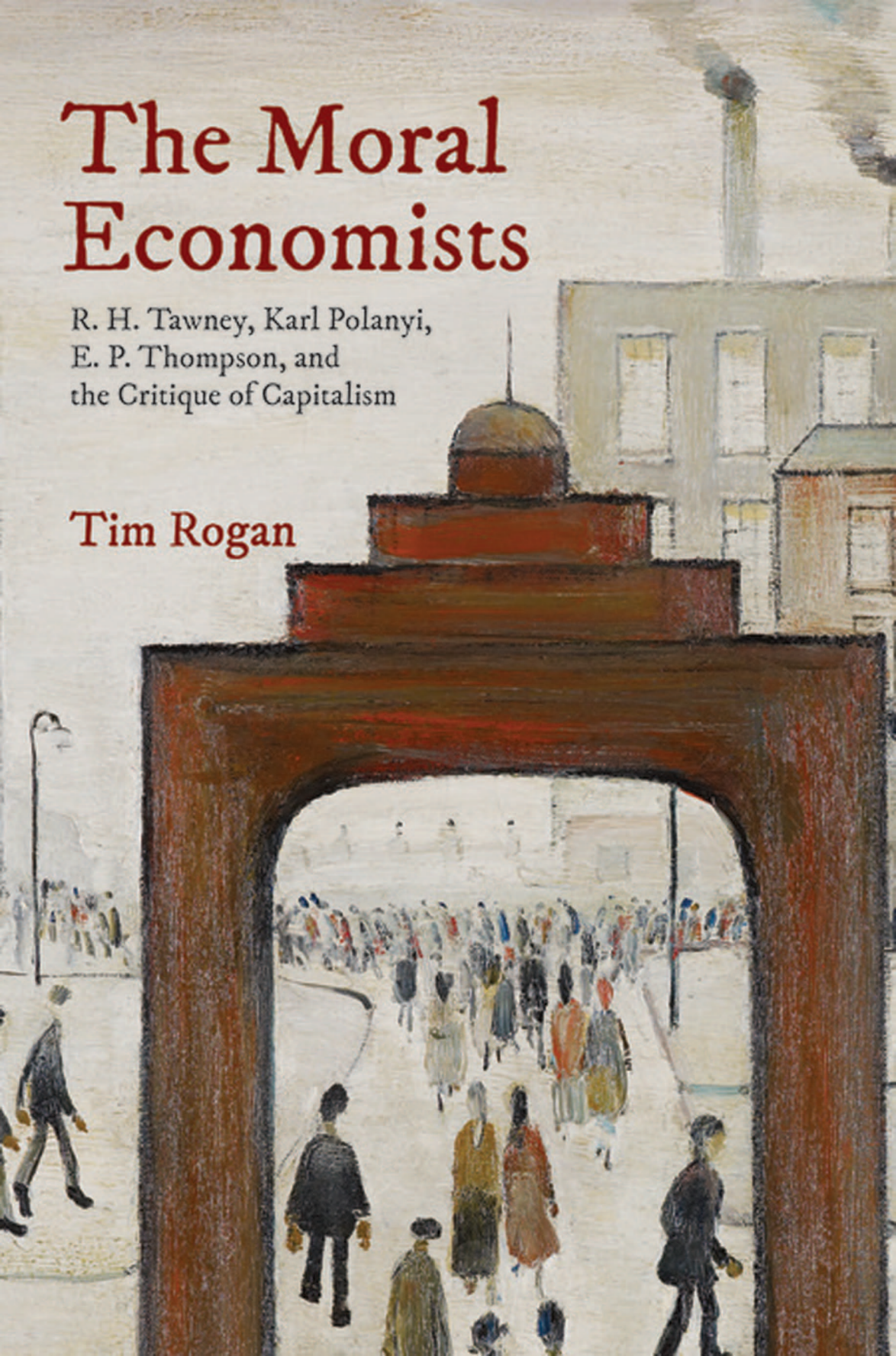

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2017

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
PRINCETON & OXFORD

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Introduction

What's wrong with capitalism? In the twenty-first century, the answer seems simple: inequality. Material disparities between the rich and the rest are widening.[1] Prosperity has become the preserve of too few. This emphasis on material inequality seems unremarkable in our own time. But in historical perspective it is extraordinary. It represents a radical truncation of the parameters of the critique of capitalism. An alternative critical tradition focused less on material outcomes than on moral or spiritual consequences has fallen into disuse. This book explains how that happened, and why it matters, and what might be done about it.

The term "capitalism" was coined by social critics in nineteenth-century Germany and Britain apprehensive about the nature and tempo of social change in the era of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution.[2] It described the new form of society in which acquisitive instincts long deemed vicious and countermanded by legal and cultural strictures came to be seen as virtuous and beneficent. Concerns about inequality have always been part of the argument against capitalism. But until very recently they were never the whole or even the major part of that argument. For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, poverty mattered less to capitalism's critics than moral or spiritual desolation. In the twenty-first century, economic arguments take precedence. Vivid moral argument has given way to calculations of advantage and disadvantage fortified with anger and indignation.

Considered from some angles, this replacement of moral argumentation with an emphasis on material outcomes is an improvement. It enables reasonable, empirical discussion of the problem, which in turn promises to identify rational, practicable reforms: woolly, inscrutable polemic has given way to exacting analysis. Written from this perspective, an account of the means by which moral argumentation yielded to a focus on material inequality might play out as an upbeat story, a whig history for technocratic progressives.

But from another perspective there is a more sobering story to tell here. If this predominance of material reckoning over moral argument in the contemporary critique of capitalism represents a triumph for certain forms of rationality, it also bespeaks the decadence of an alternative approach, the demise of another way of engaging with social problems, the failure of an attempt to open up deeper questions of liberty and solidarity—questions which the narrower economism now prevailing systematically excludes.

The purpose of this book is to reconstruct the development and demise of this alternative moral critique of capitalism in twentieth-century Britain. This critique was a success before it was a failure. Between the twentieth century's two great crises of capitalism the ideas recovered here inspired and informed a sustained push for reform. No precise quantification of the popular penetration or purchase of this critique is offered in this book: it is not a "reception" history, and readers interested in the diffusion of learned discourse into everyday life during this period should look elsewhere. Nor is any causal or correlative relationship between the vitality of this moral critique and the career of social reform and the construction of the welfare state in Britain specified here. Party politics is discussed in some passages of the book, but readers will likely be more impressed by the indifference of the major parties to these ideas and their exponents than by the degree of interest they attracted. But readers will I hope be content to accept on the basis of the evidence compiled here that the books and ideas upon which I focus had much the same effect on debate about capitalism in their time as Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* or Anthony Atkinson's *Inequality* are having in our own time.[3]

My point is not that there were not books like Piketty's *Capital* in this earlier moment.[4] My suggestion is that in this earlier moment another suite of books developed a different line of argument against capitalism, complementing the work of the critical economists. We are the poorer intellectually, culturally, and even politically for the disappearance of that alternative approach. That is not to say that inequality is immaterial, or that we should concern ourselves with moral or spiritual questions alone. It is only to suggest that a preoccupation with material inequality which leaves no room for the considerations this moral critique brought up for discussion leaves contemporary debate diminished.

What then are these books and ideas constituent of the moral critique of capitalism, once ascendant and now abandoned in favor of an emphasis on material inequality? *The Moral Economists* focuses primarily on three books, published at intervals of two decades between the 1920s and the 1960s. They are R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944), and E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the En-*

glish Working Class (1963).[5] These are landmarks of modern intellectual history and recurrent reference points for writers on the contemporary left. Each is complemented now by extensive historiographical commentary. But the closeness and intensity of their interaction has not yet been fully appreciated. Thompson emerges here as a successful innovator within a critical tradition pioneered by Tawney. More surprisingly, Karl Polanyi stands revealed as an intermediary between Tawney and Thompson.

Some of the synergies between these books will be obvious to readers familiar with their arguments. Each attempts to understand the relationship between ethics and economics in the form of society that emerged in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages—a form sometimes called "commercial society," sometimes "market society," mainly "capitalism." Each focuses on a crucial moment in the emergence of that form of society, a moment when tensions between old ethical injunctions and new economic imperatives became acute. Each book—taking the form of history—underlines the novelty and dynamism of the new form of society, reminding readers that arrangements some contemporary writers made to seem natural and inevitable were in fact mutable and contingent, making social forms and economic norms malleable, facilitating debate about reform. Each—first Tawney, then Polanyi and Thompson after him—approached "capitalism" as a legitimate object of scholarly analysis. (Earlier it had been overlooked as a by-product of socialist polemic; lately it has been set aside by many historians as too heavily freighted with polemical significance to function as an instrument of analysis).[6] Each book was able—with varying degrees of success—to speak to specialist and popular readerships in tandem.

Other synergies between these three books are less obvious. They all belonged to a tradition of social criticism with roots in Victorian moralism—in the writings of Thomas Carlyle and more particularly John Ruskin and William Morris. What lent this older tradition coherence was its antipathy toward utilitarianism—the "pig philosophy" of laissez-faire, in Carlyle's memorable rebuke—understood as the tendency of Victorian political economy to privilege the pursuit of pecuniary gain over all other human motivations in envisaging social order, reducing society to a matrix of economic transactions. The moral economists certainly maintained this antipathy toward utilitarianism. This is part of what helps us to distinguish between this mid-twentieth century critique of capitalism and the focus on inequality in the twenty-first century: even capitalism's staunchest twenty-first-century critics fall back on utilitarian arguments to justify their concerns about inequality.[7] Utilitarianism was anathema to Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson as it had been to their Victorian predecessors. The moral economists' was an undiscriminating conception of utilitarianism, a holdover from the Edwardian polemics of A. V. Dicey

reinforced by the influential scholarship of Elie Halévy.[8] A slowness to recognize real differences between figures encompassed within these inherited constructs would become a hindrance to the development of the moral economists' critique, as we shall see. But the moral economists were not wrong to believe that political economy in a certain iteration had reconstructed human persons "solely as beings who desire to possess wealth," an outcome achieved (in the words of the young J. S. Mill) by the "entire abstraction of every other human passion or motive."[9] They were wrong if they believed that every liberal from 1825 to 1870 followed this analytical practice unerringly. But they were not wrong to believe that the practice became commonplace and survived into the twentieth century as a kind of commonsense heuristic through which to think about social problems.

If there was some degree of continuity between the moral economists' critique of capitalism and the writings of Morris and Ruskin and, looking further back, Carlyle, there were also crucial departures from and refinements of earlier anti-utilitarian arguments. The distinctions between the critique of capitalism formulated by Tawney and reiterated by Polanyi and Thompson set these moral economists apart from their Victorian antecedents. Tawney's description of the norms and sentiments affecting and limiting conduct in economic life that had fallen into disuse in the seventeenth century recalled the mellow rhythms of Elizabethan England: he talked of "tradition" and "custom" and "lore." Polanyi retained Tawney's terminology while trying to project the same sentiments and norms intact into an epoch of technological revolution: mixing antique and modern in this way made his arguments less plausible. In both men's work the sense of reverence for a distant past was misleading. What they were trying to describe was not a recoverable past but an emergent present: the power of tradition and custom to stabilize social life in medieval England was the best analogy Tawney could find for the forms of solidarity he had discovered in north-west England, for the forms of life closer than individualism admitted but freer than collectivism allowed. Polanyi followed Tawney's lead by retaining this terminology even as he sought to bridge the gap between remote past and quickening present by making dissolution and regeneration simultaneous—in the conjecture of the "double movement."

Those distinctions emerge most clearly in the comparison between late Victorian conceptualizations of the "social problem" and the ways in which Tawney and after him Polanyi and Thompson would approach that problem. The Victorians had conceived of the social problem primarily in terms of poverty and aesthetic degradation. But to Tawney, and for Polanyi and Thompson, poverty and squalor were symptomatic of deeper failures of coordination. The Victorians had complained that the triumph of capitalism and the

spread of utilitarianism attenuated social feeling, diminishing the quality of social life. The twentieth century's first great crisis of capitalism—encompassing economic depression, constitutional crisis, and world war—escalated those concerns: for Tawney and his successors, the spectacle of degradation yielded to fears of disintegration. Agitation over the Irish question, industrial relations, and women's suffrage in the late Edwardian period brought Britain to the brink of civil war. Utilitarian thinking had helped to bring on this instability by leading people to think that little more than freedom of contract was necessary to sustain social order. It exacerbated the problem by making it difficult to imagine more durable principles of cohesion. Poverty and squalor were indicative of more deep-seated problems. There was no sense trying to manipulate material or aesthetic outcomes without attending to the deeper questions of liberty, solidarity, and order which constituted the real "social problem."

Tawney and his successors were neither the first ones nor the only ones to recognize this more entrenched social problem as the underlying cause for concern. Pervasive talk in the Edwardian period of a pivot from "individualism" to "collectivism" was an index of growing awareness of those deeper issues.[10] Such talk also conveyed some sense of the solution to the social problem so understood toward which many people gravitated. The Idealist movement in moral philosophy—the movement of T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet—is an important part of the context in which the moral economists' critique of capitalism took shape. So too is the movement in jurisprudence and political theory known to posterity as pluralism—the key figures in which were F. W. Maitland and Ernest Barker. But both movements mattered mainly because they failed, invalidating certain approaches to this problem, encouraging new innovations. The moral economists' critique of capitalism quickened in the moment when Idealist and pluralist solutions to the social problem reformulated for the twentieth century proved abortive. Idealism leaned too heavily on a vision of the state as an instrument for constructing social harmony: fears of authoritarianism sharpened by encounters with a German "god-state" during the First World War made those Idealist visions harder to sustain. Pluralism had sought concepts of group life at variance with Hobbesian jurisprudence, but these also proved too volatile for safe use in the hostile political climate of twentieth-century Europe: it was difficult to find formal terms to foster edifying associations that did not also encourage extremism. The problem with individualism was that it compromised social cohesion, forestalling the coordination necessary to sustain an increasingly complex social and economic life. But collectivism tended toward authoritarianism—the subject of deep-seated and broad-based hostility in Britain. The failures of Idealism and pluralism exhausted the means of formal innovation within the

extant terms of social and political thought. Markets and states were necessary components of stable order. But how the two could combine to foster liberty and solidarity—a society closer than individualism admitted yet freer than collectivism allowed—remained to be seen.

The moral economists' critique of capitalism emerged in the attempt to get beyond this impasse. Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson each found inspiration in quotidian interactions as teachers and neighbors. The headline dramas of the "death of Liberal England" put fears of social disintegration in Tawney's heart. This spectacle of social collapse was consistent with what he had seen when he went to work in the settlement houses of East London as a young university graduate: here he found people demoralized beyond relief. But then Tawney moved north to teach history to working people in the Potteries of Lancashire and north Staffordshire. Here he saw something different. If social life in Whitechapel realized the worst fears of those worried about a declension from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, the neighborhoods in which he found his students harbored different possibilities. Here as throughout England the state kept order and markets created prosperity but there was something else in play, some other kind of solidarity neither individualist nor collectivist in tenor, a social dynamic for which words were hard to find. Here among his students and neighbors Tawney found solidarities that confounded individualism without risking collectivism.

Karl Polanyi had a similar experience. Born in Vienna and raised in Budapest, the eldest son of a ruined railway entrepreneur who had seen his family cycle through grand wealth into relative penury, Polanyi bore sensitive and astute witness to the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. Then he saw the aspirations of Wilsonian peace—liberalism redeemed in the wreckage of empire by the principle of self-determination—devolve into a cacophony of reactionary nationalisms. And he saw many of his friends and contemporaries won over by the rival appeal of Lenin's strong-arm collectivism. The antinomy of individualism and collectivism seemed just as intractable to Polanyi when he fled Budapest for Vienna at the end of the First World War as it looked to Tawney in England. But postwar Vienna showed Polanyi new possibilities. A radical experiment in municipal socialism elicited distinct forms of solidarity. Meanwhile Tawney's book—*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*—was published in 1926, falling into Polanyi's hands as part of a flood of English socialist ideas carried to Vienna by relief workers between the wars. Polanyi came to understand the significance of what he saw developing in "Red Vienna" in part by reading Tawney's reflections on his epiphany in northwest England.

E. P. Thompson belonged to a younger generation. Radicalized by the fight with fascism, inspired by the Soviet Union's part in it, Thompson was even surer than Tawney had been that individualism was over, but he was slower to

see the pitfalls of collectivism as generic rather than specific to Hitler's Germany. His eventual disillusionment with Stalin's Soviet Union after 1956 left Thompson in a situation similar to that which Tawney and Polanyi had faced before him, in which available doctrines seemed equally untenable. But like Tawney and then Polanyi before him, and with the benefit of both of their books, Thompson also discovered unheralded promise in everyday settings. He had moved his young family to West Yorkshire in 1948 to take a job teaching literature and history in adult education. The solidarities he encountered among his neighbors and students affected Thompson deeply—in the same way that Tawney in the Potteries and Polanyi in Red Vienna had earlier been affected. New possibilities materialized. Ways beyond the sterile antinomies of contemporary social thought became discernible.

The moral economists argued that the solidarities they found in Lancashire, Red Vienna, and Yorkshire harbored unique promise: here social interaction was more meaningful than utilitarian analyses allowed, without becoming regimented in the way of so many contemporary social experiments. What made these places different? To find out, Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson concentrated on non-economic norms affecting commercial interactions. They were not economists. They were theorists of everything economics left out. And in Thompson's writings their venture finally acquired a luminous but imperfect terminology: the intermediate domain that Tawney and Polanyi had been trying to delineate became at Thompson's hand the "moral economy."

A more precise grasp of the nature of the social problem—as a failure of social coordination, of which problems of poverty and aesthetic degradation were symptomatic—distinguishes the moral economists from Victorian antecedents. But another hallmark of their writings is perhaps even more distinctive, and equally crucial to this task of reconstructing their arguments. The centerpiece of Tawney's critique of capitalism and of Polanyi's and Thompson's after him was a concept of human personality. Belittlement of utilitarian conceptions of humanity—of the idea of economic man—was common in the Victorian literature. But Tawney and then Polanyi and Thompson carried this a step further, making this criticism of utilitarian concepts of the human more constructive, destabilizing utilitarian orthodoxy by insinuating alternative understandings of what it means to be human in its place.

In an early critical engagement with Fabian Society founders Sidney and Beatrice Webb over the issue of sweated labor, Tawney made his position clear: because it made considerations of economic expediency pivotal, utilitarianism (to which Tawney saw that the Fabians were in thrall) could not condemn exploitative labor practices; if the misery of the few enriched the many, it was defensible. Tawney insisted that each "human personality" was

invaluable, irreducible to the terms of the utilitarian calculus. There was "a law higher than the well-being of the majority," namely "the supreme value of every human personality as such."[11]

The impetus for Tawney to define the human and particularize the attack on utilitarianism in this fashion came from his Christian faith, parsed by a particular theological moment—the emphasis on the doctrine of the Incarnation characteristic of the Anglo-Catholic movement that rose to prominence in Britain in the late nineteenth century. It was in theological argument, drawn from his engagement with the writings of cleric Charles Gore first and foremost, that Tawney grounded his "higher law" of "the supreme value of every human personality as such": because God became man in the person of Jesus Christ, "the personality of man is the most divine thing we know." Utilitarians held that human beings were self-interested, utility-maximizing agents, so that their needs and desires were fungible, and such that promoting the well-being of the majority makes for the best of all possible worlds. Tawney held that since each human being in some sense embodies the divine, their needs and desires are radically "incommensurable," so that "no amount of convenience" to the majority "can justify *any* injustice" to the minority.[12]

For Polanyi and Thompson, in turn, the concept of human personality remained pivotal. Neither was unaffected by the theological significance of Tawney's anti-utilitarian precept that "human personality" holds "infinite value." Polanyi had converted from Judaism to Christianity; Thompson was the son of a second-generation Methodist missionary. But neither man was content to let Christian theology remain the basis of that precept. This was partly a matter of personal conviction. But it was also a question of contemporary relevance: as a discourse of secularization intensified in postwar Britain, the type of "restatement of Christian social ethics" that Tawney had attempted became less and less viable.[13] First Polanyi and then Thompson re-worked the proposition that "human personality" held surpassing value—confounding utilitarian calculations—to supplant Christian theology with secular ideas. Both men looked first to the writings of Karl Marx, discovering there a natural theology to replace the Christian teachings upon which Tawney had relied. Both men eventually found fault with that Marxian alternative. Each carried on with the search for a secular substitute for Tawney's Christian moral imperative, with varying degrees of success.

Secularization forced exponents of this moral critique of capitalism to adapt, driving its development through Polanyi's and Thompson's writings, bringing alternative secular renderings of the importance of the human to the fore. But there was more to the difficulties that Tawney's intellectual successors encountered in sustaining this moral critique of capitalism than the passing of protestant fervor in Britain. The precept that human personality held

infinite value became difficult to sustain on the basis of Christian teachings as those teachings lost their purchase over public discourse—a process that quickened after 1950. And in due course the basis in the early writings of Marx to which Polanyi and then Thompson had looked for a secular alternative was also compromised—seemingly disproved by the course of contemporary history. But it was not only the specifically Christian and Marxian bases of the value of human personality that eroded over the course of the twentieth century. A more profound problem loomed. In the second half of the twentieth century social and political thought in Europe and America turned systematically hostile to the kind of claims about what it is to be human around which the moral economists' critique of capitalism revolved. A new philosophical anti-humanism emanating from France engendered skepticism toward the idea of the centered subject.[14] Post-colonial writers scorned Europe's discourse on "Man" as naïve and hypocritical.[15] Postwar liberals advised that where previously there had been affirmative conceptions of human personality around which constituencies for reform could mobilize, it was now safer—after totalitarianism—to leave a "destructured vacancy," a "nonscheme."[16] Polanyi's and Thompson's innovations had proven that the critical tradition Tawney had established could survive secularization. But this anti-humanist turn in postwar social and political thought was another matter. It made that critique's fundamental anti-utilitarian proposition—that human personality held infinite value and was thus irreducible to the terms of the utilitarian calculus—increasingly difficult to sustain.

The challenge had been to describe and articulate forms of solidarity for which contemporary social theory had no name. The idea of the moral economy rose to that challenge. But the "moral" core of that idea was the kind of essentialist conception of human personality toward which the intellectual climate had become deeply hostile by the end of the twentieth century. What success Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson had found in their endeavor hinged on their capacity to insist that human personality held infinite value, and thus stood beyond utilitarian reckoning. Only thus could they insinuate a human figure animated by non-economic considerations into the domain of "economic man." But that capacity turned on the credibility of the basis upon which that claim to infinite value was raised. And by the end of the twentieth century, with Christian theology outmoded, Marxian sociology discredited, and every conceivable alternative to those bases seemingly undermined by anti-humanist skepticism, such credibility had become scarce.

Thus did the moral critique of capitalism reconstructed in these pages lose coherence and then recede into obscurity. We focus on material inequality because opening up these deeper questions of liberty and solidarity involves violating the new strictures against argument about what it is to be human.

Fragments of the old moral critique of capitalism still circulate.[17] The career of the concept of the moral economy has been erratic.[18] Without some basis in an understanding of what it is to be human—a cornerstone for constructions of the moral—there is no limit to the variety of its uses. Some of these faintly recall the power of the original critique, inspiring a kind of nostalgia. But the books in which this critique was developed remain on shelves, unread, and successors in the same tradition reworking and redeveloping the moral critique as Polanyi and Thompson did to Tawney's ideas have yet to materialize.[19]

So much for what happened to the moral critique of capitalism, and why it matters. What might we do about it?

My proposal in this book is certainly not that we might revive the moral economists' critique unmodified. The yield of some recent efforts to do that has not been encouraging.[20] My suggestion is rather that at a certain point in the development of the moral economists' critique of capitalism, a way around the impasse at which its career would arrive by the end of the twentieth century seemed discernible. For various reasons peculiar to the personalities involved here and the events and arguments in which they were implicated that avenue has remained unexplored. But it might repay renewed attention now.

Karl Polanyi's attempts to translate Tawney's proposition that human personality as such held infinite importance into secular terms focused initially on the early writings of Karl Marx. Christian teaching needed "further elucidation" in modernity because the division of labor and the advent of commercial society—a fundamental departure from the cyclical rhythm of earlier human history, to Polanyi's mind—confounded the commandment to "love thy neighbor": the scale and complexity of commercial societies replaced face-to-face interactions with anonymous transactions, making the "neighbor" principle impracticable, generating novel social and political dynamics. This was the basis upon which Polanyi justified his departures from Tawney. In the mid-1930s, it was in large part from readings of the newly published early works of Karl Marx that Polanyi drew inspiration in this endeavor. By the early 1940s, Polanyi had grown more critical of Marx, in part as a response to revelations about Stalin's crimes. In criticizing Marx, Polanyi drew nearer to one of the authorities Marx had consulted in his own early attempts to see how the advent of commercial society outmoded religion. That authority was Adam Smith.

It might at first seem strange to many readers that a moral critique of liberal political economy could be reinvigorated with reference to the writings of a man now widely regarded as the originator of the "dismal science." But as Emma Rothschild has made clear, Smith's reputation for calculating economism owes more to the reconstruction of his legacy amidst alarm about the

French Revolution in Britain than it does to his own writings: he was made to seem interested in efficiency and not equity, in commercial freedom but not in political liberty, at the behest of anti-Jacobin reaction.[21] The injustice of Smith's recreation as zealous free-marketeer preoccupied with pecuniary motives was remarked upon by progressive writers in Britain at intervals through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with little corrective effect.[22] In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi rewrote the intellectual history of political economy to make the separation between Smith and his successors sharper. In the writings of Smith, Polanyi insisted, political economy had rested on "humanistic foundations"—on a conception of the human akin to that which Polanyi had tried to elicit from the early Marx, and comparable to the notion of human personality Tawney took from Christian theology. In the writings of Smith's successors—Malthus, David Ricardo, James Mill—those "humanistic foundations" had been repudiated. Economics had become willfully blind to the nature of human being; it proposed to deal with people "solely as beings who desire to possess wealth." Successive exponents of political economy so conceived would insist that Smith was their intellectual forebear. Polanyi now challenged that claim. Smith—he suggested—sided more readily with the moral critics of political economy so conceived than with its champions.

In the most detailed reconstruction we have of the stages by which Smith's recruitment for a narrow economism proceeded, Rothschild emphasizes the transformative effect of anti-Jacobin reaction in Britain. Under political pressure, Smith's writings were re-read as arguments for commercial freedom as the means to which material prosperity was the end, sifting out Smith's humanitarian concerns, radically adulterating his meanings. Polanyi's approach to the recovery of an antediluvian Smith was different. He focused not on apprehensions raised by the French Revolution but on the advent of a new naturalism among Smith's younger contemporaries. In the years after the publication of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Polanyi averred, writers on food, population, and poverty had begun to imagine human society in terms interchangeable with anatomies of nature.

The evocative detail in Polanyi's account was the spread of an apocryphal story about a South Sea island and its resident populations of goats and dogs. Spanish authorities concerned to provide for maritime traffic had landed a pair of goats on the island of Juan Fernandez. The goats multiplied, but upon finding that the food source sustained privateers, the Spanish authorities resolved to eradicate the supply. To that end, they landed a pair of greyhounds on the island. The dogs then feasted on the goats and themselves became superabundant. But at length something curious happened. The stronger goats retreated to rocky outcrops where the dogs could not reach them. The

weaker dogs starved. An equilibrium established itself, dogs and goats in sustainable number. Townsend told this story to dramatize an argument for the reform of the Elizabethan Poor Law, seen increasingly in the late eighteenth century as a cause of as much as a cure for poverty. The moral of Townsend's story was that hunger could be a salutary check upon population growth. But what interested Polanyi most was the implication of the success and spread of this apocryphal story, later retold by T. R. Malthus and Charles Darwin. It bespoke a new willingness to think about human society as a natural system, regular and self-regulating as the animal world. Analogies had always been drawn between humans and animals. But to *identify* humans with animals was new.[23]

The significance of this reading of the intellectual history of political economy is at first difficult to see. But consider its implication for the twentieth-century discourse on "human personality"—the discourse in which the cornerstones of the moral critique of capitalism were cut. If Polanyi was right—if it was indeed at this late eighteenth-century juncture that modern-day economics and the utilitarianism upon which it rests were established—it follows that until very recently the proposition fundamental to the moral economists' critique of capitalism (namely that human personality is strictly irreducible to terms suitable for the utilitarian calculus) was uncontentious. The need to impute an infinite value to human personality is not a timeless necessity of social criticism. That need is only as old as the paradigm in political economy earmarked by the appearance of Townsend's fable. And it is only as inevitable as that paradigm is durable. If that is true, then the supposition that the only viable anti-utilitarian critique was one which ascribed infinite value to human personality was simply an artefact of utilitarianism itself: in believing that they needed to make such strong prescriptive claims about what it is to be human to get their critique going, Tawney and Thompson were tacitly agreeing to conduct the argument on their opponent's terms. Polanyi's history of political economy suggested a way of subverting those terms *without* making strong claims about what it is to be human. It might be enough simply to insist that however much "*like* beasts" men and women may appear, the similarity is superficial. It might be enough to insist upon a radical discontinuity between human affairs and the natural world, precluding the extrapolation of norms for the one from the regularities of the other.

Albert O. Hirschman anticipated something like this argument when he noticed how strange the twentieth-century social critic's complaint that capitalism inhibits "the development of 'full human personality' " seemed in light of arguments advanced for capitalism before its inception.[24] Inhibiting the "full development of human personality" was in some sense precisely what capitalism was *supposed* to do: it was a means of diverting vice into harmless

or productive pursuits, keeping the avaricious and ambitious away from political power. Those arguments were framed by writers who felt no need to insist upon human virtue, the modeling of human affairs on the dynamics of the natural world being as yet unheard of. Polanyi's intellectual history of political economy opened up a portal through which twentieth-century anti-capitalism might have reverted to that earlier paradigm, delegitimizing utilitarianism *ab initio*, and making old ideas about the dynamics of association—ideas upon which their efforts to augment contemporary social theory might have drawn—new.

We no longer have anything like the moral economists' critique of capitalism because we harbor new doubts about whether it is wise to make strong claims about what it is to be human. Polanyi's gesture toward Smith introduces the possibility that a version of that critique might be reformulated without a conception of "human personality" or "notion of the 'fully human'" comparable to those around which Tawney's and Thompson's writings revolved. Polanyi was an important source for Thompson—at any rate that is my argument here. But Thompson's own readings of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political economy display much less of the perspicacity and subtlety evident in Polanyi's writings. That is not to side with commentators who dismiss Thompson as an innocent out of his depth in his readings of political economy. As we shall see, there are specific reasons why it was harder for Thompson to see the relevant authorities arrayed in quite the way Polanyi had found them.[25] It is only to say that for reasons peculiar to his situation, Thompson may well have been blind to the prospect Polanyi's writings raised. And it is also to suggest that it may be to our advantage now to return (free of Thompson's foibles) to the same juncture to see what appeal the relevant prospect holds for us.

The structure of this book is relatively simple and needs little introduction, except in one respect. Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson command one chapter each. But there is a fourth chapter, inserted between Polanyi and Thompson in the progression of the argument, and it may help the reader to make sense of that interruption if I explain its purpose at the outset. One indication of the influence wielded by the moral economists' critique of capitalism was the degree to which social critics of seemingly incompatible persuasions—writers and critics identifying themselves with utilitarianism, like Evan Durbin, or with relevant innovations in the human sciences, like Karl Mannheim—sought to align themselves with the critical tradition Tawney had inaugurated. Both Durbin and Mannheim styled themselves as innovators within this critical tradition. They justified their recourse to seemingly incongruent ideas by reference to the then-current notion that some process of "transcending capitalism" was in train, warranting the reformulation of the moral critique and

the concept of human personality for a new age. Innovations like Durbin's and Mannheim's have commanded great interest among historians of social and political thought. Both would be central to any whig history of the emergence of modern progressivism like that which I envisaged earlier. My aim in this chapter is to justify my own view that Durbin's and Mannheim's and cognate innovations stand outside the mainstream of the critical tradition reconstructed here. My purpose is to concentrate attention on the prospect of innovation within the tradition that I see (following Polanyi) as most promising. Articulating the relationship between the moral economists and relevant contemporary ideas and movements will give skeptical readers further opportunity to test my claims. In addition to Evan Durbin and Karl Mannheim, this fourth chapter encompasses Anthony Crosland and "revisionism" within the Labour Party, T. S. Eliot, the Moot, and reconstruction planning in the Conservative Party. It addresses the moment of planning in the 1930s and 1940s in Britain. It articulates a relationship between the moral economists' critique of capitalism and contemporary developments in the human sciences, especially psychology, sociology, and economics—with a particular concern to clarify the relationship between the emergence of this moral critique of capitalism and the genesis of welfare economics.

Finally, the relationship between the moral economists' critique of capitalism and the development of the discipline of economics bears further comment here—less to round off this introduction than to anticipate the book's concluding chapter. If the moral economists were theorists of everything economics excluded, one way to interpret their enterprise was as an attempt to reform that discipline from without. Economics became increasingly technical during the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War. One might presume that the translation of economic principles into mathematical formulae and the intensification of econometric expertise should carry the discipline still further away from the humane concerns and problems of the moral economists. But in fact the second half of the twentieth century gave rise to an influential movement within economics to make the same concerns about failures of social coordination that animated the moral economists central to the discipline of economics.

The key figures in that initiative were Kenneth Arrow and Amartya Sen.[26] Sen assimilated a version of the "social problem" framed by Tawney for Polanyi and Thompson in reckoning with Arrow's 1951 book *Individual Values and Social Choice*.[27] Arrow's impossibility theorem in effect restated in abstruse mathematical terms the same fundamental social problem that Tawney had framed during the late Edwardian constitutional crisis: individualism seemed untenable, but every conceivable alternative seemed to tend toward even more undesirable forms of collectivism. Social order could not be

achieved by the aggregation of individual preference. And since social order really did obtain in some places in the flux of commercial society *without* tending toward dictatorship, there must be some "scheme of socioethical norms" at work unseen beneath the utilitarian formula which contemporary economic theory applied to simplify its analyses.[28] But how to articulate those norms? Sen's Nobel prize–winning innovations were attempts at such articulation. Following Arrow, Sen used difficult mathematical language to that end. But that should not hide the affinities between Sen's enterprise after Arrow and that conducted by Tawney and his successors. Indeed, Arrow cites *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* at the outset of his discussion.[29] Sen traced the origins of the social choice theory with which he associated Arrow's impossibility theorem and his own innovations back to the eighteenth-century writings of the Marquis de Condorcet, one of Adam Smith's interlocutors.[30] This parallel line of inquiry into the uncertain domain between individualism and collectivism also led back to the same moment in eighteenth-century political economy over which Polanyi had paused. In this convergence of the moral economists' critique of capitalism with the course of economic science since the Second World War, a means of combining the emphasis on material inequality characteristic of contemporary anti-capitalism with a complementary critical approach grounded in moral imperatives becomes discernible. Again, my argument is not that we should focus on moral or spiritual considerations to the exclusion of material concerns. It is that we should not settle for the former without the latter. The concluding chapter of this book pinpoints a conjuncture between history and economics to show how complementing an emphasis on material inequality with some version of a moral critique of capitalism might work. It need not be one or the other. We can and should have both.

1

R. H. Tawney

R. H. Tawney commands great prestige among the British left.[1] Would-be legatees of "the best traditions of British Socialism" invariably "try to trace their lineage back to Tawney."[2] Claims to Tawney's posthumous patronage were once fiercely contested.[3] But they have become less contentious. Indeed, "a certain weariness is inclined to come over some readers" now at the mention of Tawney's name.[4] Many question whether there is actually a legacy worth claiming.[5] A steady stream of biographical and thematic treatments of Tawney's ideas attests to continuing interest his work.[6] But no one is quite sure what to make of it—what Tawney stood for, why it mattered, whether it still does. As Stefan Collini has observed, this uncertainty in relation to Tawney instantiates a more pervasive discomfort with questions concerning the relationship between economics and ethics.[7] When reading Tawney we feel a certain "unease with the very idea of the unembarrassed appeal to non-economic human values in public debate."[8] But we also feel that this unease is unbecoming—that it is a sensation we should not feel, a hesitation we had better overcome.

This awkwardness and ambivalence has affected the historiographical literature on Tawney's life and work in three respects. First, it is generally presumed that Tawney's appeals to morality were empty gestures—rhetorical postures struck without any articulate basis or sophisticated conviction.[9] In this view the moment of direct appeal to moral or ethical values in economic argument was ephemeral, a transitional stage between two more durable phases in the development of progressive social and political thought—an expiring earlier "liberal individualism" on the one hand, an emergent "welfarism" on the other. Tawney, in other words, was a transitional figure superseded by subsequent developments.[10] A second notion about Tawney—which has served to reinforce the conclusion that he extolled an empty moralism—is that he was a nostalgist. In this view his reconstruction of the declension of social thought through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represents a yearning for earlier simplicities.[11] Third, in consequence of the first two notions, Tawney has

come to be remembered mainly as the author of *The Acquisitive Society* (1921) and *Equality* (1931), his two more practical and programmatic works.[12] The 1926 book, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, which made his name and made his ideas central to social and political thought between the wars, has been relatively neglected.[13]Attention to these minor works—works more readily assimilated into prevailing technocratic currents in progressive social and political thought—has obscured the singularity of Tawney's thinking.

This chapter unseats each of these notions in turn. Taking *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* as Tawney's pivotal contribution, it validates the instinct that informed the legion latter-day socialists who have sought to trace a lineage to Tawney, clarifying that his was indeed the pioneering contribution to a particular mode of social criticism—a moral critique of capitalism predominant in Britain by the middle of the twentieth century. Tawney's formulation of the social problem set him squarely at variance with the "liberal individualism" of the nineteenth century: he was hostile to collectivism, yes, but he saw the future not in a renascent individualism but rather in the emergence of new forms of social solidarity neither individualist nor collectivist in nature.[14] A specific conception of "human personality" was integral to the critique of capitalism that Tawney pioneered: his constructions of the "moral" referred invariably to a definition of the human, a definition derived in Tawney from a specific theological moment. Tawney was neither an individualist nor a baseless moralist, then: attention to his concept of human personality overturns both of those suppositions.

Still less credible in my view is the characterization of Tawney as a nostalgist. Tawney's account of the declension of social thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emerges here not as a return to earlier simplicities but rather as the issue of his reflections on and responses to the emergent solidarities he encountered among his students and neighbors in northwest England in real time. "History," Tawney explained in his inaugural lecture at the London School of Economics in 1933, "is concerned with the study, not of a series of past events, but of the life of society, and with the records of the past as a means to that end."[15] He was looking in his sources for means of describing and articulating those solidarities—means unavailable in the terminology of contemporary social and political thought. Reconstructing the dissolution of earlier forms of cohesion was a way of imagining a social order constructed out of these emergent solidarities. Far from wishing capitalism away, Tawney was affirming that even while it destroyed older customs and norms, capitalism created new kinds of cohesion. Setting views of Tawney straight is not simply a matter of resolving anomalies in the scholarship. It begins to vindicate a widely felt instinct to revert to Tawney as a creative and constructive figure with profound relevance for contemporary politics, affirming that the

critical tradition he pioneered merits sustained attention. But it also gives that attention sharper focus. This new clarity serves in part to expose false claimants to Tawney's legacy: with the foundations of Tawney's construction of the moral unearthed, some claims to his intellectual ancestry become less plausible. It also helps us—this refocusing of attention on the specific concept of the human with which Tawney worked—to see why and how the "weariness" toward Tawney that affects many contemporary readers set in when it did: despite some recent suggestions to the contrary, Tawney *was* inspired by religion, and the intensification of the discourse of secularization has made his arguments less compelling.[16] Finally, this new focus helps us recognize where to look for Tawney's successors, and to follow the development of the moral critique of capitalism that he pioneered through successive iterations. That is the work of subsequent chapters.

To be clear, my aim here is not to redeem Tawney's arguments against capitalism unmodified. My purpose is rather to clarify the nature and bearing of the critical tradition he inaugurated, demonstrating that its success in its own time merits closer and more sustained attention than it has yet been afforded, singling out its distinguishing features the better to follow its development through subsequent innovations. Not that picking up those threads and following those innovations leads us eventually toward a set of arguments ready-made for deployment to commensurate effect today. We are uneasy about "unembarrassed appeal to non-economic human values in public debate" for good reason. But nor are we willing—and rightly, in my view—to forego any such appeal for good. Many people still return to Tawney in search of a critical standpoint. This chapter validates that instinct, but it also makes clear that Tawney is the beginning and not the end of that search.

The North

R. H. Tawney entered Balliol College, Oxford, in 1899, to read classics—"mods" and "greats," as the course was colloquially known. He left four years later with a second-class degree. His father—who had been an Apostle at Cambridge, and an associate of the moral philosopher Henry Sidgwick—deemed the result a "disgrace."[17] His friends William Beveridge and William Temple—future architect of the "welfare state" and Archbishop of Canterbury respectively—both won firsts and college fellowships. Tawney had to content himself with an exhibition and residence at Toynbee Hall, foremost of the settlement houses established in East London in the 1880s, where members of the middle classes exercised by the plight of the poor could live and work at humanitarian relief. At Toynbee Hall Tawney soon realized that "he had no aptitude for the distribution of soup and blankets."[18]

Tawney decided that he wanted "to teach economics in an industrial town." Beveridge told him that his work in Whitechapel would not "lead naturally" to that sort of post.[19] Tawney joined the fledgling Workers' Educational Association (founded in 1903) and was immediately appointed to its executive committee. From 1905 he spent two years lecturing in economics at the University of Glasgow—covering for William Smart, Adam Smith Professor of Political Economy, while Smart wrote the majority report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. Tawney joined a push for reform of the University of Oxford aimed at opening the university up to students from working-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds. Not being a senior member of the University, Tawney could speak and write more freely than the other agitators. The Liberal editor J. A. Spender gave the issue a good run in the *Westminster Gazette*. When the push resulted in the creation of a tutorial post under the joint auspices of the University of Oxford and the WEA, Tawney was appointed to it.[20] He moved to Manchester, teaching in towns like Rochdale, Chesterfield, Wrexham, and Longton.

Life in Lancashire and North Staffordshire was a revelation.[21] Here amidst "Nonconformist chapels and strong trade unionism," Tawney encountered "the normal working class life which he had missed in London."[22] The people he worked with in Whitechapel were feckless and demoralized. In the north a stronger social spirit prevailed, binding people into communities even where work was scarce and living conditions straitened. The contrast between the two scenarios transformed Tawney's attitude toward social reform. "[R]elieving distress," "patching up failures," "reclaiming the broken down," were "all good and necessary."[23] Such measures, however, treated symptoms, but did not address causes. "The social problem" needed a systemic solution. "One whole wing of social reformers" had "gone astray" in imagining that institutions like Toynbee Hall could make a real difference.[24] It was "no use devising relief schemes for a community where the normal relationships are felt to be unjust."[25]

A more systematic approach was under development in the work of the Fabians, led by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. As a younger man Tawney had been sympathetic with their ideas. At Oxford, Tawney had broached social questions with a meticulous empiricism. With William Beveridge, he had sought "to add to the unnumbered crowd of societies" an association for "the writing of papers on social questions from a matter of fact and as far as possible practical point of view."[26] At the first and only meeting of this abortive society, Tawney read a paper on the "Taxation of Site Values." Beveridge's path to power would essentially continue in this vein. He became an expert on unemployment insurance, went to work for the Board of Trade under Winston Churchill, became permanent secretary of the Ministry of Food during

the war, and then served as director of the London School of Economics.[27] In 1906, between teaching commitments in Glasgow, Tawney got to know the Webbs in London. They became friends.

But differences between Tawney's own developing outlook and the Webbs' Fabianism soon emerged.[28] Tawney had become active in the National Anti-Sweating League, campaigning (from headquarters on Mecklenburgh Square, where the Tawneys would live once they returned to London) for improvement of the wages and conditions in sweated trades like tailoring and box-making. The Webbs argued for the national legislation of a minimum wage. Tawney objected to this specific proposal in sharp terms. "It means that people are not paid what they are worth, but what is necessary to keep them working. That is how a horse or a slave is paid."[29] Reflecting upon the differences between his own outlook and the Webbs' a few years later, Tawney recognized them as utilitarians, descended directly from Jeremy Bentham, J. S. Mill, and Victorian liberalism, and he realized that from a utilitarian point of view there was nothing specific to be said against sweated labor.[30] For Tawney, that complaisance was unconscionable.

In 1905 it was economics that Tawney had wanted to teach. That soon changed. "There is no such thing as a science of economics," he wrote in his commonplace book in 1913, "nor ever will be."

> It is just cant, and Marshall's talk as to the need for social problems to be studied by "the same order of mind which tests the stability of a battleship in bad weather" is twaddle.[31]

"Too much time is spent today upon outworks, by writers who pile up statistics and facts, but never get to the heart of the problem," Tawney wrote at around the same time. In seeking broader orientations, he looked to history. By 1908 it was "some parts of economics and history" that he wanted to "master."[32] But academic mastery was again in itself not enough. He wanted to mix "scientific study" and "practical business," "the one helping the other": "books without things make Oxford dons, and things without books make borough councillors, between whom the world goes to the devil."[33] Politics held some appeal. Tawney would run for parliament without success three times between 1918 and 1922. But politics was clamorous, dry, and remote, bereft of "appeal to noble and important emotions and beliefs."[34] Reformers were preoccupied by band-aid solutions, politicians "with the manipulation of forces and interests," economists with "outworks." What was "the heart of the problem"? It was "not economic," Tawney wrote, it was "a question of *moral relationships*."[35] "Modern society" was "sick through the absence of a moral ideal."[36]

By May 6, 1910, when Edward VII died suddenly, the country was perched precariously on the verge of constitutional crisis.[37] The campaign for women's

suffrage was entering its militant phase, with prominent proponents—led by Sylvia and Emmeline Pankhurst—soon to resort to window-breaking and arson.[38] The prospect of Home Rule for Ireland prompted Ulster unionists encouraged by Conservative parliamentarians to form a paramilitary pledged to resist majority Catholic rule.[39] Industrial disputes became increasingly numerous and tense, as a concerted decade-long attempt to forestall militancy by extending the government's conciliatory role and facilitating parliamentary representation for workers proved unsuccessful.[40] The authority of parliament, and with it confidence in the capacity of liberal constitutionalism to contain pressures for social change and maintain social order in Britain, was cast in doubt in dramatic fashion.

This late-Edwardian crisis deepened understandings of the nature of the "social problem" in Britain.[41] As first raised in the studies of Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree, the social problem had been primarily a humanitarian issue, generating a concern among sections of the metropolitan middle class to ameliorate the urban poverty that decades of prosperity had failed to shift. Toynbee Hall, where Tawney spent his early twenties, was a response to the social problem so conceived. At the turn of the century humanitarian considerations had been overlaid with concerns about national prestige and imperial power. Problems raising an army to defend imperial possessions in the Boer War made the physical debility of sections of the urban working class a political issue. Relieving poverty and improving welfare became a matter of "national efficiency"—a paradigm that favored the utilitarianism of the Fabians. The constitutional crisis of the late Edwardian period gave the social problem a new complexion. "Much of the attention" long "spent on relief," Tawney observed in 1913, was now being "divert[ed] to questions of social organisation."[42] The impoverishment of parts of the proletariat now figured as incidents of a more pervasive deficit of social solidarity. The minimal cohesives that had seemed adequate in the age of Gladstone could not contain the political energies the new century was arousing.

It was in this moment of crisis that Tawney's sense of purpose quickened. British society was disintegrating in a clash of groups and interests. The reduction of interpersonal relationships to the terms of economic exchange encouraged by Victorian political economy—the elevation of what we would now call "methodological individualism" into a social philosophy—came to seem a dangerous fallacy. It made opposing viewpoints incommensurable, aggravating disagreements. New conceptions of "unity" were needed. "Unity," Tawney wrote in 1913, "is to be desired in all those matters which involve the everyday life of mankind, not in the sense that all must believe the same things or act in the same way, but in the sense that one man must not suppose that what another believes is dictated solely by selfish interests."

> While disapproving of his actions he may be able to see that it has a moral justification. It is just this moral justification which is lacking in the economic life of today. It is just the lack of it which turns disagreement into discord and bitterness.[43]

The question of moral relationships provided a way to rediscover and restore the moral or non-economic dimension in human relations which this reduction in terms had attenuated and obscured.

Idealism

Tawney was not the first to reformulate the social problem in this way. Part of the work had been done earlier by exponents of the moral philosophy of Idealism, which had emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century as the answer to an earlier crisis of faith. In the mid-Victorian period, Evangelical emphasis on the veracity of scripture generated a ferment of biblical criticism. The literal truth of the stories recorded in the Bible became an historical question, and the chronology laid down in the Bible proved increasingly difficult to reconcile with the findings of contemporary science. In Oxford, a "high church" movement determined to sustain dogma on the basis of the authority of Christian teaching separated from a "broad church" movement intent upon transposing belief into terms more consonant with the spirit of the age. Balliol College, where Tawney matriculated in 1899, was the center of the broad church movement. The central thrust of this movement was to formulate Christian belief in the terms of metaphysics—neither authority nor historical evidence but reason alone could uphold all that carried permanent value in Christianity.[44] The key figures in this movement were Benjamin Jowett and T. H. Green. While Jowett remained an ardent Christian, Green dissociated Christian moral precepts from the faith itself. One of the central propositions of Idealist metaphysics was that the "real will" of individuals was to be integrated into a higher unity, that self-realization involved the subordination of individual eccentricities to a larger social purpose. Centripetal forces exceeded the divisive power of allegiance to class and interest.

One prominent permutation of Idealist metaphysics to emerge from Balliol in this period was a vision of the state as a power synthesizing cohesion out of the anarchic play of "actual" (as distinct from "real") "wills." Bernard Bosanquet left Balliol to witness urban poverty for himself. Like Tawney after him, Bosanquet went to Toynbee Hall. In between errands he wrote *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (1899).[45] Bosanquet acknowledged (following Green) that the self was complex. The transcendent real will or true object was obscured by fickle actual wills. What we really want gets lost behind tran-

sient impulses and affects. But since (returning to Idealism's key precept) our real will was unity, the embodiment or personification of temporal solidarity could offer individuals a lead, arbitrating in the inward conflict between passing affects and permanent interests, the actual and the real. That embodiment was the state. By submitting to the authority of the state, individuals could ensure that their real will prevailed.

The idea that the state could play so active an ameliorative role in personal life was novel; Victorian liberalism had envisaged the state as a night watchman.[46] But at the turn of the twentieth century it was increasingly plausible. The national government at Westminster was accumulating power and accepting broader responsibilities.[47] Problems of poverty, public health, and material welfare had been dealt with mainly at the municipal level and through philanthropic concerns. The recriminations from failure in the Boer War made the social problem a national problem, legitimating a national response. The perceived German challenge to Britain's status as "top nation" prompted calls for protection—a policy only Westminster could implement. The first elements of the welfare state were enacted after 1906. A dispute about the governance of the Free Church of Scotland was remitted to the House of Lords to resolve—raising allegations of state interference in associational life.[48] Increasingly hostile industrial relations involved the courts—engendering fears that the state was attacking the autonomy of trade unions and undermining the principle of free collective bargaining.[49]

In the early twentieth century, the austere forms of rationality that Green's Idealism had relied upon to sustain its confidence in the movement toward unity no longer seemed pervasive. Signs of what the lapsed Fabian Graham Wallas called an "inner strain"—of what George Dangerfield would later describe as "irrational storms" looming on the horizon—were evident to all who "trie[d] to interpret the obscure feelings of half-articulate men and women" in this period.[50] The "haven" of "the cautious phrase," "the respectable gesture," and "the considered display of reasonable emotions" had "lost its charms" and—"worse still, its peace."

> Its waters, no longer unruffled by the wind, ceased to reflect with complacent ease, the settled skies, the untangled stars of accepted behaviour and sensible conviction; and men, with a defiance they could not hope to understand, began to put forth upon little excursions into the vast, the dark, the driven seas beyond.[51]

"In England," Wallas wrote in *The Great Society* (1914), a book that left its mark upon Tawney, "the 'particularism' of trades and professions and the racial feeling of Wales or Ulster, of Scotland or Catholic Ireland, seem to be growing stronger not weaker."[52]

> [E]verywhere the preachers of Syndicalism and "direct action," the editors of clericalist newspapers, the owners of "predatory wealth," claim to represent the real and growing social forces as against the phrase-makers, the undenominationalists, the bloodless traitors to class or church, who stand for the community as a whole.[53]

A second edition of Bosanquet's book was published in 1910.[54] The prewar crisis made it more, not less, influential. Bosanquet's vision of the state as arbiter in the inward contest between actual and real wills provided a kind of shelter from the inner strain and the irrational storms Dangerfield and Wallas had forecast. It was one of the works that made the Victorian jurist A. V. Dicey's claim (made in 1906 and reiterated in 1914) that Britain was proceeding through a transition from "individualism" to "collectivism" superficially credible.[55] And the currency of Bosanquet's theory was further heightened by the mobilization for war in 1914. The ecstasy of patriotism that the war created put the quietus to the disturbances that previously had seemed so troubling. The suffragettes swapped setting fires for passing out feathers. The Orangemen put down dummy rifles and enlisted. The workers volunteered in huge numbers, and the state entered into active collaboration with the trade unions, encouraging membership so as to simplify the organization of wartime production. The constitutional crisis was averted, at least for a time.

In Green's Idealism, reason sustained social unity. Christian moral precepts could be upheld irrespective of biblical criticism, and regardless of the diminishing authority of the church. The episode Dangerfield remembered as the "strange death of Liberal England" had challenged the supposition that reason was pervasive and powerful enough to discharge the cohesive function Green reserved for it. Bosanquet's theory of the state—validated by the real-world concentration of prerogatives and responsibilities long held at a local level on the national government at Westminster, a process dramatically intensified by war—had provided reassurance, making this incipient social unity more tangible. As the conflict wore on, however, and the initial bout of patriotic fervor abated, necessitating the introduction of conscription (and then the imprisonment of conscientious objectors), mostly complaisant attitudes toward the growth of state power hardened.[56]

In 1918 the sociologist L. T. Hobhouse published a widely influential broadside against Bosanquet. In a powerful piece of polemic, he recalled the memory of a summer afternoon in a Highgate garden in 1914 reading Kant with his son, and juxtaposed that memory with the spectacle of a Gotha raid on London seen from the same garden three years later, his son now flying planes for the RAF.[57] The Gotha raids, Hobhouse charged, were the "visible and tangible outcome" of the theory of the "god-state" (i.e., the theory that made the state

arbiter of the distinction between the "real" will and the merely "apparent") and the concept of freedom ("harmony with the true law of one's being") that it was taken to support.[58] Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*, Hobhouse maintained, advanced a "false and wicked doctrine," engendering international aggression. Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory* would appear in a third edition in 1920 and then a fourth in 1923. But its currency was devalued by Hobhouse's attack.

The social problem of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, reaching its most acute phase in the "death of Liberal England," revealed that mutual utility—rational, self-interested actors meeting in markets overseen by a night watchman state—was not a sufficient basis for social order. The initial response to this realization had been to pivot from "individualism" to "collectivism," swapping the social philosophy of laissez-faire for conceptions of a strong, unifying state. But during and after the First World War, state power came to be seen as inimical to freedom. And in that moment a search for new ideas about what held social life together began. A group of lawyers and political theorists had been looking for such ideas since the turn of the century. Their initiative ultimately failed; by 1918, its days were numbered. But it is the attempt that interests us here. The lawyers and political theorists who have come to be known as the "pluralists" were the first to set out on this search for a social principle apart from the binary alternatives of individualism and collectivism. Pluralism was a failure. But its failure cleared the way for the subsequent attempts of the moral economists to pursue the same end by distinct means.

Pluralism

Through the turn of the century the Cambridge legal historian F. W. Maitland wrote a series of essays on some anomalies in English jurisprudence.[59] He was worried by the growth of the state. Absolutism in Europe, Maitland believed, was a product of social atomization, a "pulverising, macadamising tendency, working from century to century to reduce to nullity . . . all that intervenes between man and state."[60] That tendency was now becoming discernible in Britain. Under Maitland's analysis the contemporary growth of the state emerged as a harbinger of tyranny.

In manifesting this "macadamising tendency" contemporary Britain was beginning to bridge the gap that had always separated English jurisprudence from British social and political practice. In the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, sovereignty was absolute, and so group life was precarious. The various associations and corporations that English law recognized came into existence only at the behest of the state. It was by sovereign concession

that they acquired standing independent of the "natural" persons who were their members. And as such these associations and corporations—including churches and trade unions—had no real independence in law. The state could interfere in their internal affairs without limit, and the organizations had no choice but to comply, upon threat of dissolution. In practice, corporations and associations had always enjoyed more independence than this jurisprudential position allowed. But in the late nineteenth century the growth of the state put that practical independence in question. The Scottish Church and Taff Vale cases underlined Maitland's concerns.

The legal anomalies that interested Maitland most were those in which the distinction between artificial personality and natural personality blurred. When a country parson died, his parsonage—a corporation sole, in law, whose existence should formally lapse with the death of its only member—did not dissolve.[61] It survived, pending the appointment of the next parson. The country parsonage had this strange longevity in common with the United Kingdom. Upon the death of the monarch, the realm did not expire; rather, it stood unattended pending the coronation of the new monarch. And this was notwithstanding the formal jurisprudential proposition that a corporation has no life but that which its members bring to it. The institution of the corporation sole—the device that facilitated succession among country parsons and kings and queens of England—suggested otherwise. Maitland used these anomalies to make the argument that there was scope in English jurisprudence to recognize that corporations and associations were seized of "real personality."[62] They were more than artificial persons insubstantial apart from the natural persons who comprised their membership. They had a life of their own, standing independent of their members. They had more than artificial personality, and could not be dealt with so summarily by the state. Maitland was trying to establish what had long been observed in practice as a matter of jurisprudential principle.

Why did the nature of corporations and associations—whether they were seized of something more than artificial personality which the state could dissolve as readily as it had created, or whether they were seized of real personality, a category unknown to Hobbes—matter? It mattered to Maitland because recognizing corporate life as real served to militate against social atomization without enlarging the power of the state. In the late nineteenth century the idea that markets could sustain social order was losing credibility. And the role of the state was being commensurately enlarged. Mid-Victorian principles of order through commercial exchange were yielding once more to conceptions of sovereign power more readily associated with seventeenth-century social and political thought. It was becoming clear, moreover, that social forces shaped selfhood in more subtle ways than the Victorians had imagined. In the

Idealist analysis, as we have seen, social life served to arbitrate in the inward struggle between actual and real wills. If the state subsumed all of social life, in this context, it accumulated enormous powers of persuasion. Maitland abhorred that prospect. If man was a social animal, it was dangerous to let the state dominate social life. Reinforcing the practical independence long enjoyed by corporations and associations in English politics by making room in English law for the proposition that such organizations were seized of real personality was a prophylactic against such aggrandizement of the state.

Maitland affected diffidence in matters of political philosophy, proceeding as though he were simply reconciling English law with its own unacknowledged principles, but his ideas were radically innovative. In modern jurisprudence and political philosophy since Hobbes, who had built in turn upon foundations laid in Roman law, group life was strictly ancillary to the political needs of pre-social individuals. "Natural persons" came first. In Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the only real persons are natural persons. The state is created by the several natural persons who propose to secure for themselves the advantages of stable government acting in concert in the form of a commonwealth. The commonwealth has no substantive existence apart from the personalities of its constituting members. The commonwealth creates the state. The state is a fictitious person. It can act only through representatives—natural persons acting in the capacity of the sovereign. The sovereign authority includes powers of artifice with which the sovereign can create certain forms of legal personality—corporations and other associations. But these are not real, they are artificial. In Hobbes, "the parts come before the whole."[63]

Maitland envisioned group life differently. He imagined "a unity which is prior to, and in some senses determinant of, the individuality of a group's members," in which "the whole comes before the parts."[64] This is at first glance a strange means of limiting the power of the state, putting unity before individuality. But the "group" Maitland had in mind was not the state. Indeed, it was not a singular group at all, but rather, groups in plural. The extant organizing principle of "unity-in-plurality"—where unity was always "consequent upon some arrangement between the group's individual members," where "the parts come before the whole"—took individuals to be fully formed before they entered into social and political life, self-sufficient irrespective of social affiliations and affections. Maitland was developing a principle to fit a dispensation in which individuality was a product of unity, in which selfhood was shaped by groups. Given the supposition that man was a social animal, plurality in group life became crucial. Without it, freedom was jeopardized. If one group—the state—were left to shape selfhood, individuality was compromised.

Maitland grounded his arguments in English legal history, but his inspiration and part of his authority came from abroad. Hobbes scholars in Germany

had set out upon the same search for means of transcending a binary choice between individualism and collectivism in advance of Maitland and his contemporaries.[65] The process of unification under Prussian rule had stirred cognate apprehensions about state power. The legal historian Otto von Gierke had discovered the concept of the *Genossenschaft* or "fellowship," a principle at variance with Roman models of unity-in-plurality.[66] Gierke's concept became the warrant for Maitland's proposition that English law recognized real personality in corporations, despite Hobbes. A fellowship in Gierke's account was seized not merely of artificial personality created by sovereign concession. A fellowship was a real person—neither natural (like humans), fictional (like the state), or artificial (like corporations under English law, in Hobbes's account)—a creature independent both of its individual members and of the state. A fellowship was greater than the sum of its parts, not merely in law or artifice but in substance, for real. A fellowship was not simply an organization in which several natural persons complete and sufficient to themselves come together for some instrumental purpose. A fellowship in Gierke's conception was as much constitutive *of* its individual members as constituted *by* its individual members.

Maitland's argument was not that the state should be construed as a fellowship. (That was Bosanquet's argument, though Bosanquet—who was indifferent to jurisprudential technicalities—did not put it that way.)[67] It was rather that it was through fellowship that natural persons—conceived as social animals—became aware of themselves as distinct individuals. Gierke's fellowship was Maitland's model for group life. Hobbes's conception of sovereignty could stand: individuals affected in and through group life still came together in the commonwealth to create the state. Maitland was not a syndicalist. But Hobbes's conception of sovereign power would be modified by the recognition that corporations had real personality, that they did not depend on the concession of the sovereign for their existence. It was not through the state that social life affects individuals, but in groups. The whole comes before the parts, but the wholes too are plural.

The really difficult question for pluralists was how unity between these several wholes was to be achieved, and how the integrity of the wider polity was thus to be maintained. For Gierke—Maitland's inspiration—this had been less of a problem. The concept of the *Rechtstaat*—untranslatable into English—provided a framework within which concord between the polity's plural fellowships could be envisaged. English jurisprudence knew no comparable framework. For some among the eccentric succession who came in Maitland's train, this was not a problem. J. N. Figgis, the Anglican cleric and historian of political thought, cheerfully described himself as a syndicalist.[68] But in the moment of the constitutional crisis of the late Edwardian period,

most were far less willing to imagine that Britain could hold together as a collocation of groups without an overarching state to keep order between these groups. Alongside churches and moderate trade unions, associational life in early twentieth-century Britain encompassed militant movements that did not respect the parameters of the constitution—syndicalist workers and suffragettes and Orangemen. The activities of comparable groups elsewhere in Europe were proving even more destabilizing. In an age of incipient extremes, replacing the concession theory with a concept of real group personality was a risk. Some—principally Figgis—were willing to take it. But most were not.

Maitland died in 1906. It fell to his protégé Ernest Barker to oversee the translation of Gierke's writings into English. When he wrote the introduction to the translation of Gierke's *Natural Law and the Theory of Society 1500–1800* in 1934, Barker deplored the theory of real personality of groups imported with the earlier volumes of Gierke's writings.[69] Though this theory counteracted atomization, it incubated dangerous new pathologies: in recalling the individual to social life, the theory of the real personality tended to "[engulf] his life, and [absorb] his individuality," in a process vividly illustrated in contemporary Germany.[70] As a plurality of fellowships gave way to the dominance of "single movement or party," the very eventuality Maitland had set out to avoid—man's social self becoming beholden to a unitary center of power—was accomplished even more definitively.[71] Barker did not wish to preserve the dispensation in which men and women were conceived as fully formed and self-sufficient before they entered into society and engaged in politics. But he refused to countenance the scenario his mentor Maitland had envisaged in which groups seized of real personality came to be seen as the crucible of individual selfhood, because he recognized that English law thus modified had no means of precluding the monopolization of group life by a "single movement or party." There had to be other means of counteracting social atomization, because the means the pluralists had initially pursued led to the very scenario—the substitution of an austere individualism for a dangerous collectivism—they had set out to avoid.

Guild Socialism

Another in the eccentric succession who came after Maitland was G.D.H. Cole. Cole rose to prominence as the leader of "guild socialism." The guild idea became prominent in English social and political thought in the first decade of the new century.[72] It was bound up with a broader ferment of interest in the medieval period that intensified in the early twentieth century.[73] The guild idea entailed the establishment of what advocates called "self-government in industry," under which trade unions would be converted from "protective

organisations of wage and salary earners" into "managing and controlling organisations, including the whole necessary personnel of industry," and would work "in conjunction with a democratic State" to organize economic production.[74] The National Guilds League was founded in 1908. *The New Age*, a literary magazine, became a center for discussion of the implications of the guild idea.[75] One of the distinguishing features of that idea was its interest in the spiritual as much as material welfare of workers. Labor was not an article of commerce, marketable with the same facility as corn or cattle. This was a proposition that commanded assent among conservatives as well as socialists. Both *The New Age* and the National Guilds League encompassed a great diversity of political opinion, "from the extreme right, which look[ed] to a gradual development of guilds by the consent of the more progressive employers, to the extreme left, which corresponds closely in method and outlook to the Marxian Industrial Unions."[76] Indeed, the National Guilds League was among the first in a series of corporatist initiatives punctuating the first half of the twentieth century in Britain, involving collaborations between groups and interests whose interactions had historically been antagonistic outside the normal channels of political contestation.[77] The NGL envisaged a reorganization of industry that would redress workers' grievances (denominated in both material and spiritual terms) while securing productivity gains for owners and efficiency gains for consumers. The guild idea had too much in common with fascism to survive long into the interwar period.[78] But corporatist approaches were renewed in other forms, most conspicuously in the discourse on "planning" in the 1930s.[79] Guild socialism was the left wing of the NGL. Cole was its key figure. As a distinct social and political theory, guild socialism only took definite shape toward the end of the First World War. Its shelf life was brief. By 1934 Cole admitted that guild socialism was finished.[80]

When Cole set about formulating guild socialist ideas more systematically after the war, one of his first concerns was to clarify the relationship between guild socialism and the pluralist innovations in jurisprudence and political theory undertaken by Maitland and Barker. Cole was wholly in sympathy with the pluralists' concern to find ways of counteracting social atomization, supplanting the market as the key principle of social order, while maintaining limits to the power of the state. The pluralists and particularly Barker would soon conclude that some means other than innovation in jurisprudence had to be found to achieve that objective. Cole had reached a similar conclusion even sooner. In *Social Theory* (1920), Cole sought to reconcile the program of guild socialism with the terms of what he called "classical Political Theory," by which he meant the paradigm in political philosophy that the pluralists had been trying to modify, to which Hobbes was central.[81] He concluded that neither classical Political Theory nor the innovations within it attempted by the pluralists were going to be much help.[82]

"[C]lassical Political Theory," Cole wrote in *Social Theory*, had treated the state as "the embodiment and representative of the social consciousness": "the State's actions" were treated as definitive of "the actions of men in Society," "the relations of the State and the individual" had become "the chief, and almost the only, subject-matter of Social Theory." "Over against the State and its action and activities," Cole wrote, echoing Maitland,

> this form of theory has set indiscriminately the whole complex of individuals and other associations and institutions, and has treated all their manifestations as individual actions without vital distinction or difference.[83]

Classical Political Theory, in other words, was complicit in the "macadamis[ation]" of "all that intervenes between man and state," which Maitland had written about at the turn of the century. Political philosophy as it had developed since Hobbes tended to atomize individuals. Hobbes had been determined to refute Aristotelian conjectures of man's innate sociability. He had insisted that the impulses to seek recognition which brought men and women into society were sources not of concord but of conflict. Hobbes challenged the idea that an innate sociability could be relied upon to stabilize the social order. In doing so he accentuated the sufficiency of individuals unto themselves: they associated not to realize some inchoate sense of self but to secure pre-political interests. Whatever group life developed within the domain constructed by the state was strictly ancillary to that primary material concern. Cole returned to something like the earlier Aristotelian conception of self and society. It was axiomatic that selfhood was social, that it was in and through associations and institutions including the state that personality took form. An "infinitely subtle and various personality" was immanent in each individual, and it was society which enabled one to "express" this personality, it was social life which "call[ed]" it "out."[84] Outside of society, selfhood is inchoate and insubstantial. It is only in and through social action that self-realization is possible. For Cole, social theory—the genus of which political theory was a species—needed to be brought into conformity with that supposition.

Maitland and his successors had experimented with means of forestalling the reduction of social life in all its complexity to the concept of the state by imputing real personality to groups. Pluralism ended with Barker, who—as we have seen—shied away from ascribing real personality to groups in law for fear of licensing extremism. Like Barker, Cole denied that corporations and associations should be regarded as "persons," "in any real sense."[85] But his reasoning was different. For Cole, informed by the guild idea, associations and corporations were defined by the functions or purposes they served. A *person* does not have a function or purpose. He or she has a personality, "infinitely subtle and various," ready to be "call[ed]" into existence by society. To reduce

that personality to the status of a purpose or function would be degrading. But integral to personality was willfulness. As well as or as part of the ethereal quality of personality, a person for Cole had "wills"—as the Idealists held. It was those individual wills, in turn, that gave civic associations their functions or purposes. It was in and through associations and corporations that individuals enacted their wills.

> As soon as we view the social scene in this light, the whole outlook is at once different. Not only the state, but all the other forms of association in which men join or are joined together for the execution of any social purpose, are seen as expressing and embodying in various manners and degrees the wills of the individuals who compose them.[86]

The preoccupation of the pluralists had been with the personality of the group and with the personality of the state. Cole was shifting attention to the personality of the individual, the "natural person" that pluralist political theory had more or less taken as given.

> Our study of Social Theory will begin, then, not with the State, nor with any other particular form of association, but with association as a whole, and the way in which men act through associations in supplement and complement to their actions as isolated or private individuals.[87]

The study of "association as a whole" was not so far removed from what J. N. Figgis and Ernest Barker, after Maitland, were engaged in. But attending to "the way in which men act through associations in supplement and complement to their actions as isolated or private individuals" was an innovation. In counteracting the tendency to reduce social life to relations between the individual and the state, the pluralists had concentrated on the nature of the group, seeking to preclude its absorption into the state. Cole proposed to begin not with "the State" or with "any other particular form of association" but with the impulse to social action. Cole's focus fell not on the state or the group but on the social self, and on the means by which people acted "through associations in supplement and complement" to their actions as "isolated or private individuals."

It was increasingly clear after the First World War that the state was only one among a number of possible sites of social action. The emergence of what would come to be called nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), particularly those that were "international in orientation," availed individuals of new means of enacting their wills through associations other than the state.[88] But it was not only and indeed not even primarily on the international plane that associations multiplied. In 1920, Cole still hoped that the guild idea had life in it, and this idea anticipated the reconstitution of social and economic life in

such a way that trade unions became syndicates through which workers participated in the management of the enterprises that employed them. Alongside vocational guilds, urban crowds and modern political parties—not least the emergent Labour party—were among the nascent movements through which individuals could act "in supplement and complement to their actions as private individuals." And with this reconstitution of social life came new problems.

How was the multiplicity of individual wills to be reconciled? In Idealist metaphysics, an incipient harmony between the real wills of individuals obtained. It was the role of civil society (for T. H. Green) or of the state (for Bernard Bosanquet) to sustain that harmony by arbitrating between the actual and the real wills within individuals. For pluralists—where this problem figured as the prospective clash of the real personalities of the manifold groups into which social life resolved—it was precisely that one could *not* bank on such concord materializing that the idea of making non-state corporate identity "real" had to be abandoned. Cole did not have a straightforward answer to the question. Indeed, he is sometimes read as having denied that the question arose, as having believed that the risk of conflict between multiplicitous wills that gave purpose or function to groups was negligible.[89]

Cole was attuned to the problem. But he sought its solution not in a conception of the state or of civil society as stabilizing agent but in inquiries into the nature of the impulse to social action that moved men and women to seek to supplement and complement their actions as private individuals by associating in groups. The "multiplicity and possible conflict of loyalties and obligations involved for the individual in simultaneous membership of several [non-state] associations" was certainly a potential problem for individuals personally and for the stability of the social order more generally. But for Cole it was a problem without an institutional solution. It was a problem best approached through the study "not of [social] institutions themselves," but rather "of the motives and impulses by which men are moved in their social actions through institutions and associations."[90] The relevant conceptual tools were not those of political philosophy, but rather those of social psychology. Robert Michels's *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* was "perhaps the best modern example of this form of study in its developed form."[91] Graham Wallas's *Human Nature in Politics* was another promising example. The nucleus of this form of study was to be found in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.[92]

> At one extreme, this type of theory finds its place in the study of "mob" or "crowd" psychology, the impulses and ways of action of a barely organized human group. At the other extreme, it studies, from the same

> standpoint, the psychological aspects of the most complicated and highly developed form of social association, and endeavours, like the psychology of individual conduct, to formulate the general rules which guide the actions of men in association as individual psychology studies the diseases of personality.[93]

Cole envisaged a process of adjustment occurring at the individual level, making divergent wills commensurable, instilling men and women with general rules to guide their actions in association. Social life was not a clash between contending individuals who had entered into society pre-formed with pre-conceived claims to pursue and interests to advance. It was an interaction between socially conditioned individuals, acting according to learned dynamics or "general rules" which contained conflict and fostered solidarity.

"While the political philosophers are holding high argument about the philosophical theory of the state, and the relation to it of the individual," Cole declared, "the world around them has become interested in a new set of problems."[94] Four decades later Peter Laslett would represent this moment as the "death" of political philosophy in Britain.[95] What Tawney called "criticisms of the omnicompetent state" fell silent.[96] "From 1920 onwards," David Runciman writes, "there was no-one in England prepared to further the case against the idea of a single unitary state, and its single sovereignty."[97] The philosophical argument with Hobbes was abandoned. But this was not because social and political theorists had decided after all to accept Hobbes's solution to the social problem as it had come to be understood by the end of the First World War. The pluralists gave up on the idea of supplanting Hobbes's model of self and society (unity-in-plurality, in which the parts come prior to the whole) with something akin to Gierke's alternative model (plurality-in-unity, in which the whole precedes the parts), fearing that to confer real personality on groups fosters political extremism.[98] But at the same time the guild socialists led by Cole grew indifferent to the formal, abstract position set down in jurisprudence and political philosophy. They shifted their focus from "institutions themselves"—the abstract nature of the state and of non-state associations, the dynamics of interaction between "man" and "state"—to "the motives and impulses by which men are moved in their social action." In this they were inspired by social psychology, as practiced in the twentieth century by Robert Michels and Graham Wallas, themselves rehabilitating approaches established in the eighteenth century by (among others) Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Ernest Barker, in his introduction to the final installment of Gierke's writings in 1934, described the pivot away from law and formal, abstract conceptions of state and corporation in simpler terms. Law was one thing. Social reality was another. Jurisprudence might reduce social life to the bare terms of

individual and state, treating everything that intervened between the two as ancillary and insubstantial, but that was not how life was actually lived. At first glance, this was merely another exercise in the new-fashioned English practice of "muddling through."[99] But that first impression belies the deeper significance of the turn that social and political thought in Britain took at this moment. In separating law and social reality, and insisting that the structure of the former was only a partial and reductive reflection of the latter, a convenience devised for certain narrow political purposes, Cole and Barker made experimentation with alternative principles of social order possible. The formal domain of law and the state came to be seen as overlaid by informal strictures of convention, custom, and tradition, and undergirded by habits of domesticity and privacy.[100]

R. H. Tawney had begun to rise to public prominence on the eve of the First World War. In 1912 he was appointed a lead writer on "labour subjects" for the *Manchester Guardian*. In 1913 he was made director of the Ratan Tata Foundation, a social research institution attached to the London School of Economics. He moved with his wife Jeanette (nee Beveridge, younger sister of Tawney's friend William) from Manchester to central London. After war broke out, Tawney became "restless in his academic work."[101] Instead of joining a volunteer battalion in London, in the company of public school boys and university men, Tawney went back to Manchester and enlisted as a private in one of the "pals battalions," units that friends and neighbors could join on the promise of serving together. Tawney refused to accept a commission when it was offered, less out of solidarity with his fellow enlisted men that out of anxiety about "pretending to teach what I don't know myself."[102] He was wounded on the Somme in the summer of 1916. Back in London he became active in arguments over postwar reconstruction. Through Thomas Jones—a Welsh economist and adult education enthusiast whom Tawney had met in Glasgow, where Jones had also been teaching, and who was now a Whitehall staffer—Tawney was invited with the classicist and internationalist Alfred Zimmern and others to address Lloyd George, the Minister for Munitions, on "the need for a new spirit in government and the conduct of the war."[103] This was not the last time Jones would bring Tawney's ideas before cabinet members.[104]

In 1919 Tawney was appointed to the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, chaired by Mr. Justice Sankey. He was one of three economists recruited, with Sidney Webb and Leo Chiozza Money—probably at Webb's suggestion. Beatrice Webb would later describe Tawney as "the great success of the commission," winning her husband's admiration with his "personal charm, quiet wisdom and rapier-like intellect."[105] His biographer Lawrence Goldman identifies the Sankey Commission as the moment when Tawney "became a public figure."[106] G.D.H. Cole counted Tawney among his fellow

guildsmen.[107] He pointed to Tawney's membership of the Sankey Commission as evidence of the public purchase of guild socialist ideas.

Was Tawney a guildsman? On the discrete issue of what to do about poor productivity and industrial unrest in the mines, Tawney's line was the same as Cole's. He recommended that the mines be nationalized (a recommendation Sankey adopted, to Tawney's astonishment) such that ownership would pass from the owners to the state. But he also insisted that while ownership should be held by the state for the public, management of the mines must henceforth involve the miners. This was the guild socialist line: "self-government" in industry did not mean (as the syndicalists argued) that both control and ownership should pass to the workers. Control—or at least involvement in management—was enough. Lawrence Goldman regards the Sankey Commission as a turning point in Tawney's socialism, when an "ethical and spiritual" orientation gave way to a state-centric, instrumental approach more akin to the Fabians. For Goldman, this development created a disjuncture in Tawney's thought, separating the authentic ethical socialist he had hitherto been from a more practical, instrumental thinker.[108] But where Goldman sees disruption, I would suggest that there was continuity. Like most of his contemporaries, Tawney abandoned criticism of the "factotum" or "omnicompetent" state after 1920. That was not because he had begun to look to the state to solve the social problems (the instability of a social order organized around the market) that vexed him and to secure the ends (the realization of human personality, as a means of knowing God, as we shall shortly see) that inspired him. It was rather because he came—in a move consistent with Cole's venture beyond arguments over the "philosophical nature of the state," and Barker's distinction between law and social reality—to see the state in less elevated terms than he and his contemporaries had once done.

The state was necessary and important. Like Cole, and Maitland before him, Tawney was never tempted by syndicalism. But the state was only part of a wider social matrix. It was "a practical political instrument" and no more, Tawney was heard saying in 1926, despite what "mere academicians"' said about it.[109] He made the same point two decades later. The state was an "important instrument, hence the struggle to control it."[110] But it had no permanent character or complexion, no unchanging internal dynamics or immutable form. Like Cole, Tawney grew impatient with "high argument" concerning the nature of the state.

> The idea that there is an entity called "the State" which possesses, in virtue of its title, uniform characteristics, existing independently of the varying histories, economic environments, constitutional arrangements, legal systems and social psychologies of particular states, and that these character-

> istics necessarily combine the manners of a Japanese customs official with the morals of a human tiger, is a pure superstition.[111]

Writing in 1949, Tawney would compare Bosanquet's turn-of-the-century philosophical theory of the state with later Marxian and Freudian representations of the state as imbued with some intrinsic quality or properties, dismissing all such theories summarily.

> Half a century ago, when we were informed by philosophers fed on Hegel that the State represented our high selves, it was an optimistic bluff. Today, when we are periodically told that the State is the executive of the capitalist class or—more terrifyingly still—the produce of one of the nastier Freudian complexes, it is a pessimistic bluff. But it is a bluff in either case.[112]

Conjectures concerning the *nature* of the state were "superstition" and "bluff." What mattered were the ends to which this practical political instrument was put, and these were not foreordained.

> Fools will use it, when they can, for foolish ends, and criminals for criminal ends. Sensible and decent men will use it for ends which are decent and sensible.

Whether the power of the state was turned toward foolish or criminal ends on the one hand, or toward decent and sensible ends on the other, depended not upon the nature of the institution but rather upon the dispositions that those who succeeded in the struggle to control the state brought with them, upon the wills of the individuals who sought to associate in and through the state "in supplement and complement" (to use Cole's phrase) "to their actions as isolated or private individuals." It was not "outworks" or institutional design but rather the diffusion of morality and the qualities of sociability that the polity sustained. All of this was in keeping with Tawney's earlier insistence that the "heart" of the social problem was the "question of moral relationships", that modern society was "sick through the absence of a moral ideal."

Where Cole in 1919 counted Tawney among adherents of guild socialism, Tawney described himself as "an unorthodox guildsman."[113] Given the diversity that the National Guilds League embraced, it is by no means clear that there was an orthodoxy to defy. But Tawney's preoccupation with morality distinguished him from most of his fellow guild socialists. Tawney shared Cole's sense that selfhood was social, that man was a social animal, so that the atomization of individuals posited in what Cole had called "classical Political Theory"—the supposition that the parts come before the whole—was misconceived. In Tawney's version, this critique of the prevailing model in political theory focused on "liberal individualism" with its emphasis upon rights

and commensurate neglect of obligations. According to this doctrine, Tawney wrote in *The Acquisitive Society*, "the individual enters the world equipped with rights to the free disposal of his property and the pursuit of his economic self-interest," these rights being "anterior to, and independent of, any service which he may render."[114] For Tawney as for Cole, individuals only accrue rights in virtue of performance of obligations, in the same way that "personality" is inchoate and unrealized until he or she engages in social action. It is only in and through association that selfhood quickens. In this respect recent characterizations of Cole and Tawney as reverting to "a form of earlier liberal individualism" (recapitulating from a different angle older attacks on Tawney for perpetuating an "inherited liberalism" inimical to the generation of new concepts of self and society akin to those developed in the contemporary sociology of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Vilfredo Pareto) are mistaken.[115] What Tawney and Cole had in common with the pluralists before them was a determination to do away with the inherited supposition that individuals entered society ready-made. Their shared conception of the relationship between self and society was radically different from that which their liberal individualist antecedents had worked from.

Tawney drew on the same set of conceptual tools Cole had used in understanding the interaction between self and society, particularly the writings of the social psychologist Graham Wallas. What these enabled Tawney to do, in much the same way as Cole had sidestepped controversies concerning the philosophical theory of the state and Barker had abandoned pluralist attempts at jurisprudential innovation, was to make both selfhood and the social forces by which it was shaped and institutions through which individuals acted *historical*. There was no such thing, Tawney wrote on the strength of Wallas's *The Great Society*, as an unchanging human nature. One could isolate such a quality only by eliminating everything that we generally think of as setting human beings apart from the animals.

> Granted that the groundwork of inherited dispositions with which the individual is born has altered little in recorded history, the interests and values which compose his world have undergone a succession of revolutions. The conventional statement that human nature does not change is plausible only so long as attention is focused on those aspects of it which are least distinctively human.[116]

Human nature did change, with the interests and values that compose the individual's world. The relative prevalence of fools and criminals by comparison with decent and sensible men was at least in part a function of how a given historical period acted upon this groundwork of inherited dispositions which

changed little across time. The interests and values that compose his or her world shaped an individual profoundly.

> There is an evolution of ideas, as well as of organisms, and the quality of civilisation depends, as Professor Wallas has so convincingly shown, on the transmission, less of physical qualities, than of a complex structure of habits, knowledge, and beliefs, the destruction of which would be followed within a year by the death of half the human race.[117]

Social psychology gave Tawney a framework within which to think about how revolutions in these interests and values worked. In the Victorian period it had been possible to suppose—on the authority of the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck—that once a group of people developed certain habits and arts of civilization, these were passed down to the next generation biologically. Acquired characteristics were thought to be heritable. But by the early twentieth century this theory had come to be regarded as false (though it would be revived in the Soviet Union under Stalin, with disastrous consequences in agriculture). The downside of this recognition was that civilization was precarious, contingent upon the successful transmission of this complex structure between generations. The upside was that the prevailing body of interests and values that constituted the social world and affected individuals for better or worse—making fools and criminals or developing decent and sensible men and women—was open to revision.

Why do individuals seek to associate in and through state and corporation "in supplement and complement to their actions as isolated or private individuals"? This, for Cole, had become social theory's key question. Classical political theory held that individuals associated to secure the advantages of stable government. Individuals came into society and engaged in politics to protect pre-political, pre-social interests. Cole held that there were other wills and motives at play, principally the impulse toward self-realization. Social life enabled men and women to express the "infinitely subtle and various personality" that "lives in each one of them." Tawney developed a similar position. He too criticized what he called (following J. N. Figgis, whose 1916 book *From Gerson to Grotius* made an impression on Tawney) "secular" political philosophy.[118] Its fault was to suppose that protection of prior interests was the main impetus toward association—that "the great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government," as John Locke had written, in a passage Tawney quoted in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, "is the preservation of their property."[119] Tawney too believed that men and women came together not to preserve or defend what they had but to find something they otherwise lacked. Tawney went a step further than Cole in all

of this. Tawney made stronger claims for the importance of the realization of this human personality immanent in each. Cole would say only that personality was "infinitely subtle and various," and that these subtleties and varieties were lost without social context. Tawney harbored a stronger sense of why the "call[ing] out" of these subtleties was important, and this was where he became unorthodox. For Tawney, human personality mattered because it was the nearest we come to knowing God.

Christian Socialism

"One of the things that strikes me as I grow older," Tawney wrote in his commonplace book in 1912, "is the extraordinary truth and subtlety of the religious dogmas at which, as an undergraduate, I used to laugh."[120] He had been helped to see the truth in these dogmas—the most important among which was the theological doctrine of the Incarnation, as we shall see—by his involvement with the Christian Social Union, which he joined alongside William Temple as an undergraduate at Oxford.[121] It was through the Christian Social Union that Tawney became involved in the anti-sweating campaign, which helped to clarify his critique of Fabian socialism. There was "a higher law than the well-being of the majority," he wrote, which furnished grounds upon which to condemn practices like sweating which utilitarian reasoning could not justify: that law was "the supreme value of each human personality as such."[122]

The CSU was founded by Charles Gore, Henry Scott Holland, and Brooke Westcott in 1889, the year that *Lux Mundi*—a collection of essays intended to restate the Christian faith in terms adapted to wider intellectual and social developments—was published.[123] It had this concern to adapt Christianity to the modern age in common both with Green's Idealist metaphysics and with liberal Anglicanism in the tradition of F. D. Maurice.[124] *Lux Mundi* was a specifically Anglo-Catholic initiative. The Anglo-Catholics were by no means alone among Christians in Britain through the turn of the century in accentuating the theological importance of the doctrine of the Incarnation. But it was primarily through Anglo-Catholicism, and particularly through Scott Holland and Gore and the CSU, that protestant theology in this Incarnationalist moment came to be seen as directly relevant to the social problem.[125] "If we believe in the Incarnation," Scott Holland wrote in his manual for the CSU, *Our Neighbours*, "then we certainly believe in the entry of God into the very thick of human affairs."

> That is just what our faith means. It is, itself, the assertion that God and man cannot be kept apart in separate compartments. God must be concerned with every scrap and detail that is human. There is nothing of ours

> that Jesus Christ did not make his own. We cannot believe this, and yet leave Him out of account anywhere or in anything. The Incarnation itself, then, is the decisive reason why Jesus Christ has a social and economic significance.[126]

Gore became a mentor to Tawney, and was impressed by his protégé. "Unknown people come to me wanting something new and important started. They always say 'Get someone like Harry Tawney,' as if there was anybody like Harry Tawney."[127] In 1920, Gore gave a lecture entitled "Christianity Applied to the Life of Men and Nations."[128] The most urgent task for the church catholic, Gore urged, was "reinterpreting, reapplying and reinforcing" the "moral and social meaning" of Christianity.

> Let it make "the old commandment" to love one another once again "a new commandment," and let us give all men to understand that Christianity is a life before it is a theology.[129]

By this point Gore believed that the Church of England was limited in its advocacy for social reform by its ties to the state. In this 1920 lecture he called for disestablishment. But he also insisted—reflecting the rapprochement in relations between the Anglican church and Nonconformity in the first decades of the new century—that denominational differences and theological controversies were of no immediate relevance. An end to theological and ecclesiastical disagreements was "in the somewhat far future."

> But here and now, without any compromise of divergent principles, we could draw together those of all churches who really believe in the principles which inspire and interpret democracy at its best, and believe also that those principles are fundamentally principles of Christ, and that in His name only can effect really be given to them.[130]

The basis of this convergence would be "the indisputable Christian principle that every soul has in the sight of God and of the church (when right-minded) an equal value, and the same really divine claim to equal consideration."[131] This was the doctrine of the Incarnation restated, and made the common denominator of the several distinct factions in British Christianity setting aside their differences and making common cause in a moment of powerful ecumenicism.[132]

Tawney himself made the doctrine of the Incarnation and its implication that each person was of "infinite value" explicitly pivotal to his own writing and political and social action. In notes for the paper he gave at the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship in 1937, Tawney invoked the doctrine of the Incarnation twice: once, against the suggestion that

Christianity is an otherworldly faith, indifferent to the temporal political and economic affairs of men; and a second time to affirm an understanding of the relationship between "man's animal nature" (the "groundwork of inherited dispositions" that changes little across time) and that "something more" which we call our humanity.[133]

> The Christian tradition does not deny man's animal nature; on the contrary, it emphasizes that nature. But it holds that the most important fact about human beings is not the nature which they share with other animals, but their humanity, which, in virtue of the Incarnation, they share with God.[134]

When Tawney spoke of privileging "personality" over "property", and of the "revolt of ordinary men against Capitalism" as an expression of "straightforward hatred of a system which stunts personality and corrupts human relations," and of the "law higher than the well-being of the majority" that followed from recognizing "the supreme value of each human personality as such"—of the idea of "the sacredness of human personality" as "a kind of lamp by which a host of squalid oppressions" were being examined in the early twentieth century—his meaning was clear.[135]

The passing of the moment of Incarnationalism has made Tawney's meaning more obscure. And since so much turned on the specific interpretation that Tawney could expect readers to assign to his references to human personality, Tawney's invocations of morality against capitalism tend to remain unsubstantiated by any further clarification of what precisely Tawney meant by morality. This leaves the contemporary reader with a sense—in reading *The Acquisitive Society*, for instance—that "the invocation of the *idea* of 'higher principles' is a good in itself."[136] "The suggestion," Stefan Collini has argued, "is that we range ourselves on the side of the angels by repeating, frequently and with feeling, that moral principle must override unbridled self-interest."[137] The "generalised tone of moral uplift" with which Tawney seems to some contemporary readers to have surrounded his sensible and persuasive proposals for practical reform is—Collini fears—"bad for the mind."[138] "One need not be a cynic nor an immoralist," Alasdair MacIntyre wrote in 1964, "to find so much cliché-ridden high-mindedness suspect."[139]

But Tawney's invocations of morality addressed an audience and a readership for whom "the indisputable Christian principle that every soul has in the sight of God and of the church (when right-minded) an equal value, and the same really divine claim to equal consideration" was axiomatic.[140] For Gore and Temple and Tawney, this principle was indisputable for Christians. They acknowledged that there were real differences between and within denominations. But they believed that this principle was a common denominator. In

invoking a specifically Christian morality—as Tawney did, tentatively at first but with growing conviction in each reiteration of his basic argument across the interwar and early postwar period—Tawney was implicitly or explicitly relying upon this principle, and upon its acceptance by their readers and listeners.[141]

"The essence of all morality is this," Tawney wrote in his commonplace book: "to believe that every human being is of infinite importance, and therefore that no consideration of expediency can justify the oppression of one by another."[142] "But to believe this," he continued, "it is necessary to believe in God." In the 1930s, in a moment of unprecedented ecumenical cooperation and of what felt to many like a broader revival of faith, it was easy to imagine an audience and a readership who based their morality on the same thing Tawney did—the infinite value of each human being, our assurance of which was the divinity of Christ. Tawney's most famous book—*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, the most widely read work of history in the interwar period by some estimates—was first delivered as a series of lectures in 1922 at King's College, London (Christian counterweight to the "godless college on Gower Street," University College, London) to an audience gathered to remember Henry Scott Holland, an Anglo-Catholic cleric: it can hardly have been possible on that occasion to imagine the audience otherwise.[143]

Religion and the Rise of Capitalism

Religion and the Rise of Capitalism was not written to win converts to Tawney's faith. Tawney presumes that his readers share his beliefs and accept his moral precept that "every human being as such" holds "infinite importance." Indeed, he does not even restate that precept explicitly. We have to go elsewhere, to his earlier commonplace book and to later lectures, to find that precept spelled out. His purpose was rather to convince his contemporaries that a moral criterion that they already accepted but reserved for *some* parts of their lives needed to be applied to *all* parts of their lives. "When we condemn slavery, sweating, the exploitation of a weak race by a conqueror, *even though these things are convenient* to the greatest number concerned," Tawney wrote in his commonplace book in 1913,

> we do so because we recognise that the convenience of the majority, and the destruction of the life of the minority are really incommensurable, and that *no* amount of convenience to the former can justify *any* injustice to the latter. Why is this? Because the personality of man is the most divine thing we know, and that to encroach upon it is to efface the very title deed to humanity. This is the principle we do recognise in part, and ought

> to recognise everywhere and always. There is a law higher than the well-being of the majority, and that law is the supreme value of every human personality as such.[144]

This principle of the "supreme value of every human personality," grounded in belief in the divinity of Christ, was recognized in part, but ought to have been recognized everywhere and always. That this moral precept was sequestered from economic life was Tawney's explanation for modern society having grown "sick through the absence of a moral ideal."

When had this "sickness" set in? When he read J. L. & B. Hammond's book *The Town Labourer* in 1917, Tawney wrote to Lawrence Hammond in praise. "You and Mrs Hammond are doing a really great work in destroying the historical assumptions on which our modern slavery is based." [145] Charles Gore in his 1920 lecture, "Christianity Applied to the Life of Men and Nations," singled out the Hammonds' books again, describing the sensation of burning with shame while reading them. The Hammonds had generally indicated that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries gave rise to the relevant "historical assumptions," pointing to the growing callousness toward the plight of the lower orders among the aristocracy and the gentry, a callousness sanctioned by the precepts of David Ricardo's political economy. But Tawney came to believe that it was the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that gave rise to economic modernity. Lawrence Hammond had always been content, Tawney chided him, to date the fall of man to the accession of George III.[146] But Tawney carried the inquiry further back into English history, and came to believe that the seventeenth century was the crucial phase.

The "spiritual blindness" that made possible the general acquiescence in the horrors of the early factory system was "not a novelty, but the habit of a century."[147] What was the nature of this blindness? Like Cole, Tawney had become interested—as we have seen—in the impulses to association and the ways in which the "complex structure of habits, knowledge and beliefs" in a given historical paradigm privileges or licenses some such impulses and inhibits others. In the present moment, throughout the nineteenth century, and—if Tawney's instinct was right—since some moment in the seventeenth century, the activity of association had been constructed as an exercise in the protection of property. "The great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property."[148]

But, as Tawney argued in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, things had not always been thus. Economic motives and needs might be as old as the hills, but the dispensation which indicates that it is these among individuals' innate dispositions that association serves was historically particular. Turn the clock back and one discovered another conception of association entirely. The "divines" of the medieval period "who fulminated against the uncharitable cov-

etousness of the extortionate middle-man" and "the grasping money-lender" and "the tyrannous landlord" saw in the state's paternalistic attempts "to suppress the greed of individuals or the collision of classes" a "much-needed cement of social solidarity"; they "appealed to Caesar to redouble his penalties upon an economic license which was hateful to God."[149] Meanwhile, "statesmen concerned to prevent agitation" viewed religion as "the preservative of order, and the antidote for the cupidity or ambition which threatened to destroy it"; "they reinforced the threat of temporal penalties with arguments that would not have been out of place in the pulpit."

> To both alike religion is concerned with something more than personal salvation. It is the sanction of social duties and the spiritual manifestation of the corporate life of a complex, yet united, society. To both the State is something more than an institution created by material necessities or political convenience. It is the temporal expression of spiritual obligations. It is a link between the individual soul and that supernatural society of which all Christian men are held to be members. It rests not merely on practical convenience, but on the will of God.[150]

How had the new dispensation displaced this older settlement? First, the Reformation. The corruption of the medieval church incurred Luther's scorn, and inspired him to enter into a direct relationship with God.

> God speaks to the soul, not through the mediation of the priesthood or of social institutions built up by man, but *solus cum solo*, as a voice in the heart and in the heart alone. Thus the bridges between the worlds of spirit and of sense are broken, and the soul is isolated from the society of men, that it may enter into communion with its Maker. The grace that is freely bestowed upon it may overflow in its social relations; but those relations can supply no particle of spiritual nourishment to make easier the reception of grace.[151]

Needing no social support to attain salvation, men and women ceased to think of attaining salvation as a purpose of association, of religion as a corporate activity.

> The difference between loving men as a result of first loving God and learning to love God through a growing love for men may not, at first sight, appear profound. To Luther it seemed an abyss, and Luther was right. It was, in a sense, nothing less than the Reformation itself.[152]

Its effects on social theory—this doctrine of salvation not through social institutions built up by man but *solus cum solo*, as a voice in the heart, with its implication that "divinely commissioned hierarchy, systematized activi-

ties, corporate institutions" were so many "blasphemous trivialities"—were "staggering."

> The medieval conception of the social order, which had regarded it as a highly articulated organism of members contributing in their different degrees to a spiritual purpose, was shattered, and differences which had been distinctions within a larger unity were now set in irreconcilable antagonism to each other.[153]

Meanwhile, "the expansion of finance and international trade in the sixteenth century" challenged settled understandings of the ways in which piety properly affected conduct in economic life. How could the principles of usury apply across oceans, severing the links between debtor and creditor which made social sanctions upon non-payment adequate assurance of creditworthiness?

> Granted that I should love my neighbour as myself, the questions which, under modern conditions of large-scale organization, remain for solution are, Who precisely *is* my neighbour? And, How exactly am I to make my love for him effective in practice?[154]

"To these questions the conventional religious teaching supplied no answer." Indeed, "it had not even realized that they could be put." Clerics "tried to moralise economic relations, by treating every transaction as a case of personal conduct, involving personal responsibility." But "in an age of impersonal finance, world-markets, and a capitalist organisation of industry," that approach could not be sustained. To "the problems involved in the association of men for economic purposes on the grand scale"—and that was the shape of things to come—the "traditional social doctrines" were inadequate.

> [They] were merely repeated, when, in order to be effective, they should have been thought out again from the beginning and formulated in new and living terms.[155]

And failure to adapt in a world of ceaseless change ensured eventual irrelevance. The practical ineffectiveness of these traditional doctrines "prepared the way for their theoretical abandonment."

The Reformation made religion a private matter: salvation was no longer reason to associate. Capitalism made the strictures that religion had traditionally imposed upon conduct in commerce impracticable, and clerical authorities failed to adapt those strictures accordingly. Private and public worlds dissociated. The "soul" and "the society of men" were rent asunder.

> Religion, ceasing to be the master-interest of mankind, dwindles into a department of life with boundaries which it is extravagant to overstep.[156]

And, in the default of religion, in the incapacity of Christian clerics to adapt their economic teaching to new circumstances, in the desuetude of Christian teaching, the "ground vacated by the Christian moralist is quickly occupied by theorists of another order." The "new science of Political Arithmetic" emerged, its exponents asserting "at first with hesitation and then with confidence, that no moral rule beyond the letter of the law exists." Political economy became the regulating doctrine of public life.

By these stages, Tawney argued in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, the "spiritual blindness" of the modern age had set in. A "dualism" which kept soul and society, private and public, personal relations and impersonal transactions separate supplanted the older principle of unity. Where the social order had been conceived "as a highly articulated organism of members contributing in their different degrees to a spiritual purpose," now its members were set apart from one another. Where they came together, it was on the basis that the parts came before the whole—on the basis of "unity-in-plurality," as we described this arrangement in the discussion of pluralist political thought earlier. And the parts being spiritually self-complete, such associations were entered into not for moral but for material purposes. Whereas the "medieval conception" of order in Tawney's description instantiated "plurality-in-unity": the whole is in some sense constitutive of the parts, so that association is not merely material (for the advancement of preconceived interests) but moral or spiritual (for the attainment of dimly understood ends, for the "expression" of "personality").

As Tawney recognized in the introduction to *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, there was an attempt proceeding in Britain in the first quarter of the twentieth century "to restate the practical implications of the social ethics of the Christian faith." But Tawney's aim in his 1922 lectures was less to contribute to that specific work of re-thinking Christian social ethics to make "the old commandment" into "a new commandment" than urging his listeners and later his readers to recognize that that work was necessary. The "dualism" that made religion a mere "department of life" had enabled people to imagine salvation in isolation, legitimating "individualism." But it was now becoming clear that where individualism was unmoderated by some "background of mutual understanding," "disagreements" and "differences" would become "discord" and "bitterness" and "irreconcilable antagonism." The strong, unifying state envisaged under Idealism could provide that "background." But "collectivism" created problems of its own. Tawney believed that he had seen how social life worked where such a background obtained. But he had also seen that such a background did not obtain in many places in contemporary England. In *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, Tawney represented the disparity between Lancashire and East London as the discrepancy between the "highly-articulated" social order of the medieval period and the atomism of

modernity. In doing so he enabled his contemporaries to think about why solidarities like those he had found in Lancashire were important. What is less clear is whether or not he offered much guidance on how those solidarities might be developed.

The History of the Present

The pluralists had sought to achieve the same end—the substitution of a paradigm in which the parts come before the whole for an alternative in which wholes precede parts, fostering social cohesion without recourse to dynamics of "collectivism"—by innovations in jurisprudence. But their initiative, the conferral of "real personality" on groups, by reinterpreting English practice in the light of recent innovations in German history and theory, proved abortive. Setting groups beyond state control in an age of extremes was considered foolhardy. English law knew no means of combining into a single polity the several groups that pluralism would have recognized. The pluralists' scenario came to seem to Maitland's protégé Ernest Barker like an efficient means of escalating the constitutional crisis that erupted before the First World War in Britain into fascist corporatism and the fusion of contending groups into a single movement.

Cole eschewed "high argument about the philosophical theory of the state" and the "real personality" of corporations, approaching the same problem—how to counteract social atomization by means other than collectivism or Hobbesian "union"—under a different aspect. Instead of concentrating on the institutional forms that social life takes, Cole set out to examine the impulses that make men and women engage in "social action" in "supplement and complement to their actions as isolated or private individuals." Contrary to the suppositions of "classical Political Theory," men and women did not associate to protect prior interests. They associated in recognition that selfhood was inchoate without social context. Social life enabled them to "express" the "infinitely subtle and various personality" which "live[d] in each one of them." Cole's wager—which he based upon readings of contemporary social psychologists Robert Michels and Graham Wallas alongside the social theory of Rousseau—was that there was some intrinsic grammar governing the interaction between these several impulses toward self-realization which contained conflict, sustaining some degree of solidarity.

Tawney followed Cole in leaving formal conjectures concerning the nature of state and corporation to "academicians" and focusing instead on the ways in which the impulse toward social action was constructed, drawing again on contemporary work in social psychology for an analytical framework. Even more emphatically than Cole, Tawney believed that the modern world had

erred in imagining that individuals entered society only to protect what they had. More convincingly than Cole, Tawney argued that solving the "social problem" necessitated reconstructing the impulse to association, making it understood that it was not to preserve property but to realize "human personality" that individuals come together to form society. Cole had no cogent explanation for why individuals should want to express the "infinitely subtle and various personality" immanent in them, save those passed down from William Morris and John Ruskin, aesthetic appeals to the idea of moral unity. He could only observe that in order to so express themselves, individuals needed society. Tawney by contrast made human personality hold "infinite value" by reference to the Incarnation—through his insistence that "the personality of man is the most divine thing we know."

Sympathetic critics—particularly after 1930—would argue that it was difficult to extract a program of reform from Tawney's writings. He dramatized the contrast between dissolute "individualism" (with its tendencies toward dangerous "collectivism") and an alternate order in which solidarity was sustained without jeopardizing liberty to profound effect, making readers see that constructing this alternative was necessary. But he offered little sense of how that might be done. John Strachey faulted Tawney for lacking "any comprehension of historical forces."[157] "[H]is book," Harold Laski wrote in a 1937 review a Left Book Club edition of *The Acquisitive Society*, "remains a contrast between two societies with no hint of how the bridge is built between them."[158] Tawney's approach was indeed at odds with Laski and Strachey.[159] But the very notion that there were two societies misses the point of Tawney's enterprise: keeping the crucial experience of moving north and discovering solidarities unknown to the atomized south in mind makes clear that the aim of *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* was not to envision some utopian transformation but to nurture solidarities already looming in contemporary England. Tawney's histories returned again and again to a particular aspect of the "life of society" set down in "the records of the past."[160] This was the salience of "tradition" and "convention" and "custom."[161] When an "old and strong society" was "challenged by a new phenomenon," Tawney wrote in his first published work of history, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (1913), its "response" was '"torn from a living body of assumptions as to right conduct of human affairs."[162] Reading Graham Wallas, Tawney began to represent this living body in more ethereal terms. There was "an evolution of ideas, as well as of organisms"; a "complex structure of habits, knowledge and beliefs" was handed down from one generation to the next, sustaining "civilisation."[163] In *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), Tawney described the strictures against sharp practice in commerce which represented the unity of the spiritual and the material in medieval England as "the traditional social

doctrines."[164] This seemed a casual, almost off-handed characterization. But over the next three decades the concept of tradition would become central to Tawney's thinking. England in the time of Elizabeth I, Tawney wrote in his 1948 book *Social History and Literature*, "was a loosely knit, decentralized society, whose pattern of existence was a round of individual activities in a framework fixed by custom."

> Except among the nobility, and often [even] among them, local sentiment was more powerful than the play of economic mechanism; custom than law; the wisdom of the elders and the lore of the region than stereotyped truths or fallacies standardized for mass consumption.[165]

The concept that tied all this together for Tawney—the positive images of custom, the lore of the region, the wisdom of the elders; the negative images of stereotyped truths and standardized fallacies—was the concept of tradition.

> Tradition was a power; and tradition—of its nature, a social creation—set discordant claims and conflicting ambitions against a larger background of mutual comprehension.[166]

Tradition and custom and convention were the specimens of the past that Tawney found to describe the contemporary solidarities he had discovered when he moved north in 1908 to teach economics and history in Lancashire and north Staffordshire. It was these among the available "records of the past" that most readily warranted Tawney's claim that in certain aspects the contemporary life of British society confounded utilitarian orthodoxy. Writing about the social networks of tradition and custom and lore attenuated by the rise of capitalism was a way of describing the non-economic sentiments he had found affecting social life in the north—the means of articulating solidarities subtler than that which collectivism encompassed upon which Karl Polanyi and E. P. Thompson after Tawney would build. "Fellowship" was "life," but in fact the forms of fellowship Tawney envisaged were minimal: he wanted to recreate a "background of mutual understanding" that could keep "disagreement" from becoming "bitterness" and "discord."[167] What he anticipated was not some utopian transformation of social life, but rather the cultivation of certain ways of getting along that were already common in parts of the country.

2

Karl Polanyi

Late in 1935, the *New Statesman* carried a review of a volume of essays, released that summer by the left-wing publisher Victor Gollancz under the title *Christianity and Social Revolution*.[1] In this "striking book," R. H. Tawney explained, two crucial misconceptions stood exposed. The first concerned Karl Marx. The conventional view in 1930s Britain was that Marx was a "vulgar," reductive "economist," interested only in the relations between different factors of production historically understood, willfully uninspired by ideas or moral principles.[2] This understanding of Marx was wrong, Tawney explained, as the moral philosopher John Macmurray's essay in the 1935 volume demonstrated. Marx's "theory of social development" was more than an arrangement of "historical facts." It was held together by "judgments of value."[3] It involved a "conception of the nature and possibilities of man, which supplies a standard of reference," by which such "facts" were "appraised."[4] That conception used historical data, but it did not depend on historical data alone. Marx, in other words, had based his theory of social development on an understanding of what it is to be human, and that understanding was normative as much as it was empirical.[5] The second misconception concerned the relationship between Christianity and "Communism." There had been reason in the early 1930s to believe that the two creeds were incompatible. "Religious Socialism" and "Christian Socialism," Pius XI declared in his 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*, "are expressions implying a contradiction in terms," such that "no one can be at the same time a sincere Catholic and a true Socialist."[6] The Soviet Union—avowedly atheist—reciprocated this hostility. *Christianity and the Social Revolution* suggested that the two creeds had more in common than this official antipathy allowed. The incompatibility was often explained as a clash between idealism or moralism and realism. Christians valued "human personality." Communists worshipped force.[7] Christians were sentimental. Socialists were pragmatic. But contributors to *Christianity and the Social Revolution* insisted otherwise.

> The watershed between creeds which this striking book suggests is not the conventional one. Whatever Christians and Communists may say and do, Christianity and popular Communism—though not, it appears, the official variety—are alike in holding the now unfashionable view that principles really matter.[8]

Christianity and popular Communism had their differences, but they were not reducible to dichotomies between idealism and realism or morality and economics. Both creeds had their moral principles. And in both creeds those principles were ultimately referable to "a conception of the nature and possibilities of man." Whatever the differences between those respective conceptions, they had something crucial in common. They valued the individual as such, insisting that there was something distinctive and invaluable about each human being.

> The one view of Man which is fatal both to Christianity and to any Social Revolution worth making is that which regards him, not as a being with a capacity, if he will use it, for autonomy and responsibility, but as a machine or a slave.[9]

Both creeds accepted "the platitude that the most important fact about human beings is their humanity." There was in this sense "sufficient basis of agreement" between the two creeds to sustain meaningful "controversy" between their exponents.[10]

What set this common ground into sharp relief was the emergence of fascism in Germany. The precept that "the most important fact about human beings is their humanity" was "perpetually denied in practice in capitalist societies." But in contemporary Germany, National Socialism was turning that practical denial into a theoretical dogma.[11] Fascism was fundamentally a counterrevolutionary movement, a reaction against Bolshevism. But "in the process of eradicating Communism," fascism in Germany had "found it necessary to attempt to eradicate Christianity." That both creeds incurred the antipathy of fascism was indicative of certain commonalities. In an instructive essay, Tawney explained to *New Statesman* readers, an émigré to Britain recently arrived from Vienna underlined the most important of those commonalities. Christianity and popular Communism, this writer explained, both revolved around "an idea of human personality."[12]

The émigré in question was Karl Polanyi. He had arrived in England in February 1934 with few prospects. In Vienna, where he had lived since 1919, Polanyi made his living as a journalist, writing first for a Hungarian weekly, *Bécsi Magyar Ujság*, and then for a monthly financial and international affairs periodical, *Der Österreichische Volkswirt*, which was modeled on Britain's *The*

Economist. His brother Michael—a distinguished physical chemist, recruited by the University of Manchester a year earlier, accepting a long-standing offer to leave Berlin after the Nazis came to power—had urged Karl to build a profile for himself in Britain by publishing articles in English from Vienna before he contemplated a move.[13] But Karl had ignored this advice, leaving in advance of the turmoil which turned "red" Vienna "black," counting on his brother and on a modest network of contacts he had cultivated among British visitors to Vienna since the First World War for help.[14]

Polanyi's 1935 essay on fascism foreshadowed a prominent career in English letters. But things did not quite work out that way. Polanyi's masterpiece—*The Great Transformation*—was published first in 1944. But acclaim for that book (as the American economic historian Charles P. Kindleberger would observe in 1973) was "slow in arriving."[15] Polanyi now commands great esteem among commentators in political economy. But when he left England for America in 1947 he was a professional failure.[16] The indifferent reception afforded Polanyi in England might be taken to particularize Perry Anderson's 1968 indictment of English culture between the wars as hostile to new progressive currents in social thought then emerging in Europe.[17] But in fact Polanyi's case confounds Anderson's analysis. Polanyi did indeed wish to develop new ways of thinking through what he called the "age old and forgotten problem of the nature of man in society."[18] But that was not why he was forced to leave England. It would be truer to say that it was the reason he *came* to England in the first place: he found inspiration in that enterprise as much in English writers—foremost among them Tawney—as anywhere else. Far from yielding to the "leathery strength" of nineteenth-century individualism, Tawney was trying to formulate a new principle of solidarity.[19] Polanyi's career illustrates the reach and appeal of Tawney's enterprise. The first part of this chapter explores connections between England and central Europe between the wars, demonstrating that Polanyi became a subscriber to Tawney's critique of capitalism from Vienna.

How, then, to account for Polanyi's failure in England? If he came to join Tawney in the enterprise of developing a critique of capitalism to generate and refine a new principle of social solidarity, he got off (as we have already seen) to a promising start: he had attracted Tawney's attention and won his public approbation scarcely a year into his English domicile. Where did things go wrong? Answering this question is the second item on this chapter's agenda. Polanyi was not content simply to reiterate Tawney's critique. He believed that it needed reformulation if it was to remain relevant. That need arose in part from the emergence of fascism. The fascists' enmity revealed that Christian socialists and socialist humanists shared a reverence for human personality. Holding that reverence in common made the two creeds partners in

the fight against fascism. The critique of capitalism to which Tawney had assigned Christian meanings should be broadened to give that reverence for human personality a secular grounding. An adult convert, Polanyi had a complicated relationship with Christianity. He sought the same meaning in secular sources so as to leave himself less beholden to his adoptive faith.

Polanyi's innovations in the moral critique of capitalism pioneered by Tawney in the 1920s involved replacing the Christian conception of human personality around which that critique revolved with a secular alternative. Polanyi looked for that alternative primarily in the early writings of Karl Marx—newly published in a German edition in 1932.[20] This initiative put Polanyi ahead of his time in Britain: the effervescent piety out of which Tawney's ideas emerged was not yet exhausted; the need to broaden the base of the critique to encompass secular alternatives was not yet obvious or urgent. The alterity of Polanyi's approach showed up in the heterodoxy of his historical interpretations—both of particular episodes in the history of capitalism and of the broader sweep and chronology of the emergence and ascendancy of this new form of society. Validating Tawney's critique of capitalism in this revised version—in which Marx provided the "further elucidation" necessary to make Christian social teaching applicable in commercial society—meant rewriting the *history* of capitalism in which Tawney's critique had been embedded. It was not enough simply to offer an alternative conception of the human to complement or supplant Tawney's Christian cornerstone. The power of Tawney's approach had been to embed the animating idea in historical narrative, dramatizing the displacement of older understandings of human being by utilitarian orthodoxy, making another such revolution conceivable. The new ideas advanced by capitalism's moral critics took root (as F. A. Hayek observed in 1954) "not in their abstract form but as the interpretations of particular events."[21] Polanyi's ideas would prevail only by issuing a new narrative of the history of capitalism to rival Tawney's. The cause of Polanyi's failure to find a following in England was that contemporaries found his effort to rewrite the history of capitalism unconvincing. Polanyi's failure in England was a function of his shortcomings as an historian.

What changed to redeem Polanyi's arguments? If he was overlooked in his lifetime (in England, certainly, but also in the United States, where he eventually found work), how did his standing improve? To answer these questions this chapter makes a connection between Polanyi's innovations within the critique Tawney had pioneered and the cognate work of E. P. Thompson a generation later. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* perfected the argument Polanyi had attempted to frame in *The Great Transformation*. The prodigious success of Thompson's book helps to account for the re-

vival of Polanyi's intellectual fortunes. Revealing Polanyi as intermediary between Tawney and Thompson is one of this book's key contributions.

What—to frame one final question for this chapter—are we to make of Polanyi's posthumous success? This book moves toward the eventual *demise* of the moral critique of capitalism pioneered in the 1920s. Tawney and Thompson both receded into relative obscurity late in the twentieth century, in keeping with the fortunes of the critique to which their work was integral. Polanyi, on the other hand, has risen in contemporary esteem.[22] What sets him apart? If the moral economists' critique of capitalism has diminished in relevance, why has Polanyi's standing improved? Part of the answer to that query is of course that Polanyi began in obscurity, whereas Tawney and Thompson once wielded wide influence. But there is more to it than that. Many readers will approach this chapter with a sense that Polanyi has something more to offer for our own time now than either Tawney or Thompson. The fourth and final purpose of this chapter is to explain where that sense comes from—to clarify what was distinctive and uniquely promising about Polanyi's take on Tawney's critique. A few words here introducing the argument I make in this specific connection may help readers to follow that argument when I return to it later in this chapter.

Like Tawney before him and Thompson after, Polanyi believed that he had encountered principles or dynamics of social solidarity unknown to contemporary social and political thought in his own life. Following Tawney and anticipating Thompson, he turned to history to try to make those solidarities articulate. He put a notion of "human personality" at the center of his conjecture, taking Marx as that notion's secular expositor. In the "double movement" central to *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi dramatized the regeneration of social solidarities amidst capitalism's dissolution of older social forms. It was in the early writings of Karl Marx that Polanyi found a way to make the idea of the human realized by these means articulate. Reading Marx, Polanyi redescribed Tawney's theological conception of human personality, giving substantially the same moral critique of capitalism a secular cornerstone.

This is one of the key points of connection between Polanyi and E. P. Thompson; as we shall see, Thompson too made Marxian humanism the basis of his secular version of Tawney's critique. But before he had finished writing *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi lost confidence in Marx in this connection. The book began in the attempt to rewrite Tawney's critique and its attendant history of capitalism with a Marxian definition of the human taking the place of the original theological conceptions. But *The Great Transformation* eventually encompassed an attack on Marx—a feature that may help to explain why Thompson never actually cited Polanyi's book. By the time *The Great*

Transformation went to press, Polanyi had come to regard Marx's oeuvre as an "essentially unsuccessful attempt" to think outside the parameters of Victorian political economy: in his determination to root out the fallacy at the heart of utilitarianism, Marx had assimilated that system's logic, becoming entrapped within its terms.[23] *The Great Transformation* forged means (if unconvincing, unfinished) of vindicating Marx's "notion of the 'fully human,'" of imagining an alternative to Tawney's Christian conception of the person and advancing the same moral critique of capitalism in secular terms. But by the time of that book's publication its author no longer believed in that alternative. Polanyi had already reached the conclusion at which Thompson arrived after 1970. What did he do next? If not Marx's conception of human personality, what *was* to be the basis of a secular version of Tawney's moral critique of capitalism? It is Polanyi's response to this question that explains why he seems more interesting to us now than either of his collaborators.

Tawney's critique of capitalism worked by raising an argument about what it is to be human to falsify the idea of "economic man": to insist that every human being held infinite value because they impersonated God was to confound the reduction of human affairs to economic transactions. First Polanyi and then Thompson looked initially to Marx for a secular conception of the human to replace Tawney's Christian conception. But for both men that Marxian "notion of the 'fully human'" soon proved unreliable. And then what? Thompson's approach, as we shall see, was to search in vain for some further alternative to that Marxian substitute, some other definition of the human upon which to falsify the utilitarian stereotype. Polanyi's solution was different. Instead of asking how else the human might be defined in defiance of the utilitarians, Polanyi asked why it was necessary to answer the utilitarians at all.[24] The point of the exercise from the outset had been to break the hold of utilitarianism over the imaginations of the moral economists' contemporaries, to demonstrate that there were other ways of understanding what it is to be human. Tawney and then Thompson had deemed it necessary in that endeavor to uphold the precept that human personality held infinite value, confounding utilitarian calculations. Polanyi took a different tack.

Instead of thinking about how utilitarian orthodoxy could be countered—searching out means of making the solidarities he had seen in Vienna articulate in order to refute reductions of social life to bare economic terms—Polanyi began to ask why that orthodoxy mattered. Instead of taking the commonsense status of economistic notions of the human as a given, he started looking more closely at where they came from. Instead of collapsing everything in English social and political thought from Thomas More to T. H. Green into an indiscriminate colloquy of uncompromising individualists, Polanyi began drawing distinctions and making discriminations. The yield of

that undertaking was a more convincing account of the intellectual history of political economy than Tawney before him or Thompson after him entertained. Of greatest consequence, Polanyi began to separate Adam Smith from everything after, proposing that the declension into economism began *after* the publication of Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith, too, was a moral economist of a kind. Perhaps attacking political economy from without—using strong claims about what it is to be human in answer to utilitarian economism—was the wrong way forward. Perhaps political economy could be reconstituted from within to correct the utilitarian error *ab initio*. This was the gravamen of Polanyi's readings of Adam Smith: going back to Smith might mean avoiding the problem of defining what it is to be human entirely by reinstating a scenario in which everyone accepted that there was something special about human beings without dwelling on divisive questions about what that distinctive quality was. This is a possibility explored in depth later in this chapter and in this book's conclusion. Polanyi held out a way beyond the impasse at which the moral critique of capitalism had arrived by the end of the twentieth century. Thompson—for reasons peculiar to his situation—never pursued that possibility. But one of the questions this book raises is whether we should pursue that possibility now.

Hungary

Born in Vienna in 1886, Polanyi grew up in Budapest in a family of assimilated Jews. His father was an engineer, trained at the ETH in Zurich, who made a fortune building railroads. His mother held weekly salons for the Budapest avant garde. In 1900, when Karl was 14 years old, three months of rain washed away a railway line their father had been building in the Danube Valley. The government insisted that the risk was the entrepreneur's, and refused to pay for the work. Polanyi's father paid out his workers and returned his shareholders' capital and then declared bankruptcy. He died of pneumonia five years later. The second eldest of five siblings, 19 years old by the time of his father's death, Karl bore much of the strain. Late in his life Karl would write to his brother Michael that he had "set his heart on sheltering [him] from the thrusts of fate," and took a "quiet satisfaction" in Michael's success.[25] But he added that the "strains" of the years after his father's death had "excited" an "inner paralysis" in Karl himself. Karl was a hypochondriac and unsure of his famous younger brother's affections.[26]

When he arrived in England in 1934 Karl Polanyi was already schooled in English social and political thought. He had studied law at the Universities of Budapest and Kolozsvár. At around the time when Tawney and Beveridge in Oxford were founding their abortive undergraduate society (discussing

"social questions from a matter of fact and as far as possible practical point of view"), Polanyi was helping found the Galileo Circle, a Budapest forum for the discussion of problems of knowledge and the possibility of social amelioration by rational administration informed by social science. Alongside the epistemology of Ernst Mach, Polanyi and his contemporaries read H. G. Wells, "believ[ing] too much," Polanyi would later write to his brother, "in the goody-goody rationalism and Fabianism" they encountered there.[27] After taking his doctorate in law, Polanyi entered and then quickly abandoned the profession, and instead became editor of the Galileo Circle's journal, *Szabadgondolat* (Free Thought). In 1915 he went to war, serving as a cavalry officer on the Russian Front. He was injured two years later and forced to return to Budapest to convalesce.

Problems of social atomization or "alienation" became the preoccupation of Hungarian intellectuals in the first and second decades of the twentieth century.[28] At the turn of the century they had hoped to develop techniques to perfect a market-based social order using innovations in social science. By the time the First World War broke out, this aspiration had been abandoned as naïve. Much as Tawney had turned from "outworks" to the "question of moral relationships" after he left Oxford, many of Polanyi's contemporaries in Budapest left their earlier empiricism behind and made moral renewal their business. The formation of the Sunday Circle around the critic Georg Lukacs in 1915 was indicative of the altered mood. Polanyi's Galileo Circle had formed early in the new century to develop positivist principles of social amelioration. At gatherings of the Sunday Circle only the "metaphysically disposed" were welcome.[29] Dostoyevsky and Kierkegaard were among the authors discussed. Conversations "revolved around religion in the broadest sense of the word."[30] When politics came up at the Sunday Circle, as they did with growing urgency beginning late in 1916 as it became clear that the Habsburg Empire was dissolving, some participants tended—if not uniformly—toward Leninism. Meanwhile the Galileo Circle continued to meet, further adulterating its "goody goody rationalism" under the influence of the charismatic scholar-statesman Oscar Jaszi.[31] Here, too, religion was becoming important again. Despite the high hopes of Enlightenment, even these erstwhile arch-positivists had reached the conclusion that scientific reason alone could not sustain social order. As at the Sunday Circle, in the Galileo Circle late in the war moral regeneration became the primary concern. Institutional reform was necessary, "but as the English say: not measures: men—above all we need men, different, better, more perfect men."[32] The politics of Jaszi and his followers were broadly Wilsonian. Polanyi followed, and advised, Jaszi.[33]

Between 1917 and 1919, an abrupt succession of political upheavals brought both factions—the Leninist members of the Sunday Circle and the Wilso-

nians around Jaszi—close to power. In October 1918, Jaszi's Radical Party joined two other left-wing parties to constitute a Hungarian National Council. Its president was Mihaly Károlyi, but Jaszi was its intellectual and moral inspiration.[34] Constituting itself the true representative of the Hungarian nation in defiance of the Habsburg monarchy, the Council was in effect a revolutionary organ. Later that month, at the end of three days of intrigue culminating in crowds in the streets and the assassination of the former prime minister István Tisza, who had advocated war and opposed extending the franchise, Karl I—the last King of Hungary—appointed Károlyi prime minister. Ties to the Habsburgs were soon dissolved. "The People's Republic of Hungary" was proclaimed on November 16, 1918. Jaszi accepted a ministry, though resigned a month later in dismay at the government's incapacity to press ahead with land reforms. The Károlyi government was immediately destabilized by an increasingly popular Hungarian Communist Party. *Szabadgondolat*, the Galileo Circle monthly that Polanyi still edited, devoted its December 1918 issue to Bolshevism, seeing the writing on the wall. In the same month Georg Lukacs joined the Communist Party. Because it was believed to have failed to protect Hungary's territorial integrity in the postwar distribution of former Habsburg possessions, Károlyi's National Council lost its grip on power, and was overthrown in March 1919. Socialist elements within Károlyi's government joined forces with the communists to proclaim a Soviet Republic. Lukacs became deputy commissar for Public Education. He embarked upon a radical shakeup of the University of Budapest with the stated aim of synthesizing a culture to overcome alienation and connect individuals to one another; politics was "the means," "culture" was "the goal."[35] But the dictatorship was a political failure. A military confrontation with Romanian forces refusing to withdraw beyond agreed borders ended in disaster. Both Wilsonian and Leninist factions had failed to secure the support of nationalists. By August 1919, the Soviet Republic in turn was overthrown by counterrevolutionary forces led by Miklós Horthy, an admiral in the Austro-Hungarian navy. By the end of 1919, most prominent members of both the Jaszi and Lukacs factions had left Budapest for Vienna, despairing of Hungarian politics and fearing reprisals.

In Vienna, Jaszi and his cohort were soon in the market for new ideas. Wilsonian "measures" had been little help in stabilizing Hungary after the Habsburgs ceded power. And Wilson's 14 points offered little indication of how liberals should go about making "different, better, more perfect men." All the Wilsonian principles had accomplished in practice in the Hungarian intellectuals' experience was to mobilize reactionary nationalists, the constituency that had propelled Horthy to power and forced the progressives into exile. And the alternative—Bolshevism—was not made any more acceptable for

Jaszi and his followers by the fate of the Soviet Republic of Hungary. Jaszi offered qualified praise for Lukacs's efforts in education reform. But if he shared Lukacs's ends—moral regeneration, overcoming atomization or alienation—Jaszi deplored Bolshevik means. Wilsonian liberalism was destabilizing. Leninist dictatorship was unconscionable. Was there another alternative? This was a version of the same question English pluralists and socialists, taking a lead from German scholars, had been asking since 1900. Individualism had proven unstable. Collectivism endangered freedom. Was it possible to get beyond that binary choice?

Karl Polanyi had been confined to his bed during much of the upheaval of the years before he left Hungary. He took no direct part in Károlyi's government. By the time the Soviet Republic was proclaimed, he was well enough to work and accepted a post in the People's Commissariat for Social Production. He resigned in frustration three months later. That direct experience as part of the bureaucracy in charge of a command economy helps to explain why he became interested in socialist alternatives to the centralization of production once he moved to Vienna. More interesting than why Polanyi became interested in such alternatives, though, is where he found them. Within three years of arriving in Vienna, Polanyi had become an avid reader of the writings of G.D.H. Cole and an advocate of guild socialism. The "English socialist practice confirmed the direction of my work," he wrote to his brother Michael in 1921. "To discuss social problems from a Christian viewpoint—this is my socialism."[36]

Jaszi was among those Polanyi convinced of the merits of this development in "English socialist practice."[37] By 1923, in a letter to his brother Michael, Karl Polanyi had joined his English contemporaries' quest for ways beyond the impasse to which the crisis of nineteenth-century liberalism had brought Europe. Criticisms of the state or of the profit motive, Polanyi wrote to his brother, were misdirected.

> *We* are the state, *we* are capital—but in what way? We shall remain servants until we understand this. It will, however, be possible to understand only if we create forms of life from which we can see beyond these symbols. But how do we create them? That is the question! I would say by means of a Christian gild-spirited life.[38]

In the last chapter, we saw that Cole looked past contemporary debates about the "nature" of state and corporation to consider "the motives and impulses by which men are moved in their social action," the "wills" that animated men and women when they were moved to "act through associations in supplement and complement to their actions as isolated or private individuals." Cole's approach was informed by the contemporary social psycholo-

gists Robert Michels and Graham Wallas, and the eighteenth-century critic Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In reading Cole in Vienna, having found both Wilsonian and Leninist institutional blueprints unreliable means of thinking one's way through the contemporary crisis, Polanyi embarked upon a similar course of inquiry. Polanyi too would consult contemporary social psychologists, as well as anthropologists and social historians. He read Rousseau, too, but he would incur a much greater intellectual debt to Rousseau's contemporary, Adam Smith.

Red Vienna

Precisely how guild socialist ideas reached Polanyi in Vienna is unclear. Many Hungarian politicians and intellectuals in the early twentieth century were anglophiles, a legacy of English support for the revolutionaries of 1848.[39] The Galileo Circle's readings of H. G. Wells were only one recent episode in a long series of influential encounters between Hungarian intellectuals and British writers and critics. The assassinated premier István Tisza had modeled his resistance to rising tides of support for suffrage and land reform on English liberals of the age of Gladstone. And we have seen that intellectuals envisaging moral regeneration during the war took their slogan from unnamed Britons: "not measures, men."[40] But if there was more behind Polanyi's acquaintance with guild socialism than the osmosis of this regard for English ideas, it almost certainly involved the contacts Polanyi made among the British relief workers who arrived in Vienna in numbers after the Armistice.

When the Hungarian émigrés arrived in Vienna in 1919 and 1920, the city was well-staffed by humanitarian relief workers brought in to help manage postwar shortages and displacements. Many of these relief workers were Britons, mostly members of the Student Christian Movement—the British affiliate of the umbrella organization, European Student Relief, which administered relief programs. In 1920 Polanyi went to the University of Vienna—where the ESR representative was based—looking for help for his future wife Ilona Duczynska. The worker who received him was a Scot named Donald Grant, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, raised in a prosperous Presbyterian family, imprisoned as a conscientious objector during the war, arrived in Vienna with his new wife Irene to offer help in cleaning up a mess he had wanted no part in making.[41] The Grants were socialists, and it was the socialism of Cole and Tawney, rather than that of the Fabians, that appealed to them.

If indeed Polanyi became familiar with guild socialism through Donald and Irene Grant, that is another entry for the list of ways in which Ilona Duczynska changed his life. Lee Congdon writes that Duczynska "worked a miracle in Polanyi," restoring to him a degree of the emotional vitality and

affective engagement with the world that had disappeared with his father's death in 1905.[42] Polanyi would later describe himself as having been enmeshed when he returned from the First World War in a Hamlet-like state of melancholy indecision. He could not resolve to live, to accept his share of responsibility for a fallen world. In a revealing critical reflection on Shakespeare's play, published in the *Yale Review* in 1954, Polanyi would set up "moral sensibility," "intellectual genius," and "temperamental instability" among the "inner obstacles to action" that explained Hamlet's inertia, comparing the moments when these proved insurmountable with "periods of normal behaviour during which [Hamlet's] 'healthy impulses,' remnants of a virile personality, break through."[43] Duczynska helped Polanyi find the energy to overcome his own inner obstacles.

Duczynska was born in Budapest, the product of intermarriage between Hungarian and Polish-Austrian nobility. Her Polish father died young, in America, and she nursed a grievance against the Hungarian gentry (her mother's side, who frowned upon the marriage) for having denied her father opportunities in life. Duczynska supposedly "cursed her misfortune at having been born a girl."[44] As a teenager she identified with Turgenev's Bazarov. She found hope first in her cousin—the poet Ferenc Békássy, who had read history at Cambridge and been elected an Apostle, but was killed in the war in 1915—and then in the radical Ervin Szabó, who encouraged her intrigues and put her in touch with the Galileo Circle. In 1915, Ducszynska went to the ETH in Zurich to study engineering. In Zurich she learned to use firearms and associated herself with émigré socialists conspiring to derail imperialist war efforts. She would later remember seeing Lenin at work in the library.[45] When she returned to Budapest in the spring of 1917, Duczynska plotted to assassinate Tisza—the conservative prime minister who would be killed by unknown forces the following year.[46] She associated herself with the Galileo Circle (in Polanyi's absence) as part of her plot, so that she would not be mistaken after the event for an enemy agent if she succeeded. Finding the Circle's politics anodyne, she formed her own "revolutionary socialist" faction within it. Early in 1918 she was arrested and jailed. Károlyi freed her after taking power later that year. When Bela Kun's communists took power, they sent Duczynska to Zurich to argue their case before Swiss newspaper editors—powerful opinion-makers in interwar Europe. In 1920 she left Switzerland for Russia, where she worked for the Comintern, staying for four months before heading to Vienna to work with the exiled Hungarian Communist Party.

Polanyi and Duczynska met in Vienna. They married in 1922. His thinking became more committed and worldly, and he began to write and publish more frequently. In 1922 he published an essay advancing guild socialist ideas in the

Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik.[47] Ludwig von Mises engaged him in debate in the pages of the same journal, and F. A. Hayek would later recognize Polanyi's article as one of the key socialist contributions to the calculation debate.[48] The change was not apparent only in Polanyi. In the same year, under Polanyi's influence, Duczynska published a criticism of the Hungarian Communist Party as militaristic, immoral, and corrupt. She was duly expelled on charges of "Luxemburgist deviations."[49] Husband and wife both joined the Austrian Social Democratic Party, and wrote for the magazine *Bécsi Magyar Újság*, which Oscar Jaszi edited.

Duczynka was partly responsible for energizing Polanyi. Life in Red Vienna was further inspiration. In 1922, under the federal constitution enacted in Austria two years earlier, Vienna was proclaimed an autonomous state. The Social Democrats, now out of power federally, embarked upon a radical experiment in moral regeneration. Tax reform enabled the fledgling state to tap into the city's wealth to fund new education and welfare programs. Building on prewar developments led by Christian Democrats, pursuing an ambition similar to Lukacs's as commissar for education in Hungary in 1919 over more than a decade and on a grand scale, Vienna's social democratic rulers built hospitals, nurseries, schools, and above all houses with a view to synthesizing a "consciousness of social responsibility."[50] Polanyi and Duczynska moved into a flat in an "old and grimy tenement" in a run-down workers' area.[51] Witnessing the transformation of Red Vienna helped Polanyi to believe that an alternative to Wilsonian and Leninist principles of social order was conceivable. Bricks-and-mortar reforms were consolidating an intensifying spirit of social solidarity. And yet this was an evolving social space unblemished by political violence, with little social premium on conformity. The social dynamics were neither individualist nor collectivist. Polanyi would later describe the 12 years of Red Vienna as "one of the high points of Western civilisation."[52]

The Polanyis were not the only ones who thought so. Britons who had come to help after the war returned repeatedly to admire the city's achievements over the next decade. Polanyi cultivated a modest network of contacts among them. The key nodes in that network remained Irene and Donald Grant. From Vienna, they connected Polanyi to John Macmurray—the moral philosopher alongside whom Polanyi's ideas were discussed in Tawney's 1935 *New Statesman* review—bringing Macmurray and his wife Betty to the besieged city in 1933 to meet Polanyi. Living back in London by the early 1930s, the Grants organized an informal lobby to "rouse English public opinion in sympathy with Austrian democracy" as agrarian and ultra-nationalist parties in the federal government developed plans to drive the socialists out of Vienna.[53] The Grants procured invitations for Polanyi to address Chatham

House on the issue, which he did twice—in 1933 and 1934.[54] They kept a spare room in their Golders Green home for sympathetic visitors and became well-known "in some Vienna circles" for their hospitality.[55]

Bécsi Magyar Újság, Jaszi's magazine for the émigrés, folded under financial pressure in 1923. Polanyi accepted a job writing for *Der Österreichische Volkswirt*. His beat was international affairs. His preoccupation soon became fascism. Proto-fascist forces in Austria—which began to attract notice in the late 1920s—were initially aligned with Mussolini's Italy. But Polanyi was less alarmed by Italian fascism—relatively primitive and undoctrinaire, the work of opportunists seizing power and dispensing patronage in the decadence of a weak state—than by the looming threat of National Socialism in Germany. Jaszi had emigrated to the United States in 1924, accepting a teaching job at Oberlin College in Ohio, convinced that there was "no room for the democratic, liberal, and confederative politics" for which he had "fought for three decades" in contemporary Europe.[56] As the social democrats responsible for Red Vienna careened toward a confrontation with Dolfuss's ultra-nationalists, a confrontation they were sure to lose, Polanyi too began to despair of democracy on the continent. (Duczynska's hopes died harder. She took up arms with the *Schutzbund*, a paramilitary formed by Vienna's socialists to defend the city in the impending civil war.)[57] There were also financial considerations. Like Jaszi's *Bécsi Magyar Újság*, the *OV* came under severe pressure in the early 1930s. With his political hopes for continental democracy, Polanyi's prospects of a livelihood in Vienna were rapidly diminishing. In that incipient despair, Polanyi's affection for English democracy strengthened.[58]

By the spring of 1933 Polanyi was thinking about leaving Vienna for London.[59] His brother Michael advised against making a precipitate move. Karl would ignore his advice, and in the year after Karl's arrival in England a rift developed between the two men, "darkening" Karl's countenance in a manner he could only compare to the death of his father.[60] Michael—quick, resolute, and impetuous—was impatient with his elder brother's difficulty overcoming his "inner obstacles." His hypochondria was among the things Karl understood to have come between him and Michael in 1934.[61] There were also political differences. Michael had been a member of the Sunday Circle, the more metaphysical of the two coteries in wartime Budapest, many members of which turned their admiration for Dostoyevsky into a leaning toward Lenin, expecting a movement for the moral regeneration of Europe to emanate from the east. Michael Polanyi had no truck with Bolshevism, and by the mid-1930s he had come to view the Soviet Union as a practical failure and a moral abomination, and its apologists as unpardonably naïve.[62] Karl Polanyi had never admired Lenin, but he held the achievements of socialism in practice in the Soviet Union in much higher esteem than did his brother.

During exploratory visits in June and November of 1933, Polanyi secured audiences with G.D.H. Cole, the emerging Labour-affiliated economist Evan Durbin, a protégé of R. H. Tawney's, and editors at *The Economist*. He had hoped to meet Tawney and John Maynard Keynes, but was disappointed.[63] Polanyi became friendly too with Hugh Gaitskell, contemporary and friend of Durbin's, also under Tawney's wing, when Gaitskell came to Vienna on a Rockefeller-funded exchange to lecture at the University in the autumn of 1933.[64] Staying with the Grants in Golders Green, he began to make acquaintances in Britain's Student Christian Movement, or more specifically in the adult Auxiliary to that movement, in which the Grants were active members.

By December 1933, Polanyi had decided to emigrate.[65] His plan was to find work in England "as lecturer in economics in some very modest appointment e.g. at a workers College or so."[66] But this proved difficult. Available university posts were being filled through the émigré assistance programs run out of Germany, for which Polanyi did not qualify. In fact, his main source of income in 1934 and 1935 came not from Britain but from the United States: a grueling series of lecture tours through the American Midwest replaced the income lost in giving up his post at the *OV*.[67] His wife and daughter had initially remained in Vienna. His daughter moved across later in 1934, Duczynska not until 1936. It was at that point that Polanyi found regular work teaching in adult education.

Fascism

Polanyi's first year in England was difficult. He had imagined that his brother—patched into an influential network almost as soon as he arrived in England, including the historians Lawrence and Barbara Hammond and Lewis Namier, through the University of Manchester and the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society—would set aside his resentments and "do what he can to be helpful in establishing me in England."[68] But Karl was wrong. Michael stayed aloof.[69] The Grants and the Macmurrays, by contrast, continued working assiduously on his behalf. One initiative of Macmurray's became particularly important. In 1933, Macmurray had begun collaborating with the sinologist and Anglican layman Joseph Needham and the theologian Charles Raven to produce the volume eventually published as *Christianity and the Social Revolution*—the book which Tawney would review in the *New Statesman* in November 1935. On the eve of Polanyi's arrival in England in February 1934, one of the volume's prospective editors was taken ill. Macmurray nominated Polanyi to replace him, citing his editorial experience at the *OV* and volunteering Irene Grant's assistance to help bring the "foreigner" up to speed.[70]

Less important than being listed as an editor of the volume, for Polanyi, was the attention his own contribution attracted. In his own words, his essay—"The Essence of Fascism"—"caused quite a stir."[71] British social and political thought by 1935 did not yet encompass a sophisticated conception of fascism.[72] Mussolini's Italy had won considerable public sympathy, which Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists sought to harness. After 1933, "fascism" became increasingly synonymous with "Nazism"—radically limiting its appeal. Attitudes toward Hitler were shaped by recollected antagonism toward "Prussianism." But beyond anti-German sentiment, anti-fascism remained under-theorized. Polanyi had begun to parse the differences between Italian and German fascist movements earlier. In his analyses of developments in Europe for the *OV*, the development of the social philosophy that informed National Socialism in Germany had become his major concern through the late 1920s. Polanyi's analysis helped—as Tawney's *New Statesman* review makes clear—to render fanciful the notion that Nazi fascism and Bolshevism might be left to bog each other down in internecine conflict in a war from which Britain could keep its distance. In their determination to roll back communism, Nazi fascists, Tawney explained, paraphrasing Polanyi, were finding it "necessary to attempt to eradicate Christianity" and to "repudiate two thousand years of European history" as "a gigantic aberration."[73] In demonstrating that Christianity and communism had much in common, including the enmity of the Nazis, *Christianity and the Social Revolution* helped to reinforce and clarify for the left in Britain the growing sense that there could be no compromise with Hitler.[74]

More specifically—and this was what made Tawney in particular begin to take Polanyi seriously—"The Essence of Fascism" described the social philosophy of Hitler's Germany in terms commensurate with the critique of capitalism which he had developed in the 1920s. Polanyi's essay on fascism, moreover, was readily identifiable with the attempt to move beyond the binary choices between individualism and collectivism—and thus with the discussion of alternatives to the established but unstable social order in Britain which Tawney's critique of capitalism had inspired.

As we saw in the first chapter, a succession of English social and political theorists from pluralism through guild socialism to Tawney's Christian socialism had been trying to extricate their readers and followers from a paradigm in which individualism or collectivism seemed the only alternatives. Within that paradigm, the implication of the escalating "social problem" was that liberal capitalism must yield to some form of "god-state" collectivism. The intellectual movement in which Tawney and Cole played a major part was designed to transcend that paradigm, by engaging with alternative principles of order. The pluralists had looked abortively to Gierke's principle of the *Genossenschaft*

as a means of reinventing English jurisprudence. Cole had taken an interest in the "impulses" and "wills" to social action, drawing on contemporary discourses in social psychology and certain eighteenth-century antecedents of those discourses. Tawney had given the guild socialist approach—with its emphasis on "human personality' as "called out" of individuals by social life, inspired by the aesthetic reveries for "fellowship" inherited from William Morris and John Ruskin—greater impetus by drawing on protestant theology.

The emergence of fascism in Germany underlined the urgency of this development. What fascist social philosophy amounted to, Polanyi revealed, was an attempt to reinforce the sense of inevitability with which people looked to collectivist solutions in the decadence of individualist principles of order. To commend their movement to impressionable contemporaries, Polanyi revealed, fascist ideologues were insisting that the binary choice from which a succession of English social and political theorists from pluralism through guild socialism to Tawney's Christian socialism had been trying to extricate their readers and followers was in fact inexorable.

In his exposition of the social philosophy of fascism—which he associated with Hitler's Germany, not Mussolini's Italy—Polanyi took the University of Vienna philosopher Othmar Spann as representative. Spann had been an overnight sensation as a lecturer at the University of Vienna in the early 1920s, not least for leading his students into the woods outside the city for "midsummer reveries" in which intuitive visions of the whole were elicited by walking over blazing coals.[75] Spann's ideas turned upon a critique of individualism. "Individualism," in Polanyi's paraphrasing of Spann's argument, "must conceive of human beings as self-contained entities spiritually 'on their own.' "[76] Whereas such individuality was unreal. "Its spiritual autarchy is imaginary. Its very existence is no more than a fiction."[77] This was the critique of atomization or alienation that had become commonplace among intellectuals in central Europe by the end of the First World War. Spann—Polanyi's representative of fascism—took the critique of capitalist individuality further by insisting that this conception "of human beings as self-contained entities spiritually 'on their own' " affected socialism (especially Bolshevism) and before socialism, democracy in nineteenth-century Europe *equally*. Capitalism, socialism, and democracy were all founded on individualist principles. They all conceived of individuals as self-contained entities. And for Spann, the seedbed of these various permutations of this notion that 'spiritual autarchy' is the human condition was Christianity. Instead of these various flawed philosophies, each founded on a mistaken understanding of the relationship between self and society, Spann commended a social philosophy of *Ganzheitslehre*, translatable into English as "Universalism" or "Totalitarianism."[78] Individualism had created a world in which individuals were too self-conscious. The

stunt with the coals was designed to help students see the virtues of self-forgetting. Fascism would create a world in which previously "self-contained entities" would lose all sense of their own distinctive identities.

Polanyi readily conceded that Spann's critique of individualism was defensible. "Indeed," he admitted, Spann's arguments against individualism so conceived—that its "spiritual autarchy" was "imaginary," that its "existence" was "no more than a fiction"—were "conclusive."[79] But he denied that capitalism, democracy, and socialism shared this misconception. And he denied that the form of individualism Spann had attacked was coterminous with the Christian "idea of man and society as a whole."[80] Spann, Polanyi argued, was trying to tar democracy and socialism with the same brush Dostoyevsky had used in attacking capitalist civilization in his novels. The individualism Spann used as the pretext for his case for fascist totalitarianism was the individualism not of socialism or democracy. It was the individualism rather of Kiriloff in Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*. What was the difference? In short, God. What Spann was attacking was the "atheist individualism" that arose where people presumed that there is no God: "If there is no God, then I, Kiriloff, am God."[81] The individualism which socialism and democracy actually embodied, by contrast, was "Christian" in orientation.

Democracy and socialism rightly understood were theologically inspired. Socialism and democracy were indeed consistent with one another in this respect: both were based on a principle of "Christian individualism." And this "Christian individualism" was poles apart from the "atheist individualism" Spann had sought to render as exhaustive.

> Christian individualism arises out of the precisely opposite relation to the Absolute. "Personality is of infinite value, because there is God."[82]

Atheist individualism did not discount the value of the individual. If anything, it escalated that value, by creating the individual as "God." The difference between the two principles was rather the basis upon which each ascribed value to the individual. Under atheist individualism, the individual holds value because "there is no God." According to Christian individualism, the "opposite" relation obtains. The individual is of infinite value, because "there *is* God." But that was not the whole story. Each of these two bases upon which to credit the individual with value carried distinct implications concerning the relationship between the individual and society. Under atheist individualism, the individual had no use for society; he or she was, as in the terms of Spann's critique, "self-contained." But Christian individualism conceivably encompassed two distinct permutations of the relationship between self and society. As Tawney had observed in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, there were different ways of imagining the relationship between the human

individual and the Christian God. One view—the seed, for Tawney, of the Reformation—held that salvation could be found without society, "*solus cum solo*, as a voice in the heart and in the heart alone."[83] The Christian individual cleaving to this understanding of his or her relationship with God maintained a relationship with society comparable to that which the atheist individual maintained. He or she did not need society for his or her own salvation. But there was of course another view of the Christian individual and his or her relationship with society. This was the view, which Tawney associated with the Middle Ages, and hoped to cultivate in modernity, that held that individuals related to God in and through "social institutions built up by man."[84] It was this latter view upon which Polanyi expounded. The explicit terms in which he justified that view in his 1935 essay were theological. It was an implication of "the doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man."

> The doctrine of the Brotherhood implies that personality is not real outside of community. The reality of community *is* the relationship of persons. It is the Will of God that community shall be real.[85]

As we shall see in the next section, Polanyi's reliance on theological terminology and Christian doctrine through these years needs to be treated carefully. It was less on theological than on natural-theological and historical grounds that Polanyi cleaved to the latter of the two views concerning the relationship between self and society. But on whichever basis, there is no question that this was the view Polanyi took. "Aristotle was right," he would write later, after almost two decades spent studying English social and economic history and the economies of ancient cultures: "man is not an economic, but a social being."[86]

What democracy and socialism had in common, through their shared historical connections with Christianity, was an idea of personality. They joined with fascists in condemning certain forms of individualism inherited from the nineteenth century. But where fascism made this condemnation the basis of an anti-individualist social philosophy that urged individuals to subordinate selfhood to visions of the social whole, socialists and democrats—in Polanyi's account—were recognizing that their own true position fell somewhere between these two extremes, the "spiritual autarchy" which needed no relationship with society and the "totalitarianism" which effaced selfhood entirely.

Democrats and socialists, unified by common historical grounding in Christianity, agreed that "the most important fact about human beings" was their "humanity."[87] They regarded the human individual "as a being with a capacity, if he will use it, for autonomy and responsibility," rather than "as a machine or a slave."[88] Between these creeds and fascism, as Tawney wrote in his response to Polanyi's essay, the argument lay "less between different forms

of political and economic organisation than between different estimates of the value to be put on the muddled soul of Henry Dubb" (a reference to a popular American cartoon satirizing the credulousness of the working man).[89] But that was not to say that among those who agreed with the platitude that "the most important fact about human beings" was their "humanity," there was only "sufficient basis of agreement" to convoke "controversy." After Tawney reviewed *Christianity and Social Revolution*, a series of exchanges between Tawney and Polanyi ensued. And what emerged was not that they agreed on everything, but rather that they agreed on enough to make their disagreements illuminating.

"Beyond Jesus"

Christians and socialists shared "an idea of personality." This "idea" added a moral and ethical dimension to their politics without coercing unity out of a pluralist polity, while incurring the enmity of (and justifying their opposition toward) Nazi fascism. But which was Polanyi, by 1934—a Christian or a socialist? Contrary to the 1931 papal encyclical, it was not necessarily an either/or question. It was possible to be both Christian *and* socialist. In Budapest it had been possible to remain noncommittal on this question. In forums like the Sunday Circle, religious metaphysics were tabled as sources of edifying moral principles, the stuff out of which an intellectual elite might synthesize a new social philosophy, irrespective of the depth of fidelity to the creeds from which those principles issued that prevailed in the relevant contexts. Polanyi himself had recognized that "the New Testament revelation possessed a socialist flavour" in 1913.[90] In Britain things were subtly different. Polanyi arrived at a moment of ecumenicism in British Christianity.[91] Arguments between Anglicanism and Nonconformity were muted, where they had not been dropped entirely.[92] Provisional settlement of the Irish question had defused relations with Catholics.[93] Anti-Semitism was minimal. Mass immigration, making Britain a multi-faith polity, still lay ahead. Still, in certain contexts it mattered whether one was a socialist borrowing Christian moral precepts or a Christian advocating socialism. When he first arrived in Britain, Polanyi chose to present himself as the latter.

Polanyi's family members were Jewish. It was not uncommon for Jews of Polanyi's generation to convert to Christianity, as part of their assimilation into a Magyar polity that had made space for Jews in public life after they aided the 1848 revolts against Habsburg rule. (Polanyi's father was born Pollascek, but like many others, he Magyarized his name when his children were young, apparently less out of fear than pride.) Michael Polanyi converted to Catholicism after the First World War. This was almost certainly more a matter

of administrative and matrimonial convenience than an act of faith.[94] Karl came to rely on New Testament moral precepts in envisaging the remoralization of public life in Europe after 1918. But there is little evidence of any formal conversion to Christianity in his case.[95] Historians have usually described him as a Tolstoyan adherent of "socialist Christianity" or an exponent of "theological liberalism."[96]

"Personality is of infinite value, because there is a God": this was one of the key lines in Polanyi's 1935 essay, "The Essence of Fascism."[97] It was also the proposition around which Tawney had organized his critique of capitalism across the previous decade, a precept Tawney justified by direct reference to the doctrine of the Incarnation, which as we have seen became central to British protestantism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Budapest, where reinstating certain moral precepts derived from Christianity had come to be seen as a possible means to the moral regeneration the intellectuals were striving toward by the end of the First World War, such statements had been supported not by Christian faith but by some form of natural theology.[98] But in Britain it was Incarnationalism that underwrote the "value" of "human personality." In Britain in the early twentieth century the doctrine of the Incarnation became the "indisputable Christian principle" which set the limits of ecumenical accommodation.[99] Soon after his arrival in Britain, Polanyi was invited publicly to confess his faith in these terms, in circumstances where it might have been detrimental to his prospects not to do so. He elected to do so.

When he first arrived in England, Polanyi associated predominantly with Christians interested in socialist ideas. The Grants were Christians, as were many if not most in the circles to which they introduced him after his arrival in England in 1934. The major forum for their activities was the adult Auxiliary to the Student Christian Movement, of which the Grants were active members. The SCM was nominally an association of Christians averse to quietist or otherworldly religiosity, determined to bear active witness to their faith.[100] But many believed that the movement was not doing enough in that connection during the 1930s. Soon after Polanyi's arrival in England in 1934, the Grants, the Macmurrays, and Polanyi formed the nucleus of a ginger group within "the Aux" (as the adult Auxiliary to the SCM was called) seeking to induce that body into active and direct engagement with "party politics' in Britain, on the basis that it was unconscionable for Christians to stand aloof from such activities in a moment of deepening crisis.[101] There was strong opposition within the Aux to this initiative, not least because the group's program was explicitly left-wing in orientation. It called itself the Christian Left.[102] Many Auxiliary members were more conservative, both in politics and theology. Before long a rival faction materialized to counter the Christian

Left's challenge. Because the Christian Left were sympathetic toward "socialism in practice" in the Soviet Union, whereas Bolshevism was notoriously atheist, questions were soon raised about their orthodoxy.

In the first issue of their *News Sheet*, published in July 1936, members of the Christian Left deemed it necessary "before proceeding" to discuss "those convictions in which we differ, possibly, from the main body of Auxiliary members," to "reaffirm those Christian convictions which we and they hold in common with other Christians."[103] They went on to enumerate their belief "in the transcendent existence of the God who is immanent in the world He created," in "the need for personal redemption," in "the reality of sin," in "the need for forgiveness." "We believe," they continued, "in the redemption of the world through the life and death of Jesus."

> We hold the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of God in Christ.[104]

To the extent that there was an orthodoxy which held the ecumenical movement of the interwar years together, this was it—the doctrine of the incarnation. Tawney and Gore certainly considered it the "indisputable" Christian principle.[105] It was the keynote of the catechism the Christian Left thought was required of them in 1936. It was this specific doctrine above all which members of the Christian Left felt they had to affirm to see off "the right wing of the Auxiliary" who had "challenged the religious nature of our convictions."[106] Polanyi's name appeared among the signatories to the declaration.

It was evidently not mandatory within the Christian Left to subscribe to this document. John Macmurray—with Polanyi, the group's major source of intellectual inspiration; influenced by Christianity but indisposed toward churches; a Quaker by the end of his life—did not add his name. But then Macmurray's situation was different from Polanyi's. He held a chair in moral philosophy at University College London. He could afford to stand aloof from such controversies. Within the Christian Left group there was considerable doctrinal latitude. (Its membership included an Anglo-Catholic, Kenneth Ingram, and at least one active communist.)[107] The group's preoccupation, as we shall shortly see, would soon become finding means other than protestant theology for sustaining the extant moral critique of capitalism. But the *News Sheet* was for external consumption, and in the Aux more broadly, orthodoxy in this very limited sense mattered. Polanyi had barely been in the country for two years, had yet to find steady work, and was heavily reliant for help in making his way—the success of "The Essence of Fascism" notwithstanding—on the Grants and the wider membership of the Christian Left and the Aux.[108] Polanyi only acceded to the dogma of the Incarnation for fear that to do otherwise would diminish his standing—within the Christian Left but in the Aux

more broadly. Karl's situation here might be clarified by reference to something his brother Michael wrote a decade later. Michael Polanyi, who converted out of convenience and who would later carry a copy of the *Book of Common Prayer* whenever he traveled, became involved with a lay Anglican discussion group called the Moot in the mid-1940s. When talked turned theological at a 1948 meeting of the group, Michael realized that he could not subscribe to the general belief in Christ's divinity. He wrote to the group's convenor J. H. Oldham that he must consider himself an "outsider" on that basis.[109] Karl Polanyi's situation in 1936 was similar, but he could not risk admitting it.

Without a grounding in protestant theology, what upheld Polanyi's claim that human personality was of infinite value? This was a problem for Macmurray, too, and between them Polanyi and Macmurray found an answer to this question in the early writings of Marx. The other essay Tawney had singled out in his 1935 review of *Christianity and Social Revolution*, Macmurray's account of "the early development of Marx," giving the lie to "materialist" caricatures of Marx by pointing to the "conception of the nature and possibilities of man" that informed his "theory of social development," was the early yield of a collaboration Polanyi and Macmurray would sustain in and through meetings of the Christian Left over the next four years.[110]

The moral critique of capitalism that had developed through the first quarter of the twentieth century in Britain centered around the precept that human personality was invaluable. To prioritize personality was not, as we have seen here and in the last chapter, to sustain the "liberal individualism" of the last century. Personality was a quality realized only in and through society. Fellowship was life, because it is only through fellowship that we discover what distinguishes each individual from every other, his or her human personality; and human personality is the nearest we come to knowing God. Neither the repudiated principle of individualism nor the collectivist alternatives toward which much contemporary social and political thought moved encompassed the forms of solidarity which this critique envisaged. Under individualism, fellowship was lacking. Under collectivism, plurality was missing. Attempts to extract new principles in social and political thought by interpolating older ideas (Gierke's *Genossenschaft*) into modern jurisprudential paradigms had come to nothing. Other possibilities were sought through contemporary social psychology and certain of its eighteenth-century antecedents—the departure initiated by G.D.H. Cole which helped bring Tawney's moral critique to fruition.

How could the critique pioneered by Tawney be sustained with comparable moral force without God? That is the question the Christian Left set out to answer. Polanyi could write in the outline for a course of WEA lectures in 1937 that the "philosophic root" of democracy in Europe was "that conception

of human personality which derives its validity from the New Testament."[111] But, unlike Tawney, and despite the Anglo-Catholic presence in Christian Left discussions, neither Polanyi nor Macmurray in their individual writings nor any of the Christian Left's circulars recites the doctrine of the Incarnation as the basis of the value of human personality. Indeed, their discussions explicitly designated Jesus a prophet, not God incarnate.[112] And in their writings in the late 1930s Polanyi and Macmurray for the Christian Left supplanted the prophecies of Jesus (set down in the New Testament) with the insights of a later prophet, Karl Marx, as set down in the series of early writings which had just been published in German.[113]

There was no difficulty establishing that what William Morris had called "fellowship" was pivotal for Marx. Indeed, the basis of the Christian Left's claim that Marx had gone "beyond Jesus" and the New Testament doctrine of the brotherhood of man was that Marx had a more sophisticated grasp of just how important fellowship was under modern industrial conditions. The Christian Left confined the authority of the teachings of Jesus to pre-industrial society. They implied that in response to Tawney's questions concerning the adaptation of the "traditional social doctrines" to modern economic and social conditions—"Who is my neighbour? How shall I make my love for him effective in practice?"—the New Testament could supply no answer.[114] Something more than Christian doctrine was needed to "elucidate" "the religious situation of man" in the specific circumstances of industrial modernity.[115]

> Jesus did not view society as a necessary framework within which human freedom and community were to be realised. The historical development of society in his time was not such that it was necessary to solve the problem of human freedom within and through the social organisation of industrial society. With the development of a complex, industrial society, Marx recognised that society has to be transcended in the interests of man and society.[116]

In a different circular, members of the Christian Left averred that the "basic truth about human life, discovered by Jesus" was that "man only finds his true nature in communion with his fellow men."[117]

It was more difficult to distill an equivalent of the Christian conception of the infinite value of human personality out of Marx. The early writings outlined a "conception of the nature and possibility of man," as Tawney explained in his review of Polanyi and Macmurray's essays in *Christianity and Social Revolution*. But Marx had described the negation of this nature and the disappointment of these possibilities, without offering any affirmative conception of human personality. Marx's early writings treated "alienation" or "estrangement" in its "non-personal" dimension—"not in a psychological sense, but in

terms of the objective conditions," not as something that happens to someone, but as something that happens to everyone.[118] The division of labor had alienated or estranged individuals from the fruits of their toil, which were the principal source of meaning in their lives. In these passages it seemed to Polanyi that Marx had tried valiantly to articulate "a clear notion of the personal," "struggling for many pages to express its nature." As Marx described a person, "a being is one who wants to communicate its own passion in a passionate way," explaining that "passion is therefore man's essence trying forcefully to reach its own object." But Marx's definition of the person had remained "complex and tentative."[119]

Human personality matters under Incarnationalism because it is the nearest we come to knowing God. In Marx, Polanyi, Macmurray, and the Christian Left eventually found a comparable proposition. It was not God that we come to know in recognizing the human personality in our peers and ourselves. It was "the assurance of the perfect thing," the "idea" of society after the phenomenon of self-estrangement had been overcome. It was "in the nature of man" to resist self-estrangement once he recognized it; "not to accept the bad actuality," i.e., unreformed capitalism, "which is his own contradiction of himself." That instinctive response, moreover, played a crucial role in precipitating the crisis which would generate new forms of life. Indeed, this human response was inspired by the idea of the social life that would be realized in the refusal to "accept the bad actuality." "There is that in man which is already the assurance of the perfect thing," namely this idea of society enriched by the division of labor but untroubled by the problem of self-estrangement.[120] Incarnationalist Christians found God in each individual human being. The Christian Left, developing a reading of the early writings of Marx, found the "idea" of "the perfect thing"—society beyond self-estrangement, what E. P. Thompson would later call, in language borrowed from William Morris, "the change beyond the change"—instead. In the second bulletin of the study group created in 1937, Polanyi described Marxism as "prophetic teaching—the most important since Jesus—a revelation of truth become active in history."

> [T]he true nature of man rebels against Capitalism. Human relationships are the reality of society. In spite of the division of labour they must be immediate, i.e. personal. The means of production must be controlled by the community. The human society will be real, for it will be humane: a relationship of persons.[121]

In his account of the dialectical process through which self-estrangement was overcome, in the recognition of that estrangement—the "bad actuality" which it was "in his nature" to revolt against—Polanyi had reiterated Marx's emphasis upon the importance of objective impetus:

> Marx said that it is not enough for the idea to press towards realisation: reality itself must press towards the fulfilment of the Idea.[122]

In terms borrowed from George Lukacs, whose 1922 book, *History and Class Consciousness* informed the Christian Left's readings of the early Marx, Polanyi found warrant to seek out evidence of men and women in revolt against capitalism, pressing toward the realization of a different conception of human personality.[123] The theological conception of the human found its warrant in the veracity of scripture, the authority of the church, and in the ardor of individual and corporate belief. Marx's secular alternative to the theological idea of human personality needed some other means of validation. Polanyi would find that in history.

The other aspect of the Christian Left's second bulletin—the product of a week's study retreat in December 1937, devoted primarily to the study of the early writings of Marx—had concerned "British Working Class Consciousness" in historical perspective. At this point Polanyi was already beginning to work through outlines and early draft sections for the book that would be published as *The Great Transformation* in 1944. And in that book, Polanyi would seek to defend the proposition that the transformation in British society described in broad terms in the Christian Left's circulars on the early Marx had actually been in process in Britain since the 1830s. That the "true nature of man rebels against Capitalism" and in doing so encounters an "idea" of "the perfect thing," unestranged individuality, became the Christian Left's warrant for the proposition that human personality was all-important. It was because this idea was immanent in each that personality mattered. And the assurance that this idea was indeed there in each person was found not in scripture or church doctrine but in history. In Polanyi's writings the basis of the infinite value which human personality held was not a religious dogma but an historical thesis.

The moral critique of capitalism developed in England through the first quarter of the twentieth century made sense to Polanyi. In the collapse of the Habsburg Empire and the incapacity of Wilsonian liberal principles to clean up the ensuing mess, he had seen that individualism would not hold. Abandoning his earlier empiricism, he had come to believe that some sort of moral regeneration—putting affect and meaning back into an atomized social life—was necessary. Like many in his Budapest and Vienna *milieux*, Polanyi was inclined to look to Christianity as a source of some such moral precepts. That inclination was strengthened in the early 1920s, as he became more familiar with the socialism of Cole and especially Tawney. Meanwhile, in the failures of the Soviet Republic of Hungary, but more dramatically in forebodings of fascist ideology intimated in Vienna in the mid-1920s, Polanyi

recognized the same tendency to pivot from individualism to collectivism that had worried his English counterparts. In the guild socialist idea of "self-government in industry," he found the rudiments of an alternative, a way of escaping from this binary choice between individualism and collectivism. In the success of Red Vienna he became convinced that alternatives could be made to work. When he arrived in England, Polanyi was a full subscriber to the moral critique of capitalism expounded by Tawney, the fulcrum of the development initiated by the pluralists at the turn of the century. Polanyi's 1935 essay "The Essence of Fascism," announcing his arrival in England, documents that concurrence.

But while Polanyi initially presented himself as a Christian socialist, a believer in the Incarnation, for whom human personality held infinite value because it was a means of knowing God, his "conversion" to Christianity did not in truth go so far. It was the moral precepts, not the high doctrine, that he came to accept. His was a natural theology. He saw a social impulse everywhere, and needed terms in which to make sense of it. Though he accepted the Christian socialist terminology to begin with, he did so more for convenience than out of conviction. Meanwhile he looked for a secular basis upon which to uphold the proposition that personality held infinite value, to match the moral force of Tawney's critique of capitalism. He found that substitute basis in the early writings of Marx. Protestant theology held that personality is important because it is through personality that we know God. Marx—in Polanyi's reading—held that personality is important because it is through personality that we find "the assurance of the perfect thing," the idea of society after self-estrangement.

This change in the basis upon which the value or importance of human personality was upheld did not alter the fundamentals of the moral critique of capitalism developed by Tawney. Fellowship was still life, because it was through fellowship that one recognized human personality. Human personality was all-important still, if on new grounds. Capitalism was immoral and unstable because it frustrated fellowship and debased personality. Remedies for that immorality and instability available within the extant parameters of social and political thought—supplanting the market with the state, individualism with collectivism—fostered false forms of solidarity and jeopardized plurality. All of these propositions set down in Tawney's critique recur in Polanyi's, as does the tendency (as we shall shortly see) to look for alternatives in informal institutions of tradition, custom, and convention.

But making the humanist Marx rather than Incarnationalist theology the basis of the value of human personality also created significant disparities between Polanyi's critique and Tawney's. Tawney's critique of capitalism had been written as history. But Tawney did not need to find warrant for his

precepts about the value of personality and the importance of fellowship in history. Theology supplied that. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* explained what was possible, dramatizing the disparity between life in London's East End and the solidarities Tawney found in the north, defamiliarizing most readers' contemporary experiences, making clear that things had not always been as they were and might be different. But we have seen that by the late 1930s, many readers of Tawney's work—particularly those who had been reading Marx—complained that Tawney built no "bridge" between the two societies he described—the fractious, atomized present and the integrated social order of the past and for the future. Polanyi upheld the same moral precepts on the basis not of theology but of the early Marx's historical anthropology. Both to answer recent criticism of Tawney's approach and because he needed to defend his proposition that the idea of the perfect thing (i.e., of society after *The Great Transformation*) was integral to human personality, Polanyi made the declension Tawney had described in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* more recent. He also made the emergence of new solidarities in the demise of the old more explicit. The purpose of *The Great Transformation* was not to illuminate possibilities but to describe actualities, to explain what was happening. It had to demonstrate that human nature did indeed "revolt against Capitalism." It had to show that the idea of society beyond self-estrangement was indeed immanent in human personality, by establishing that reality was "pressing towards the fulfilment" of that idea. These imperatives—alien to Tawney's conception—set Polanyi's account of the history of capitalism at variance with Tawney's, shaping *The Great Transformation* (its debt to *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* notwithstanding) into a very different book.

The Great Transformation

The Great Transformation is comparable in the structure of its argument to Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. It recounts the dissolution of the paternalist settlement that had constrained conduct in economic life in medieval England through the infiltration of liberal-capitalist political economy. It does this on the premise that the same liberal-capitalist paradigm which supplanted that older settlement was itself now in crisis. Writing in the early 1940s, Polanyi was able to recreate that sense of crisis more vividly; his focus on the collapse of the international financial system lent stronger emphasis to Polanyi's own affirmation that nineteenth-century liberal capitalism was now (by 1944) finished.

In the comparison between the two books, however, it becomes obvious that there is a fundamental discrepancy between their respective structures. As Laski's review demonstrated, Tawney's history seemed to some readers to

envision two societies—the flawed present and the redeeming past—without communicating any sense of *how* a promising future could be realized. For Polanyi no such structure was viable, because, although Polanyi's socialist humanism was almost identical in its operative terms to Tawney's Christian socialism, what gave those terms substance for Tawney was not what gave those terms substance for Polanyi. For Tawney, all followed from belief in God and more specifically in the doctrine of the Incarnation. But Polanyi regarded Jesus not as God incarnate but as a prophet. And Polanyi insisted that the prophetic teachings of Jesus needed elucidation by the writings of a later prophet, Karl Marx. In Marx's terms, as Polanyi understood them, human personality carried "infinite value" not because of the divine resemblance but because "there is that in man which is already the assurance of the perfect thing . . . the idea." And what was our assurance that this perfect thing was indeed immanent in man? The fact that reality had already begun to "press towards the realisation" of that idea. Tawney wrote history to describe extant solidarities, but he did not need to make that clear. Polanyi had to discover these new solidarities invested with unique promise emerging in contemporary social life in more explicit terms. Anyone with eyes to see could already recognize the transformation promised by this immanent idea embedded in each person materializing: this was the premise of Polanyi's book. Polanyi's defense of human personality rested not on belief in God but on faith in history.

This need to demonstrate that the transformation was actually in train induced Polanyi to draw out the transition to capitalism, holding back the climax of that process until the "countermovement" was thoroughly prepared.[124] For Tawney, the rise of capitalism took place in the period 1540–1640. The "spiritual blindness" characteristic of liberal political economy was centuries old by the time it found expression in John Stuart Mill's 1836 definition of political economy as a science approaching persons "solely as beings who desire to possess wealth" perfected by the "entire abstraction of every other human passion or motive."[125] For Polanyi, by contrast, this re-description of human beings in radically reductive materialist terms was a novelty of the early nineteenth century: it was not until the New Poor Law of 1834—with what he described as the creation of a national market for labor, completing the process of commodification of the more intrinsically human resources of land and labor begun with the enclosures of the sixteenth century—that the dissolution of older conceptions of the moral significance of human beings was complete. In Polanyi's critique of capitalism, moreover, the new dispensation to which capitalism was to yield in the contemporary crisis was presented not as an uncertain prospect but as an emergent reality. If Tawney had presented visions of two different societies with no bridge between them, in Polanyi's narrative no sooner had capitalism finally displaced the medieval

settlement than wholly new forms of solidarity could be seen emerging among the fragments of the old.

The centerpiece of Polanyi's narrative was the famous conjecture of the "double movement." As soon as the last vestiges of the medieval settlement were destroyed, in the movement inspired by the political economy of David Ricardo and his contemporaries, the "self-protection of society set in": "factory laws and social legislation, and a political and industrial working class movement sprang into being," staving off the worst excesses of liberal capitalism, ensuring in particular that its "utopian" aim of hiving the economy off entirely from wider social norms was never completely realized.[126]

Polanyi relied in sustaining this conjecture on a novel interpretation of the significance of the so-called Speenhamland system of wage subsidies introduced in parts of the country from 1795.[127] That system was named after the village in Berkshire where a group of local magistrates met and devised a sliding scale of wage supplements to alleviate the hardship caused by high grain prices. Polanyi presented Speenhamland as evidence that the dissolution of medieval moral scruples concerning conduct in economic life was unfinished. In *The Great Transformation*, Speenhamland was described as a "vain attempt" grounded in an expiring humanitarianism to forestall the commodification of labor. In Polanyi's account it was only with the abrogation of Speenhamland by the New Poor Law that the "logic of the market system proper" was finally enacted in England.[128] And that proposition in turn was crucial to Polanyi's conjecture of the "double movement," since it effectively held the full force of liberal capitalism at bay until the point in time when evidence of a substantial "countermovement" became available.

Not one of the historians he consulted about his work accepted Polanyi's interpretation of Speenhamland. They rejected his characterization of the measure as the issue of moral or humanitarian scruples. They insisted that he exaggerated the system's importance. G.D.H. Cole offered the most pointed criticism. Cole thought Polanyi's assertion that Speenhamland effectively precluded the formation of a competitive labor market before 1834 was a "monstrous exaggeration."[129] He disputed Polanyi's assertion that the wage subsidies were applied to industrial as well as to agricultural labor. He found Polanyi's sense of the geographical coverage of Speenhamland "all out of drawing."[130] He considered Polanyi's interpretation of the motives with which Speenhamland was implemented "just wrong."[131] Some correspondence between Polanyi and Cole ensued, and Polanyi undertook to modify his argument in deference to Cole's criticisms. But an exchange after the English edition of the book was published in 1945 found Cole reiterating his criticism.[132] At Polanyi's suggestion the prospective publisher approached Tawney, who also read parts of Polanyi's manuscript—though not the then-unfinished

chapters on Speenhamland and the Poor Law reforms.[133] Tawney subsequently agreed to review those chapters, but Polanyi decided to forego Tawney's "most valuable advice" in these connections.[134] Polanyi was right to be apprehensive about how Tawney would read his account of Speenhamland. Tawney had made his view of Speenhamland known elsewhere and it was diametrically opposed to Polanyi's: what Polanyi saw as last-ditch humanitarianism Tawney described as a "hot fit" of "hateful policy."[135] In his letter to the publisher, Tawney described Polanyi's historical interpretations as "amateurish" and advised the press to proceed with caution.[136]

It was largely owing to the Hammonds, Polanyi wrote, that Speenhamland had been "rediscovered" and rendered as part "not of economic but of social history," but their characterization of the measure was in agreement with Tawney's.[137] Michael Polanyi had befriended Lawrence Hammond at Manchester and had undertaken for Karl to run a precis of *The Great Transformation* past him. But when he rehearsed Polanyi's interpretation of Speenhamland for Hammond in December 1943, Hammond's response—which was to the effect that he could remember little about the measure, his wife Barbara having done most of the work on it and that "30 years ago"—left Michael demanding to see Karl's manuscript, insisting that his argument evidently "[could] not be presented in synoptic form."[138] Arthur Redford—another of the Manchester historians with whom Polanyi was in touch through his brother, a former pupil like Tawney of the economic historian George Unwin—asked Michael: "has your brother evidence that people had in mind these considerations?"[139] Polanyi admitted that he did not. "I do not think," he wrote back to his brother, "that I have as yet enough evidence on all the points to satisfy even myself."[140] Polanyi conceded that he was not really looking for the sort of evidence that Redford was after.

> That people should have had in mind these considerations in their modern form, I would not expect. I would be surprised to find this. All that is relevant, to me, is whether their actual considerations were such as can reasonably be interpreted in the way I do.[141]

The historical profession as a whole read *The Great Transformation* with skepticism. J. H. Hexter, writing in the *American Historical Review*, summarized that verdict in concluding that Polanyi's book

> twists the history of the eighteenth century into an unrecognizable shape by contending that it was a period of "interventionism," and . . . pretends that archaic survivals of Tudor social legislation interposed real obstacles to the operation of free markets instead of being mere peripheral nuisances.[142]

By the early 1940s, British history was far removed from the crude antiquarianism of its Victorian iterations.[143] Historiography was no longer understood as the studious accumulation of "facts" about the past. The attempt to integrate those facts into coherent narratives was now understood as integral to the historian's craft. That the facts themselves were not so much found as they were made in that process was also beginning to be acknowledged. But at the same time empirical evidence—fragmentary, elusive, and ambiguous though it often proved—remained indispensable. Even among those most sensitive to the downsides of liberal capitalism's atomizing tendencies and most determined to synthesize new unities in contemporary society—a process in which history took the leading role in Britain—continued to insist upon evidentiary rigor. "What I learnt from Tawney," wrote Lawrence Stone in a 1989 memoir, "was that the documents for early modern history were preserved in sufficient quantity to make it possible to enter into the very minds of the actors."[144] Tawney insisted on doing as much—that is, on "enter[ing] into the very minds of the actors"—and, as Keith Thomas noted in 1960, "it was not often that the advice of this most influential historian went unheeded."[145]

Polanyi presented his argument as empirically substantiated.

> *Our own interpretation of the double movement is, we find, borne out by the evidence.* For if market economy was a threat to the human and natural components of the social fabric, as we insisted, what else would one expect than an urge on the part of a great variety of people to press for some sort of protection? This was what we found. Also, one would expect this to happen without any theoretical or intellectual preconceptions on their part, and irrespective of their attitudes towards the principles underlying the market economy. Again, this was the case.[146]

A friend from whom Polanyi had sought a reassuring personal reading of *The Great Transformation* described the book as "controlled by the evidence, not by any theory"—presumably reflecting the importance Polanyi attached to the general estimation of his book as grounded in historical evidence.[147] But informed readers recognized its evidentiary shortcomings. Indeed, they had trouble recognizing Polanyi's book as a work of history at all. A glowing letter arrived from A. D. Lindsay, moral philosopher and Master of Balliol, but the pleasure that Polanyi took from Lindsay's response was tempered by unrest at the realization that Lindsay thought his work "Continental": "I agree that in method my work is Continental," Polanyi protested, "but not, I feel, in spirit." Conceding that he had been "trying to integrate some of the more recent results of various social sciences," Polanyi was determined to claim a place among the historians, associating himself with "Cunningham, Toynbee

and the Hammonds."[148] In response to overtures from Polanyi concerning the possibility of appointment to a faculty post on the strength of *The Great Transformation*, Tawney anticipated "an increase in the number of posts concerned with the social sciences" but mentioned no prospects in history.[149]

The History of Political Economy

The disagreements revealed in these exchanges between Tawney and Polanyi were primarily methodological and interpretive, matters of historical argument and practice. But the differences between Tawney and Polanyi were not limited to their respective historiographical approaches. These differences emerged, as we have seen, out of the disparities between the bases upon which the two men upheld the precepts central to the critique of capitalism they shared. For Tawney, those precepts were justified theologically. For Polanyi, they stood to be validated historically. The two men wrote history in different ways and to different ends. But their differences of approach to argument and practice were not limited to history. They also harbored varying conceptions of effective political action and advocacy, and in particular of how writers and critics should engage in politics.

In February 1936, the Christian Left—the faction that Polanyi helped to form, seeking to radicalize the adult Auxiliary of the Student Christian Movement—arranged to meet with Tawney, seeking his blessing for their activities. The Christian Left's stated concern was to clarify the connections between religion and politics as a means of encouraging members of "the Aux" to engage actively in left-wing party politics. Many people joined the SCM, John Macmurray explained, asking "How can I relate my religion to politics?" The Christian Left's answer was, "By ceasing to keep religion and politics separate."[150] Tawney was in sympathy with that objective. In *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, he had described as the "essence" of the capitalist social order "a dualism which regards the secular and religious aspects of life, not as successive stages within a large unity, but as parallel and independent provinces, governed by different laws, judged by different standards, and amenable to different authorities."[151] The "spiritual blindness" about which Tawney had written set in when social life was divided into different compartments. The impulse from which the Christian Left issued was a concern to break down divisions between those compartments.

The Christian Left proposed to cultivate this concern more broadly by coopting the Aux. They envisaged taking control of its committee, and using its institutions—its circulation lists, its press, its authority within the wider Student Christian Movement—to urge SCM members into political action. It was a condition of membership of the Christian Left that members also join

a political party. The Christian Left putsch within the Aux aimed to widen this requirement. But the Christian Left was basically an intellectual movement. For external consumption, they described their proposed activities as "seeking to cooperate with parties and groups in the political Left," "study, with a view to the formulation of the theological position of the Christian Left," and "keeping in touch" with sympathetic groups "outside the Auxiliary movement," "working towards a united front of left-wing Christians."[152] In practice, study and discussion were their preoccupations.

The appearance of this ginger group seeking to propagate ideas with which he was basically in sympathy inside the Aux and through the Aux more broadly made Tawney uncomfortable. He set himself against the Christian Left's plan. He thought it would be very useful to have "a Socialist Christian group." Indeed, he thought the emergence of such a group inevitable: "as and when people form strong convictions they most naturally want to meet with people who had made the same decisions, to work further on their faith."[153] But he "did not think the Auxiliary should itself become the Socialist Christian Group." Tawney "did not believe in mass conversion or "baptism by the hose." His preferred model of political action was more incremental: "a convinced group should draw people in as individuals."[154]

Tawney's misgivings were in part strategic. Tawney told Polanyi and Macmurray that he thought the existence of the Christian Left "need not at all preclude the formation of a Christian political group to bring together such persons of all parties as are prepared to think out the spiritual issues behind the political and economic questions of the time and come to their decisions."[155] The yearning to correct the spiritual blindness characteristic of capitalism was felt well beyond the confines of the left, as we shall see further in the next chapter.

But Tawney's discomfort over the Christian Left's program was also the product of a suspicion toward the dynamics of the group comparable to that which we found among later pluralists (particularly Ernest Barker) in the first chapter. In an exchange with his young colleague Evan Durbin, Tawney deprecated "the satisfaction which arises from identification with a group, especially when group consciousness is heightened by unfamiliar or hostile surroundings and uncommon strains."[156] Though many men found "being merged and lost in a group" to be a "painful" experience, many craved it. "I think that to many men it is exhilarating."

> It is a quite irrational feeling, which ordinary life offers few opportunities of gratifying. In primitive societies it may well have been a condition of survival. In the manner of life imposed by war it comes more into its own. When fools talk of having "enjoyed" the war, I believe it is often that emo-

tional satisfaction of unquestioning & unquestioned solidarity which they are unconsciously recalling.[157]

There are indications in Polanyi's correspondence with the Grants and the Macmurrays, and in records of the meetings and discussions of the Christian Left in the late 1930s, that such a psychological dynamic affected members of that group. They were millenarian in their sense of crisis, constituting themselves a "saving remnant" in a world turning inimical to their ideals.[158] This made Tawney uncomfortable. There were degrees of aversion to the dynamics of collectivism. Tawney's aversion was stronger than Polanyi's.

The historians' coldness toward Polanyi might be taken to vindicate the charge which Perry Anderson and Gareth Stedman Jones long ago leveled against British culture during the period under study here—that it was barren soil for theorists of totality, that the lack of any British equivalent of the classical sociology developed in Germany, Italy, and France through the turn of the twentieth century was testament to the "leathery strength" of "liberal individualism" in British culture.[159] And certainly Polanyi was explicit about his concern to encompass society in its totality, to overcome an ingrained tendency to think of economics as one thing and politics another. He wanted to enable his students in adult education and his readers to "appreciate the institutional unity of society" so that they could recognize that seemingly discrete issues and questions—whether or not the state should be involved in setting wages, for instance—could not be properly approached or answered without adverting to "the age-old and forgotten problem of the nature of man in society."[160]

But in this Polanyi followed in Cole's and Tawney's footsteps. The "forgotten problem of the nature of man in society" was precisely what they had turned toward in abandoning classical Political Theory—in focusing not on the nature of institutions but on the "impulses" and "wills" which animated social action. Polanyi's approach was (as he put it) "peculiar"—peculiar not in conception but in execution. He was trying to do the same things as Cole and Tawney before him—advancing beyond the point where pluralism had stalled in extricating British social and political thought from a predicament in which binary choices between individualism and collectivism seemed inescapable. He was trying to do those things, moreover, on substantially the same terms, by replacing the atomized conception of the individual inherited from liberal capitalism with a concept of human personality inconceivable without fellowship, and by discovering a basis upon which to argue that human personality (and thus the fellowship through which alone it could be realized and recognized) was invaluable. But there were subtle differences between how Polanyi proceeded and how Tawney before him proceeded. Instead of looking to

protestant theology, Polanyi turned to the writings of Marx for the basis of the value he would ascribe to human personality. This meant that he used history differently. But ultimately it was less that he used history differently than that he didn't write history all that *well* that explains why Polanyi failed to persuade the English historians. E. P. Thompson would succeed where he had failed, as we shall shortly see, and the difference was in part the superiority of Thompson's craftsmanship.

It was the need to substantiate the conception of human personality extracted from Marx's early writings that made Polanyi focus on the early nineteenth century, where Tawney had written about the seventeenth century.[161] Reading Marx, Polanyi wagered that an "idea" of the "perfect thing"—society with the division of labor and all its material bounty but without self-estrangement—was immanent in each person: this was the secular basis of the "infinite value" of each "human personality" in Polanyi's reformulation of Tawney's critique. To subtantiate that proposition Polanyi needed to point to evidence of "reality pressing towards the fulfilment" of this immanent idea. The popular movements of the early nineteenth century were the earliest anti-capitalist agitations he could propose.[162] Sustaining his argument that these agitations represented the actualization of the "countermovement" against capitalism and the realization of the idea of society immanent in each person involved maintaining that it was only in the 1830s that capitalism matured. We have seen how emphatically extant historiographical authority was set against that proposition. Polanyi eventually found some reassurance, in certain passing remarks which the economist William Cunningham had made about the measure in an 1881 book, that he was not alone in viewing Speenhamland as he did, such that his interpretation of the eighteenth century was not wholly idiosyncratic.[163] But part of what explains Polanyi's assurance and intransigence in the face of criticism from Cole and others was that by the time *The Great Transformation* went to press, his conviction concerning the delayed maturity of capitalism was grounded less in the social and political history of the period than by an intellectual history of the period. In writing *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi's position underwent a subtle shift. He had set out to demonstrate that the infinite value of human personality could be upheld on a secular basis, with reference to the early writings of Marx. But in writing the book he had come to concentrate less on Marx himself than on writers with whom Marx had engaged in those early writings. In *The Great Transformation* the key humanistic figure is not Marx. It is Adam Smith.[164]

Polanyi had justified his departure from the theological grounding upon which Tawney ascribed infinite value to human personality on the basis that Christian teaching was outmoded. Christian social ethics belonged to an earlier period in human history. The threshold beyond which the relevance and

practicability of the precept "love thy neighbour" became uncertain was the moment of the emergence of capitalism: at this point the cyclical pattern of earlier human history yielded to a linear trajectory of incessant growth; the size of commercial society superseded older political and social principles, because the interpersonal dynamics these had relied upon no longer obtained. Discrete series of face-to-face interactions were replaced by infinite series of anonymous transactions. "Who is my neighbor? How am I to make my love for him effective in practice?" As Tawney had recognized, these questions could no longer be answered without some innovation within Christian social ethics. The failure to make these innovations helped to account for the marginalization of clerical authority over economic life from the seventeenth century onward. But where Tawney still supposed that some such innovation within Christian social ethics was conceivable, the emphasis on the Incarnation marshaled in his own time as a means of contradicting utilitarian reasoning was exemplary. Polanyi insisted that the necessary innovations had to come from outside the Christian tradition. In the late 1930s he had pointed to the early writings of Marx as sources of the requisite "elucidation." But if the early Marx harbored a conception of the human comparable to Tawney's Christian emphasis on the infinite importance of human personality, Marx's eventual critique of political economy effaced that early humanism almost entirely. Polanyi came to believe that this was because Marx had assimilated the premises of his polemical opponents to the point where he could not think outside of them. Marx's aim had been to challenge the estrangement of ethics and economics. But Marx's "too close adherence to Ricardo and the traditions of liberal economics" confounded the attempt.[165]

Recognizing that Marx's attempt to tackle liberal political economy head-on had been unsuccessful made Polanyi think again. Insinuating moral considerations into the paradigm in social and political thought established after 1830 seemed impossible. Polanyi began to focus instead on understanding how moral considerations had been extruded to begin with. He set about rewriting the history of political economy. Marx had been unable to escape from the premises which Ricardo and his contemporaries had set in political economy. But those premises were not timeless. They had been cemented in a particular moment. The challenge now was to find a way back before that moment when utilitarian reasoning began to seem inexorable. Polanyi followed the intellectual history back beyond Marx in search of a displaced humanism. That path led him back to Adam Smith.

It was true that Smith was the founder of the science of economics.[166] It was also true that his suggestions about "the psychology of early man"—that the "propensity to barter, truck and exchange one thing for another" was known to all times and places—were misconceived, just as much so "as

Rousseau's were on the political psychology of the savage."[167] But as Polanyi read him Smith had always approached his subject—the wealth of nations, "the material welfare of 'the great body of the people'"—"within a given political framework." For Smith, economic questions were to be asked and answered within "the moral world of which the body politic had hitherto been part."[168] It was only after Smith in a succession of works beginning with T. R. Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* that these "humanistic foundations" of political economy eroded. It was in the period between Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and the moment of Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo in the early 1800s that political economy had become set in its contemporary ways—become the set of maxims placing economics beyond "moral rules" that Tawney attacked. "The watershed lay somewhere around 1780."[169] Before that, economic questions only arose within the parameters of "the moral world of which the body politic had hitherto formed part":

> No hidden hand tries to impose upon us the rites of cannibalism in the name of self-interest. The dignity of man is that of a moral being, who is, as such, a member of the civic order of family, state, and "the great Society of mankind." Reason and humanity set a limit to piecework; emulation and gain must give way to them.[170]

After that watershed, a lapse into naturalism—a refocusing on the biological nature of man instead of his distinctively human qualities, manifest as a presupposition that the natural world set limits to the wealth of nations, so that for instance the food supply limited population growth—set economics apart.

Polanyi identified the source through which this new naturalism had been assimilated into political economy with impressive precision. The key document was Joseph Townsend's *Dissertation on the Poor Laws* (1786).[171] Townsend's tract—an attack on the English poor laws, which Townsend saw as perpetuating the problems of "poverty and wretchedness" they were supposed to solve—revolves around an apocryphal story. On the South Sea island of Juan Fernandez, a pair of goats is landed to provide a supply of food for seafarers. The goats multiply, their food supply runs short, the weaker starve, and in time an equilibrium is established in which the population size is regulated by the availability of food. Before long, Spanish authorities become concerned that the goats are provisioning the privateers who are plundering their ships. They land a pair of greyhounds to kill off the goats. The dogs feast and multiply, goat numbers decline, until at length the stronger goats retreat to rocky peaks where the dogs cannot follow, leaving only the weak and reckless to be eaten. A new equilibrium is established. Nature had a solution for problems of scarcity, and should be left to take its course, in

human affairs just as among the goats and dogs on the island of Juan Fernandez: this was Townsend's implication.

This piece of apocrypha would be cited again and again in early nineteenth-century social and political thought, notably by Malthus and then Darwin.[172] The lesson drawn was that social problems were best solved by leaving things be. Poverty was a problem created and sustained by the poor laws: by allowing hunger and scarcity to do their grim work, the abolition of the poor laws would limit the population to a level the country could support, lifting the living standards of the laboring poor. This—for Polanyi—was the inauguration of the social philosophy of laissez faire.

> [O]n the island of Juan Fernandez there was neither government nor law and yet there was balance between goats and dogs . . . No government was needed to maintain this balance; it was restored by the pangs of hunger on the one hand, and scarcity of food on the other. Hobbes had argued the need for a despot because men were *like* beasts; Townsend insisted that they were *actually* beasts and that, precisely for that reason, only a minimum of government was required.[173]

It was in this moment that political economy as known in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—as attacked by Tawney—was conceived.

> The biological nature of man appeared as the given foundation of a society that was not of a political order. Thus it came to pass that economists presently relinquished Adam Smith's humanistic foundations and incorporated those of Townsend.[174]

The spiritual blindness Tawney thought had been the "habit of a century" by the early 1800s was in fact only—Polanyi believed, based on his history of political economy—a product of the late eighteenth century.

In the course of this inquiry into the history of political economy, Polanyi's agenda was altered in one subtle but highly significant respect. In Marx, Polanyi had earlier sought a secular modern equivalent of the theological basis upon which Tawney ascribed infinite value to human personality. But in Smith he found an alternative approach to the problem. Reading Smith, Polanyi stopped looking beyond Christianity and Marx for some more cogent conception of human personality. Instead he began to question whether it was actually necessary to formulate some such conception to challenge utilitarian orthodoxy. For Tawney, the pervasiveness of utilitarianism had necessitated a strong direct challenge averring that human personality held infinite value and was thus incompatible with utilitarian calculations. After Marx, Polanyi had no ready means of upholding the same claim about the surpassing value of human personality. But instead of asking where else he might find some other

secular alternative to Christian conceptions of the human, Polanyi began to ask why he needed such a conception at all. Clearly it had not always been necessary to fight the reduction of human beings to indistinguishable articles of commerce with extravagant claims about precisely what it is to be human. The implication of Polanyi's history of political economy was that *before* Townsend and the story of the island of goats and dogs there had been no *need* to insist that human personality holds infinite value and to explain why that value obtains. Before Townsend's trip to the island of Juan Fernandez, no one had suggested that social affairs could be modeled on the regularities of the natural world, that human being was commensurable with animal life. The conceptions of human personality which Tawney drawing on Christian theology and Polanyi himself using the writings of the early Marx were trying to articulate were ways of meeting a need created by this naturalistic turn in political economy. The suggestion now was that through Smith, by putting "humanistic foundations" back into political economy, we might return to a paradigm in which strong conceptions of human personality are not needed—the status of human beings as radically *unlike* natural species falling beyond argument.

Polanyi came to conceive of human personality then not in prescriptive or definitive terms comparable to those which Tawney derived from theology. Instead of a strong conception of what it is to be human, Polanyi reverted to a more modest claim—the proposition that humans are not animals, and that our lives and needs confound the regularities of the natural world. He became similarly non-prescriptive in his conceptualization of the relationships that form between human beings, of the kinds of solidarity they realize in their daily interactions. At times during the 1930s, Polanyi's thinking had proceeded toward the visualization of some strong communal bond between people as putting the lie to the methodological individualism of utilitarian political economy. This process of experimentation at one point put him at odds with Tawney, who as we have seen looked askance at Christian Left plans for reconstituting the SCM Auxiliary as a kind of revolutionary vanguard. But by the mid-1940s, Polanyi's conceptualization of social solidarities had moderated in line with the revision in his concept of human personality. He now repudiated ostensibly sympathetic forms of collectivism in substantially the same terms as he had always condemned totalitarianism. Pressed by his more conservative brother in a 1943 letter to align his own ideas with Ferdinand Tonnies' *Gemeinschaft* or Sir Maine's "status," Polanyi refused.[175] *If* he had sought to "give an explicit definition of society," he explained, Polanyi would have talked in terms of "customs" and "habits" and (drawing on an anthropological literature which had become increasingly prominent in the 1930s and 1940s) "be-

haviour patterns."[176] But for Polanyi to talk even in those minimal terms would have confused matters, "would have merely produced a Teutonic monstrosity without any added clarification to compensate the reader for his trouble."[177] There was no need—Polanyi had concluded—to so confuse matters. He didn't need to say what the precise nature of interpersonal relationships that formed between people in commercial societies was. He only needed to demonstrate what it was *not*. All he needed to establish—as he saw it—was that the utilitarians had been wrong to eliminate every passion and motivation other than the appetite for pecuniary gain from the understanding of social life. All that was needed, Polanyi believed, was to "prove that they must include more than the contractual relationships of barter and exchange."[178] Just as he had reformulated his conception of human personality to the minimal form necessary to confound utilitarianism, so too he had stripped down the solidarities peculiar to human beings into more modest and prosaic material—enough to put the lie to utilitarianism, but no more than that.

Polanyi read Smith as the last humanist in political economy, whose writings record the moment before a naturalistic turn created the form of nineteenth-century utilitarian reasoning against which Tawney had led a twentieth-century revolt. Polanyi had set out to supplant the theological basis upon which Tawney had ascribed infinite value to human personality with some secular alternative. But what he arrived at was not a distinct conception of human personality. It was rather a way of avoiding the problem to which Tawney's conception of human personality had been a solution. On one analysis what Polanyi found in Smith—before the lessons of the island of Juan Fernandez were learned—was a more prosaic basis upon which to exempt human beings from utilitarian reasoning, namely the proposition that human affairs bear only superficial resemblance to the regularities of the natural world. While human wants and needs might *seem* as readily commensurable as the appetites of goats and dogs, this argument goes, the diversity of human affairs is such that utilitarian calculations are irredeemably inadequate. Such a conception of human personality could perform much the same integrating function in the critique of capitalism pioneered by Tawney as Tawney's own theological conception and Polanyi's Marxian equivalent had done. But upon closer analysis Polanyi's return to Smith was a more dramatic innovation. If humanistic foundations could be rediscovered *within* political economy, the task of describing the solidarities Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson had seen in Lancashire and Yorkshire and elsewhere was no longer a matter of theorizing everything economics left out. A reconstituted political economy might in fact be the means they were after of describing those solidarities, of theorizing the social domain which neither individualism nor collectivism encompassed.

3

Capitalism in Transition?

In 1938, R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* was released in a paperback edition. In a new preface, Tawney reviewed the career of the concept of capitalism since his lectures first appeared in print more than a decade earlier. In 1926 it had been possible for "a friendly reviewer, writing in a serious journal, to deprecate in all gravity the employment of the term 'Capitalism' in an historical work, as a political catch-word, betraying a sinister intention on the part of a misguided author."[1] In other words, was Tawney not elevating a slogan into an object of historical analysis? By the late 1930s times had changed. "An innocent solecism of the kind would not, it is probable, occur so readily today."[2] Tawney could point to "more than half a century of work on the subject by scholars of half a dozen different nationalities and of every variety of political opinion" as affirmation that "the phenomenon" described by the concept "Capitalism" did indeed exist. And not as something "unique among human institutions" in having no history, "in having, like Melchizedek, existed from eternity": Capitalism existed and its development was amenable to historical reconstruction. Tawney was impatient with people who disputed the terminology:

> Verbal controversies are profitless; if an author discovers a more suitable term, by all means let him use it. He is unlikely, however, to make much of the history of Europe during the last three centuries, if, in addition to eschewing the word, he ignores the fact.[3]

Indeed, by the late 1930s Tawney believed it was time to refocus discussion around new points of contention. It was more important now "to determine the different species of Capitalism, and the successive phases of its growth, than to continue to labour the existence of the genus."[4]

Tawney's remarks here stand at the intersection between two distinct controversies. One was an argument over historiographical method. Was it legitimate to write history in such totalizing, epochal terms? Historians in Britain

had become preoccupied during the 1920s and 1930s with the limitations of the epistemologies with which their predecessors had worked.[5] The idea that historians simply accumulated facts with the aim of reconstructing a picture of the past as it actually happened had become untenable.[6] But few were yet comfortable with alternative notions of the historian as imposing meaning and coherence upon a field of evidence that was otherwise chaotic and fragmentary. Herbert Butterfield's ambivalence about what he called "whig history" illustrates this uncertainty. Butterfield was faithful to the past's particularity and mindful of the present's need to construct coherence in equal measure. He found it difficult to get anything finished.[7] The skepticism toward the concept of Capitalism which Tawney recalled in this new preface was in part a product of this moment—of the profession's reluctance to reconsider its affection for the atomized fact, of apprehensions about reconstructing the past in totalizing perspective.

Among those who pioneered the writing of history as totality, some suspected that there was more to the criticism of their endeavors than epistemological foibles, that there was an element of *parti pris* in the repudiation of totalizing perspectives on the past.[8] The capacity to envision the past in its totality was a powerful instrument of social criticism. Exponents of the new method recognized this just as readily as did their antagonists.[9] "If capitalism does not exist as an historical entity," the economic historian Maurice Dobb wrote in his 1946 book *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, "critics of the present economic order who call for a change of system are tilting at windmills."[10] As the suggestion by Tawney's "friendly reviewer" that he was taking a "political catchword" too seriously suggested, the controversy over the salience of the concept of capitalism was at least in part a contest to limit the power of history as a tool of social criticism. G. R. Elton's recollection that *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* had been "one of the most harmful books written between the wars" acknowledged that the innovators had prevailed.[11]

But in his call for a move beyond questions about whether or not capitalism was a legitimate historiographical concept to focus instead on anatomizing the "different species" of the "genus," and on distinguishing between "the successive phases of its growth," Tawney anticipated a separate controversy. This was the issue of whether or not the reconstructed social and economic order into which Britons settled after 1945 *was* a "species" of the "genus" "capitalism." After 1945, the interwar drama of constitutional crisis, industrial unrest, and unemployment, shadowed by the emergence of violent extremes on the left and on the right in Europe, yielded to a postwar order of recovering nation-states doling out impressive welfare largesse, buttressed by a rejuvenated internationalism and underwritten by American power. National government managed demand with complex new tools of fiscal and monetary

policy, maintaining full employment, making a prosperous and stable domesticity possible. J. A. Hobson had confidently surmised in 1937 that the terminal crisis of capitalism Marx had predicted was at hand.[12] But the anticipated collapse had failed to materialize. This forced critics of capitalism to recalibrate their arguments. Howard Brick has described social criticism in the United States in the middle third of the twentieth century as an exercise in "transcending capitalism."[13] By the late 1940s an analogous attempt was in train in Britain: in a range of distinct permutations, the critique of capitalism established by Tawney in the 1920s was rewritten through the 1940s and 1950s for a putatively post-capitalist age.

In this 1938 admission of distinct species within the historiographical genus of capitalism, Tawney acknowledged that some recalibration of his critique was necessary. In 1950 he would go further than that. "[T]he monster has proved more malleable," Tawney wrote in 1950, "than—a century ago, when Socialist searchlights were first turned upon him—it seemed conceivable that he should."

> His designation remains that given him when he roared and ramped at will through cowering jungles; but . . . the identity of name masks a reluctant acquisition, under chastening strokes from above and below, of a slightly less unsocial nature.[14]

How precisely to conceptualize the process and outcome of the reconstruction Tawney alluded to here would become one of the major preoccupations of postwar social and political thought on the left. Even among those who embraced the totalizing historiographical and sociological practice from which it issued without reservation, the concept of capitalism became unstable in its meanings and referents after 1945. Responses ranged from the retrenchment of relatively narrow and rigid economic definitions of capitalism to the abandonment of the concept of capitalism entirely in favor of alternative descriptions of the social and economic system: "managerialism," "statism," "post-capitalism" were prominent alternatives. Conceiving of capitalism primarily as an economic logic—as Maurice Dobb did in *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, zeroing in on markets for labor, making these the "essential" features of capitalism—carried economic history by degrees back into alignment with the premises of the classical paradigm in economics from which it had broken away through the turn of the century, a tendency for which Tawney and Karl Polanyi criticized Maurice Dobb and his followers.[15] Meanwhile conceiving of the postwar social order as something outside the genus capitalism entirely, as a mutation beyond that genus, as the beginnings of something else—"post-capitalism"—threatened to disable the critique for-

mulated between the wars entirely by suggesting that the question of "moral relationships" engendered by capitalism had gone away.

If the historical category of capitalism had become unstable by the late 1940s, such that some modification of the terms of the moral economists' critique came to Tawney and Karl Polanyi to seem necessary, another key term in that critique—human personality—was also becoming problematic. Polanyi had supplanted Tawney's theological conception of the person, arguing that Christian meanings needed modification to make them relevant to the modern world. Polanyi had first replaced Tawney's theological conception with a Marxian equivalent. He had then suggested on the basis of Adam Smith's writings that no strong conception of the person was needed, that to offer one was tacitly to normalize utilitarianism. Polanyi's attempt to obviate the need for a conception of human personality around which to organize a critique of capitalism was not widely accepted. But his initial bid to replace theological with secular conceptions of the person anticipated a widespread trend. Over the next decade an additional series of modern models of human personality emerged alongside Polanyi's Marxian alternative. Conceptions of personality derived from psychologists after Freud, anthropologists back from the South Seas, and sociologists preoccupied by bureaucracy suddenly rivaled older theological languages and newer natural-theological concepts as definitions of human personality.

In this chapter, we examine two ventures in "transcending capitalism." The first was the work of the economist and politician Evan Durbin, a protégé of Tawney's who became a seminal figure in the revisionist movement of Labour intellectuals intent upon modernizing the party in the 1950s and 1960s. Durbin assimilated Tawney's critique of capitalism, making the question of moral relationships his preoccupation, but adapted that critique to fit a distinct conception of capitalism—a conception which Durbin himself gave the tangled epithet "State-organised private property monopoly capitalism," and which his intellectual successor Anthony Crosland simply called "post-capitalism."[16] Durbin insisted that this transformation of capitalism did not solve the social problem Tawney had identified. But it did make solutions to that problem easier to envisage. Durbin formulated solutions to the problem using analytical tools that had been largely unavailable to Tawney—developments in the human sciences disseminated between the wars. Durbin still made human personality pivotal, but he conceived of the person not in terms of protestant theology but rather in terms developed in social science. In addition to a distinct conception of capitalism and of human personality, Durbin also understood the relationship between Tawney's problem of "moral relationships" and the discipline of economics in a manner at variance

with Tawney. Through Durbin we can see where and how the critique of capitalism established by Tawney interacted with interwar developments in economic theory—with the turn "against laissez-faire" within the discipline, in the welfare economics of A. C. Pigou, and the macroeconomic theories of John Maynard Keynes.

Durbin's program took shape within the parameters of the critique Tawney had established in the 1920s, departing from Tawney's premises as Durbin ascribed his own meanings to the key terms of that critique. The relationship between the established critique and the second venture in transcending capitalism which this chapter brings into focus is less obvious. This second "post-capitalist" venture was the work of the sociologist Karl Mannheim. Mannheim—another Hungarian Jew—had arrived in England in the early 1930s with a series of intellectual orientations at variance with Karl Polanyi's. In Budapest he had been a member not of Oscar Jazsi's positivist coterie but of Georg Lukacs's "metaphysical" club.[17] From Budapest he had traveled through Vienna on to Heidelberg, where he studied sociology among Max Weber's followers and heard lectures by Martin Heidegger. In England, Mannheim became associated with a more conservative group of capitalism's critics. His 1936 book *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* found an ephemeral following among conservative parliamentarians—foremost among them R. A. Butler, architect of the Education Act of 1944—in the early 1940s. Mannheim, like Durbin, reckoned that capitalism was a passing moment, giving way to a new paradigm in which economic rationality was tempered by a set of social norms or precepts reinstating the "vital relationships" dissolved by capitalism in a new post-modern form. One of Mannheim's key interlocutors in the early 1940s was T. S. Eliot—a subscriber to Tawney's critique of capitalism, whose arguments with Mannheim help to isolate the points of friction between Mannheim's post-capitalist vision and the paradigm established by Tawney in the 1920s.[18] Like Durbin, Mannheim made human personality central to his arguments, but he defined that quality by reference not to theology or philosophy but to social science. And if Durbin's attempt at transcending capitalism helps us to see how the moral economists' critique of capitalism related to interwar economic theory, exchanges between Mannheim and T. S. Eliot and others enable us to articulate a relationship between the moral economists' critique and debates about planning in the 1930s and 1940s.

The specific line of development of Tawney's critique prioritized in this book—through Polanyi and Thompson—was not the only line along which that critique was developed: that much this chapter makes clear. But its purpose goes beyond identifying these derivative threads of discussion. There is nothing novel in the recognition that Durbin was a student of Tawney's, or that Mannheim was involved with the ferment in social thought to which

Tawney was central. Covering familiar ground again here serves its own purpose, giving skeptical readers opportunities to test my claims about the significance and the centrality of the moral economists' critique of capitalism by offering an account of the wider intellectual, social, and political contexts in which its exponents moved. But it also serves a more specific aim, and that is to justify my own focus on the development prioritized here—through Polanyi and onto Thompson and beyond. Ben Jackson and others have seen the points of interface between Tawney's "ethical socialism" and the more technocratic or instrumental versions of socialism exemplified by Durbin and Crosland as pivotal: at these interfaces, the argument goes, we see a noble but otherworldly enterprise coming to terms with social and political realities once again.[19] For these historians, it is to Durbin and Crosland and Mannheim and cognate figures that we should look for means of refitting Tawney's critique for our own time. My own sense is that these were relatively sterile innovations. There *are* promising points of convergence between the moral economists' attack on economistic thinking from outside the discipline of economics and attempts to reform that discipline from within. But we need to look beyond Durbin and Crosland to find them. There *were* promising attempts to develop instrumental solutions to deal with failures of social coordination without recourse to authoritarianism. But Mannheim's conjectures were not foremost among these.

Where then *should* we look for the most promising complements to the moral economists' critique? One might seek to connect the human personality–based critique of capitalism developed in Britain with the moment of personalism on the continent—a moment the particulars and consequences of which have been carefully reconstructed in recent years by Samuel Moyn, Jan-Werner Müller, and others.[20] Further work correcting for the predominant focus on Catholic social thought in this vein of scholarship to date to find out how protestant theology in Britain, the United States, Holland, and Germany worked within this wider ferment will likely discover connections between the critique of capitalism reconstructed in these book and the wider "personalist" ferment. But I have chosen not to try to elucidate those connections here. My sense is that these connections are secondary in importance to those I do focus on in the latter part of the book. The conservative antitotalitarian politics of the person in the transwar period soon resolved into a language of human rights.[21] Re-appropriated by the secular left in the 1970s, this language of human rights had become by the late twentieth century the predominant platform upon which to launch ameliorative initiatives—the operating system one might say with which every aspiring programmer has been forced to work.[22] With many I now see reason to doubt that this hegemony of human rights is desirable.[23] My interest in Tawney and his successors

thus stems in part from my sense that they eschewed the language of rights in favor of other ways of discussing the problems of liberty and solidarity that preoccupied them. Accordingly I have left connections between the moral economists and the ferment of personalism in Europe (understood as the transwar precursor of the late-twentieth-century discourse of human rights) unexplored, preferring to focus on developments of and from their ideas which generated programs at variance with the dominant framework of human rights.

Instead of seeking to articulate the moral economists' critique of capitalism by way of personalism in Europe with late-twentieth-century human rights frameworks, then, I attempt in what follows to relate the moral critique of capitalism reconstructed here to particular developments in postwar economics. My argument through the second half of this book is that it is to a series of specific initiatives within economic theory that we should look for the most promising complements to the moral economists' critique of capitalism. The relevant developments can be grouped together as the advent of social choice theory. The original contribution to this enterprise was Kenneth Arrow's 1951 book *Social Choice and Individual Values*, which will be discussed in the book's conclusion.[24] The most innovative and sympathetic exponent of social choice theory has been Amartya Sen. It is here in the postwar development of social choice theory if anywhere that the moral economists' critique of capitalism dovetails with a more instrumental or technical approach. This chapter introduces Sen as a critic of welfare economics between the wars, initiating in doing so an argument about the complementarity between the moral economists' critique of capitalism and social choice theory developed in the remainder of the book.

The Politics of Democratic Socialism

A number of minor groups and movements took moralistic exception to capitalism throughout the 1940s. The Common Wealth Party headed by the barrister and erstwhile Liberal parliamentarian Richard Acland (a product like Tawney of Rugby and Balliol) was among them.[25] Inspired by Acland's writings, and emboldened by the support of the populist writer J. B. Priestley, the Common Wealth Party raised "a moral standard for society based on the Christian ethic" and indicated "the practical political and economic consequences of that standard."[26] Several former members of Polanyi's Christian Left—including John Macmurray—became associated with Acland. Common Wealth was largely absorbed into the Labour Party after 1945, but its members went on to become instrumental in the founding of several prominent NGOs during the 1940s and 1950s, including Christian Action (1947) and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (1958).[27] Another group which

styled itself successor to Tawney and fellow exponents of a "fellowship"-based critique of capitalism was the Socialist Union. Founded in 1951, but prefigured in the activities of industrial relations expert and anti-Catholic Allan Flanders and Flanders's Socialist Van Guard in the 1930s and 1940s, the Socialist Union sought "to recreate 'the strong sense of fellowship which marked the early days of the Labour movement' and to rekindle the 'early ideals' which had 'become dimmed' in Labour's lexicon."[28] They did so on the basis neither of protestant theology nor of Marx but instead from neo-Kantian principles vaguely derived from correspondence with members of Germany's Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund.[29]

But none of these was as closely affiliated with Tawney himself as the venture launched by his protégé Evan Durbin in his 1940 book *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*. Durbin was born in 1906 and raised in Devon in Liberal Nonconformity. The son of a Baptist pastor and grandson of a distinguished Congregationalist, "God and Mr. Gladstone" were the two overriding influences in his upbringing. He had remained "uncertain" into early adulthood "which one was more important."[30] By the late 1920s—after reading biology and then PPE at New College, Oxford, and before accepting a research fellowship in economics at UCL—Durbin had lost faith in both God and Mr. Gladstone. He became what he would describe in 1937 as a "militant moderate" of socialist persuasion. Tawney's influence—exerted at the LSE, where Durbin took up a lectureship in economics in 1930, in the Labour Party, where Durbin commanded growing influence, and through the WEA, where Durbin lectured throughout the 1930s—was crucial.[31] Durbin assimilated Tawney's account of the rise of capitalism, and his understanding of and concern about the problems of political instability to which capitalism seemed to have given rise. Like Tawney, Durbin rejected the proposition that economic factors were paramount: it was altered "habits of thought," new "emotional judgments," an emergent "intellectual institution"—giving free rein to an acquisitive instinct previously restricted by custom—that accounted for the rise of capitalism.[32] Following Tawney, Durbin sought to situate dynamics of market production and consumption within wider social contexts. And Durbin—after Tawney—argued that the causes of the contemporary instability of capitalism were not exclusively or even primarily economic. "The fact is that as human beings," Durbin wrote in 1939, "we are not merely economic beings, we all think and feel about other things and are moved by other loyalties."[33]

Durbin too became preoccupied by the late Edwardian constitutional crisis—not least as a counterpoint to the Marxian argument that all history is the history of class struggle. Industrial relations and responses to the "social problem" had helped to set Liberal and Conservative parties at loggerheads—class issues were part of the background to the prewar crisis.[34] But in the maneuvering around Ulster in the period 1912–1914, when the country seemed to many

to have been brought to the brink of civil war, the aggravating factor was personal animosity between Liberal and Conservative parliamentarians—or, rather, the *amour propre* of Tory MPs aggrieved by successive defeats by Liberal majorities. "*As between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party in Britain*," Durbin underlined in his overview of the Ulster crisis, "*there was no class issue, no serious question of economic privilege at stake*."[35] The prewar crisis challenged Marxian theories of historical change. It tended to vindicate—for Durbin—older understandings of the causes of political instability. "The forces that endanger democracy," Durbin explained, "are emotional forces."

> The things that destroy democracy are human passions, and in the light of historical and anthropological evidence—natural and normal passions. Democracy is a difficult system to set up and maintain, because the emotional characteristics that must be preserved in a great majority of the persons that make up the nation are not easy to create or preserve.[36]

We have seen that Tawney's response to the late Edwardian crisis had been to recognize that a "background of mutual understanding" preventing "disagreement" from becoming "bitterness and discord" was lacking in modern British society, and to look beyond "classical Political Theory" for redress. The writings of G.D.H. Cole and the social psychology of Graham Wallas gave him primers in this direction. Durbin followed a similar path, but proceeded further, finding richer resources at his disposal. In Tawney's time psychology had not developed far beyond the rudimentary experiments of William James. Two decades later Durbin could draw on the deeper stores of learning accumulating in the incipient social sciences, particularly upon "individual psychology."[37] "The social scientists," Durbin urged, "must look through the psychological microscope; so must the politician."

> They will then see the real, but macroscopic, institutions of government and property, party and revolution, with which they deal and must continue to deal, dissolve into a thousand fragments of personal ambition and patriotism, of secret love and hatred, unconscious purpose and need.[38]

"High argument" concerning the nature of the state and of associations was thus displaced in favor of a focus on the "impulse and wills" that moved people in their "social actions," on the dynamics by which what Durbin called "emotional balance," the condition in turn of "stable democratic habits," was reached.[39]

Durbin joined Tawney in recognizing the state or "government" as indispensable—of "an apparatus of force constructed with the conscious and explicit purpose of preserving peace within the group" as a pre-condition of social order. But in terms more explicit than any Tawney had used, Durbin

also framed "a prior and more fundamental question": "What are the causes of peace in a group without government or any effective machinery for the restraint of fighting?" After surveying early literatures on social interaction among animals and children, grounded in developing analytical techniques in behavioral psychology, Durbin concluded that human beings experience "pleasure . . . in the presence of human company." "Sociability," he concluded, is "an independent cause of the existence and stability of society."

> If there is a principle of living more fundamental than another, or a form of behaviour more characteristic than another, of the human species—and therefore of history—it is the principle and practice of cooperation, and not that of destructive, or even creative, struggle. We have survived by the principle of society. We have conquered by the practice of community.[40]

"Man is a social animal," Durbin insisted; "his sociability combined with his intelligence" had been "the chief source of his survival value." Sociability was not a *sufficient* cause of social order: Durbin put the "ancient and obvious conclusion of political theory" that "the social institution of *government* is a potent cause of peace in society and therefore of incalculable benefit to mankind" beyond argument; absence of government meant absence of order.[41] But if the threat of force was sometimes necessary to keep aggression in check, it was also the case that certain habits of sociability could serve to "alleviate the pressure of aggressiveness within the social group."[42] The state was the necessary framework of social order, but within that framework, certain practices of cooperation and community had developed which diminished the need for coercion.

This alleviation of "the pressure of aggressiveness within the social group," moreover, had been particularly effective under capitalism, at least in Britain and the United States. The question for Durbin was not how the coercive structure of the state and the innate human disposition toward cooperation had interacted across all times and places. The question rather was how these two dynamics had interacted in the specific contexts of two particular "societies" (Britain and the United States) which had been "founded upon the union of the political system of *representative democracy* with the economic system of *capitalism*."[43] To which particular or historical practices of cooperation and community had these conjunctions—between capitalism and representative democracy—given rise? For Durbin, "a certain emotional balance in the individual," "a certain type of character," had developed in Britain and the United States through the period of capitalism and democracy, a "kind of personality" was associated with the success of democracy. Indeed this "emotional balance" was—for Durbin—the "ultimate cause of stable democratic habits."[44]

This balance and these habits—in turn—had been formed under and were reinforced by the dynamics of economic expansion. Classical economists had supposed that economic expansion under capitalism would supersede politics, but they had been wrong. Marx had expected that the contradictions built into the logic of expansion under capitalism, expropriating "surplus" value in proletarian labor and exacerbating inequalities between rich and poor, would eventually provoke revolutionary crisis. He too had been wrong. There *was* a relationship between economics and politics, Durbin insisted, but it was more subtle than this. Expansion engendered stability: rising real wages pacified politics; the "social success" of *laissez- faire* capitalism had "unquestionably" been "the immense rate of growth produced within and by it."[45] But more recently things had changed: in "the present variant of the capitalist order," the "pace of physical expansion" was no longer "the sole source of stability." Capitalism—it turned out—was adaptable. Writing in the late 1930s, Durbin believed that a "new variant—a new sub-type of capitalism" was "coming into existence under our eyes."[46] And this new sub-type of capitalism accommodated new forms of sociability, opening up new prospects for the solution of Tawney's "question of moral relationships."

In *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, Durbin surveyed the "recent changes in capitalism" which justified his surmise that a new "sub-type" of the social and economic system was emerging. Durbin gave this emerging system the "clumsy and tangled name of 'State-organised, private-property, monopoly capitalism.' "[47] The "habits of thought" out of which capitalism had grown—"rationality and acquisitiveness"—were "still dominant and fundamental." But other key institutions of capitalism—freedom of enterprise, property—were increasingly qualified and truncated. The growth of trade unions and the spread of collective bargaining, the emergence of a managerial class within the bourgeoisie through technical developments in company finance, the growth of monopolies, and the movement for "physical planning" or state control over industry: all imposed limits on the free play of instincts of "rationality and acquisitiveness" by creating "loyalties and interests" favoring stability over change.[48] Particularly significant in this respect for Durbin was the growth of "social services," and the fiscal policy changes which funded that growth.

> A society in which the individual receives a measure of support in the main crises of his life—a small income when he is unemployed, ill or aged—is infinitely more secure, and therefore more contented, than one in which the certain reward of any inescapable disaster is shameful humiliation at the hands of the Poor Law at the best, and death by starvation at the worst.[49]

The "monster"—to return to Tawney's gloss on these developments, written with reference to Durbin—was proving "more malleable than . . . it seemed conceivable that he should." And by virtue of this responsiveness to "chastening strokes from above and below," the system was more *stable* than many had anticipated.

Tawney read *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* in manuscript. He was among its dedicatees, and he praised it privately before and publicly after its publication. He showed particular interest in Durbin's innovations on the basis of neo-Freudian psychology. Tawney had taken some persuading about the merits of those borrowings, admitting after reading his 1937 book *Personal Aggressiveness and War* that a "Philistine scepticism as to that line of approach" had put him off initially. But by now he was much impressed: "It is really *very* good," he wrote to Durbin in September 1939.[50] Durbin came to share Tawney's conception of the problem—the difficulty of preventing disagreement from becoming bitterness and discord; the need for extra-economic "moral relationships" to that end. But for his own part he discovered new ways of thinking about that extra-economic dimension. Tawney had conceived of the restored moral relationships in the terms of protestant theology. Durbin approached them in terms of "emotional balance" derived from readings of Freud and his successors. Though again here both solutions shared a format: they took the form not of theories of state or association of the kind associated with classical political theory, but rather of theories of sociability. And if Durbin was impressed with Tawney's conception of contemporary social and political problems—of the ways in which capitalism's moral vacuity engendered instability—Tawney found in Durbin both further warrant for his own critique of capitalism and evidence that it needed modification.[51]

Welfare Economics

Durbin's *Politics of Democratic Socialism* was meant to be the first in a two-volume series. The other volume was mooted as *The Economics of Democratic Socialism*. If the first volume filled Tawney with enthusiasm, the second—had it ever appeared—might not have been quite so well-received.[52] We have seen that Tawney's critique of capitalism began to take its distinctive shape when he realized that his friends Sidney and Beatrice Webb in the Fabian movement had no means of condemning sweated labor. Their utilitarianism prioritized the greatest happiness of the greatest number; they were interested in individuals only as integers in a calculus of aggregate utility. If sweated labor immiserated the few but enriched the many, it was defensible. Tawney—convinced that *each* human personality held infinite value—found that stance unconscionable. Hostility toward utilitarianism was crucial to the critical

tradition Tawney inaugurated. But during the 1930s some younger intellectuals aligned with Tawney's critique tried to reconcile adherence to that critique with specific forms of utilitarian reasoning.[53] They tried to reaffirm versions of the commitments to the value of the human person and the importance of fellowship in the "technical vocabulary" of economics—specifically, in the form of the "welfare economics" developed by A. C. Pigou and others in the second and third decades of the twentieth century.[54] And in doing so they took themselves outside the critical tradition established by Tawney—this at any rate was the view taken by some among the revisionists' intellectual rivals in the Labour left during the 1950s, and the view taken by E. P. Thompson and his colleagues in the New Left a few years later.

As a young man, in the same move that had distanced him from the Fabians, Tawney had grown hostile toward the economic theories of Alfred Marshall. He came to regard the idea of an economic "science" of human behavior as "twaddle."[55] And he faulted the profession for the same thing he detected in the Webbs—fidelity to utilitarian reasoning in which the infinite value Tawney ascribed to human personality went unrecognized. In the two decades that intervened between Tawney's decision to set economics aside and his taking the young research students in economics Evan Durbin and Hugh Gaitskell under his wing at the London School of Economics, economic theory in the British academy underwent dramatic changes.[56] Already in Tawney's time economists were becoming more conscious of the social problem, of the state's assumption of responsibility for that problem, and of the prospect that social policies enacted to solve that problem were leaving classical economic theory—in which supervention in the allocative and distributive decision-making function of the market was prima facie inimical to the operation of markets—behind. But during the 1920s, the discipline's responsiveness to these problems intensified. A. C. Pigou, who succeeded Alfred Marshall as professor of political economy at Cambridge in 1907, began enumerating instances of market failure, episodes of "externality" where the consequences of economic conduct were not properly reckoned or allocated by free markets.[57] By the mid-1920s the theories loosely designated "classical" or "laissez-faire" in which markets were to be left free to work with minimal interference stood discredited.[58] A decade later, John Maynard Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money accomplished a revolution in economic theory*, subordinating the specific isolated instances of market failure where state intervention was prima facie defensible to a macroeconomic model encompassing an integral role for the government in managing demand.[59]

Two factors help to account for the appeal for Durbin's generation of the "technical vocabulary" in which arguments for reform similar to those advanced by Tawney could now be made. The first was the growing intellectual

fashion for ostensibly fact-laden, value-free analytical tools. Philosophers responding to the breakdown of Kant's epistemology and the onset of an "age of extremes" in Europe formulated arguments in the 1920s and 1930s for ridding public discourse of contentious metaphysics.[60] The scientific vocabulary of new developments in economic theory more readily comported with this new fashion than the explicit moral idiom Tawney worked in.[61] The "terminology of economics" thus became "a rough-and-ready proxy for the more complex ethical propositions" that had been advanced earlier.[62] But for many who tried with Durbin to revert from Tawney's critique to the technical vocabulary of the economist, the appeal of the latter was less that it was value-free than that it reproduced in a more defensible form specific values for which they retained some residual affection. "To those of us who were brought up in the liberal and democratic traditions of British political life," Durbin wrote in 1940, "a certain form of utilitarianism is bred in our bones, and will not pass from us until we are dead."[63] Welfare economics gave a certain form of utilitarianism a late reprieve for Durbin and his contemporaries: in the work of Pigou, a latent egalitarian potential had been discovered in utilitarian reasoning; this was the basis upon which Durbin and his contemporaries sought to revert from Tawney's moral idiom to the language of welfare economics.[64] They thus began to argue for redistributive interventions not according to "canons" of "economic justice" but rather on the strength of calculations of aggregate utility: a pound in the pocket of a poor man, all other things being equal, created greater utility than that pound in the pocket of a rich man.[65]

Jim Tomlinson has looked back at this period and lamented that Tawney did not see synergies between his own agenda and that of the welfare economists sooner.[66] Had Tawney tried in the 1920s what Durbin and others accomplished in the 1930s, Tomlinson insists, Labour might have gotten its act together and avoided calamity in 1931. But this line of argument rests upon a twofold misconception—first, that Tawney's critique of capitalism was reconcilable with utilitarian forms of reasoning; and second, that welfare economics really could advance the egalitarian objectives which Durbin carried over from Tawney's critique. To suppose that Tawney could have been converted in the 1920s to Pigovian economics misconstrues the depth of his antipathy toward utilitarianism. As we saw in the first chapter, this antipathy was enough to hold him at odds with his lifelong friends, Beatrice and Sidney Webb—whose broader commitment to egalitarian goals was much more pronounced than that of the Cambridge economists. There could be no compromise between the two approaches. But to argue that Tawney should have seen merit in Pigovian welfare economics sooner also accepts too readily that the theories developed by Pigou and his students deserve their egalitarian

reputation. A later generation has questioned whether welfare economics in Cambridge actually did discover egalitarian possibilities in certain applications of utilitarianism.[67] The assumptions upon which the utilitarian calculus of overall utility increasing where the poor man gets the additional pound are so facile as to discredit the scenario almost entirely. Shoddy reasoning acquired a veneer of credibility—in Amartya Sen's account—only because Lionel Robbins, LSE professor and leader of the rearguard action against anti-laissez-faire innovations in economic theory, attacked it as such.[68] In fact utilitarianism was a poor means of advancing egalitarian values: despite Robbins's broadside, it contained no means of making interpersonal comparisons, and thus could make no discrimination between any one distribution of a finite quantity and another. We return to this issue in the concluding chapter.

If the compatibility of welfare economics and the moral economists' critique of capitalism was doubtful, what of the broader Keynesian revolution? Durbin and his contemporaries were much less sure to begin with that Keynes's macroeconomic theories were better adapted to their ends than Pigou's welfare economics.[69] One of the principal means through which Keynesian stimulus would eventually be applied was social spending, and insofar as "social security" measures helped to alleviate economic inequalities and to solve the problem of "moral relationships" more broadly, there were potential synergies between the moral economists' critique and Keynes's ideas. But Durbin never believed that social spending was an adequate solution to Tawney's "question of moral relationships." For his part Keynes thought the question of moral relationships and the whole issue of the social problem in which it figured ancillary: his primary concern was solving "the economic problem."[70] Personally, Keynes shared many of the concerns central to Tawney's critique, particularly the antipathy toward "acquisitiveness." And he looked forward (though not without trepidation) to an age when the purpose which licensing such motives served had been discharged—when the race had become so productive that "absolute" wants were satisfied, so that "economic necessity" no longer figured among human motivations. But "the time for all this," Keynes wrote in 1930, "is not yet." It would be "a hundred years" by Keynes's reckoning before the economic problem had been solved and question of moral relationships suspended under capitalism could be asked and answered once more.[71]

The Future of Socialism?

In June 1941, a precocious young unknown, Anthony Crosland, then serving as a paratrooper in Europe, wrote to a friend that he looked forward to opening up a "Durbin-Crosland front on the future of capitalism" after the war.[72]

Durbin became a silent partner in this after 1948. He drowned off the coast of Cornwall after plunging into the sea to save his daughter. But a "Crosland-Durbin front on the future of capitalism" formed and swept through the Labour Party in the 1950s, elevating Hugh Gaitskell to the leadership of the parliamentary party. When he returned from Europe, Crosland (who had previously attained a mediocre degree in classics at Trinity College, Oxford) returned to his alma mater to read PPE, became President of the Oxford Union, and got a job as an economics don. In 1949 he was elected to parliament, having won pre-selection with the patronage of the Pigovian economist and sometime Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton. Crosland's contribution to the *New Fabian Essays* in 1952 was called "The Transition from Capitalism," echoing the title Durbin gave to the second part of his 1940 book, "Capitalism in Transition." In *The Future of Socialism* in 1956, Crosland paid tribute to Durbin as foremost among those "very few" intellectuals in the Labour Movement who "stood outside the Marxist stream" in the interwar years, anticipating Crosland's own postwar conclusion that "Marx has very little to offer the contemporary socialist."[73]

Durbin's enterprise apart, efforts in Britain to take social democratic thought beyond *The God that Failed* (the title of a 1949 book reconstructing the notional ruin of Marxism by capitalism's survival of the crisis of the interwar period) were largely derivative of the transnational discourse on "managerialism" or "bureaucratic collectivism." The idea that capitalism was yielding not to socialism (as Marx had anticipated) but to a form of managerialism or bureaucratic collectivism (of which fascism, communism, and liberal welfare statism were various permutations) became fashionable during the 1940s.[74] Models of monopoly capitalism devised by Rodolf Hilferding and the so-called Austro-Marxists; Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means's analyses of corporate finance and the separation of ownership and control (bringing a new managerial class to the fore); the work of the obscure Italian political theorist Bruno Rizzi; the sociological conjectures of the Frankfurt School émigré Franz Neumann; new English translations of Max Weber's ruminations on the rule of bureaucratic rationality: all these and more came together in various combinations to justify claims that capitalism had given way to a new paradigm in which neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie but rather a "power elite" of managers or bureaucrats took charge.[75] Many of those making such claims were disillusioned ex-Communists. The most famous among these became the former Trotskyist James Burnham, whose book *The Managerial Revolution* packaged a version of this thesis for popular consumption. Burnham's book was part of the stimulus to George Orwell's dystopia, *1984*.[76] Criticism of the Labour government as managerial became common in the late 1940s, advanced by the residual membership of Richard Acland's Common

Wealth Party, for instance, and in the founding document of the Socialist Union.[77] In the *New Fabian Essays* of 1952, R.H.S. Crossman—another ex-communist, editor of the 1949 polemic *The God that Failed*—associated the incipient revisionist movement with this managerial thesis.[78]

Crosland, following Durbin, took Labour revisionism in a distinct direction.[79] His account of the significance of the separation of ownership and control in commerce follows Durbin closely: emphasizing Marx's failure to anticipate this variegation within the bourgeoisie, eschewing alarmism about the power of the managers, seeing this straightening of the entrepreneur's range of movement as a stabilizing influence upon the system as a whole. The empowerment of the manager—a product of legislative reform of company finance—was one index of the decadence of capitalism. Another—and here again Crosland made a point Durbin had made in 1940—was the emergence of the state as "an independent power, dominating the economic life of the country," sustained in part by "political pressure for full employment," which was running "stronger than ever before."[80] Subtler marks of Durbin's influence over Crosland are also discernible: lamenting that "US affairs" were "seldom discussed on the British left with any objectivity," Crosland reckoned that "judgments are biased by immense sub-conscious efforts at projection and displacement," reproducing Durbin's reliance on neo-Freudian terminology.[81] And in Crosland's work, too, this reform of capitalism—its "acquisition" (to return to Tawney's formulation) "by chastening strokes from above and below . . . of a slightly less unsocial nature"—warranted a reformulation of socialist objectives.

Capitalism's socialization was most tangible in the reduction of inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth. Progressive taxation, disincentives to saving, redistribution of income through social services provision, particularly health and housing: all of these brought Britain nearer the egalitarian situation that the labour movement had long desired. Socialism had met with success in this limited sense. It was primarily in this respect that there was "much to be said," to recall Durbin's 1940 verdict, "for 'State organised private property monopoly capitalism.'" But if this measure of success brought disorientation or even bewilderment for some, for others—Crosland, following from Durbin and before him Tawney—it only brought higher priorities into sharper focus. In the critique of capitalism set down by Tawney in the interwar period, and developed through Durbin, inequality was one remediable cause of social division. Social division—as a threat to the existence of those institutions that "enable a man to express his personality," the gravity of which had been brought vividly home in the late Edwardian constitutional crisis—was the prior concern. The disruption of those moral relationships and that background of mutual understanding which prevented disagreement from

becoming bitterness and discord and enabled a man to express his personality was capitalism's fundamental downside.

The developments of the three decades after 1910 succeeded in ameliorating material inequalities: continuing economic expansion brought rising real wages, monopoly and managerialism set limits to entrepreneurial disruption, state control achieved a degree of macroeconomic stability, alleviating unemployment. "[G]reat strides towards equality" had been made.[82] This move beyond the immiseration of the proletariat—for Crosland, as for Durbin before him—was to be welcomed. "Prosperity," Durbin had written in 1940, "often moves the English electorate towards the left. The British people appear to feel more optimistic about reform, and less fearful of change, when they are doing well."[83] Social services affirmed a measure of social solidarity which the system of poor relief they replaced—the reformed Poor Law—had renounced. As Durbin had written in *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*:

> A society protected from the shocking results that follow if there are no covenanted benefits to meet these emergencies is bound to enjoy greater internal peace, a deeper sense of corporate unity and milder impulses to reform. The social services are, for all their deficiencies, a primitive recognition of human solidarity, a crude realization of the splendid idea of corporate responsibility for individual disaster, of the profound social truth that we are members of one another. In America these services are called "social security" measures. They are well named, for they are not only measures for the security of men but measures for the security of social relationships, of social order among men.[84]

And yet Crosland insisted that social divisions had not yet healed. "Class feeling, and general social malaise, still persist in England to a deplorable extent."[85] The redress of economic inequalities—one source of social division only—had gone some way toward solving the problem of moral relationships, but it was even clearer now that economic remedies alone could not suffice.

> The purpose of socialism is quite simply to eradicate this sense of class, and to create in its place a sense of common interest and equal status. This will require not only more measures on the economic plane, directed to the greater equalisation of living standards and opportunities, but also measures on the socio-psychological plane.[86]

Durbin had used the social-scientific lexicon of neo-Freudian psychology to formulate the sorts of "measures on the socio-psychological plane" he had deemed necessary to augment reductions in material inequality. Crosland borrowed concepts from Durbin—"projection" and "displacement," for instance—but his vocabulary was primarily drawn not from psychology but

from sociology. Crosland, like Durbin, was born into Nonconformity—his parents had been members of the Plymouth Brethren, an evangelical network loosely associated with the Anglican church, as had their parents before them. Crosland, like Durbin, had left religion behind. The place occupied by protestant theology in Tawney's critique of capitalism was taken in Crosland's argument—as it had been in Durbin's—by social science.

The discipline of sociology in England found a following in the late 1940s and 1950s in the process of reckoning with the successes and failures of a generation of social and economic reform.[87] The founders of the modern discipline of sociology in Britain were particularly interested in the success of the Education Act of 1944 in eliminating hereditary privilege. Did the tripartite system of secondary education formalized in the Butler Act bring British society any nearer to realizing the ideal of "equality of opportunity"? The provisional conclusion reached in studies conducted during the 1950s was that it did not: the "11 plus" test with which allocations between grammar and secondary modern schooling were made gave everyone the opportunity to demonstrate measured intelligence," but the tests tended to find higher levels of intelligence among the middle classes, and to allocate places in grammar schools accordingly.[88] Allocating grammar school places by IQ test replicated class privileges, in other words, reiterating divisions between the "middle class" and "upper working class" and everyone else. Indeed, by using ostensibly rigorous tests to do what had previously been put down to accidents of birth, the new system risked conferring a new legitimacy and immutability on those old divisions.[89] In rationalizing his concerns about such a scenario, and justifying his proposed solution—the replacement of the tripartite system recreated in the 1944 Education Act with a system of comprehensive schools—Crosland reiterated Tawney's concerns, first formulated in the moment of the "death of Liberal England," about the need for a "background of mutual understanding" between members of a society in order to prevent "disagreement" from degenerating into "bitterness" and "discord." Shared educational experiences, Crosland reasoned, would equip people with a "common language" in which to reconcile their differences peaceably.[90]

How far did the categories and concepts of sociology provide a substitute for the theological meanings that had anchored Tawney's critique of capitalism? Crosland's critics have most readily found him at odds with earlier arguments about capitalism in his conception of what have been rendered in this book questions of "fellowship." In *The Future of Socialism*, Crosland gave "cooperative" ideas relatively short shrift, finding them too vague to encompass in a tight definition of socialism.[91] This was a provocative omission at a moment when various regroupings were seeking explicitly to revive an ideal of

fellowship which the managerial tendencies of Labour in power were taken to have neglected. Members of the Socialist Union found Crosland's writings "very confused on fraternity," positioning themselves as the true heirs to the mantle Tawney had worn between the wars.[92] Meanwhile some began to sense that all the talk of fellowship on the left signified nostalgia for the solidarities of emergency, for the experience of war.[93] And many of the young people drawn into political activity in the late 1950s steered clear of the earnestness and sobriety characteristic of the Socialist Union—teetotaling, vegetarian, almost monastic in its insistence upon sexual abstinence.[94] Crosland's call for a "reaction" against the dour, technocratic demeanor of the Fabians set a different tone: he called for "a greater emphasis on private life, on freedom and dissent, on culture, beauty, leisure, and even frivolity."[95] Many on Crosland's left found this too laconic, as we shall see in the next chapter, but in context it is comparable to Tawney's dismissal of Macmurray's and Polanyi's program for the radicalization of the Student Christian Movement: it defends the prerogative to stand aloof from politics which any sustainable form of solidarity should preserve.

Where there *was* discontinuity between Tawney's critique of capitalism and Durbin and Crosland's transposition of the same priorities into a "post-capitalist" conjecture was in their respective conceptions of human personality. In revisionist writings, human personality remained pivotal, but explaining *why* that was so became more difficult. The "essence of human personality," Durbin ventured, was "disagreement." Human variety, for Crosland, anchored the "ethical case" against social stratification: case against any elite or aristocracy" rested on the "injustice of isolating, as a basis for extreme inequality, certain selected ones out of the multiple strands that go to make up the human personality."

> Why should one trait, or even a group of traits, alone determine success or failure, riches or poverty, a high or low prestige? Why should no marks be given for saintliness, generosity, compassion, humour, beauty, assiduity, continence, or artistic ability? . . . [96]

Comprehensive schools—an *Observer* editorial argued in 1956—would foster a capacity "to respect human personality in all its manifestations."[97] The references to human personality accumulate, but at no point is the meaning of that concept anchored to some basis of value.[98] Tawney had ascribed infinite value to human personality on the strength of theology. But by the late 1950s the theological orientations upon which Tawney had relied in provoking a response in his readers were no longer nearly as strong. "Thank you for comparing me with the Bible," Tawney wrote to one correspondent in

January 1960. "If I resemble it, the only likeness is that nobody nowadays believes in either."[99] The sons of Baptist pastors and Plymouth Brethren became economists and sociologists.[100] But social science did not have the means to fill the void opened up in the abandonment of the theological conception of human personality. Durbin and the revisionists kept using this language which they had inherited from Tawney. But what they meant by it—what the basis of its "infinite value" was; why it mattered—was becoming radically uncertain.

Planning for Freedom

John Maynard Keynes announced the "end of laissez-faire" in 1926.[101] We observed earlier in this chapter how an emerging consensus on the need for government intervention "revolutionised" economic theory, looking particularly at Pigovian welfare economics and Keynes's macroeconomic theories. At the interface between these developments in economics and the critique of capitalism pioneered by Tawney in the 1920s stood Evan Durbin and his contemporaries. The conversion of academic economists to this emergent consensus was a measure of the depth and reach by the late 1920s of the conviction that the economic orthodoxy associated with "Liberal England" was outmoded. In the early 1930s the fiscal and monetary pillars of that orthodoxy—free trade and "sound money," understood as the maintenance of the gold standard—fell away.[102] Precisely how and why free markets should be coordinated by governments and combinations became a preoccupation among opinion-makers.

Many on the left came during this period to esteem the Soviet Union's command economy a model to emulate. But the left held no monopoly over the discourse on planning. The think tank Political and Economic Planning was founded in 1931 by a number of conservatives and Liberals on the basis that it would have been "a misfortune and a political blunder to leave the Labour Party alone in possession of a planning policy."[103] Conservatives did not join leftist planners in envisaging command economies on the Soviet model, in which government was the key coordinating agency. "Planning," the future conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan argued in 1932, was too often "made to look like a system of bureaucratic regulation." Macmillan envisaged "the exact opposite"—industry left free of government regulation to conduct its own affairs, a system of "industrial self-government." "[T]he proper substitute for the individual," Macmillan argued, "is not the State, but the functioning group, substituting the initiative of the whole industry for that of the individual."[104] Macmillan believed that this represented "a reasonable compromise between the rival claims of individualist and collectivist conceptions of society," "in the true tradition of English development."[105] Against those

who attacked his corporatist proposals as "a species of Fascism imported from Italy," Macmillan replied that "in that event the medieval English gilds must presumably also have been Fascist institutions," invoking the guild idea that had risen to prominence two decades earlier.[106] Guild socialism—the "left wing" of the National Guilds League, led by G.D.H. Cole—had since collapsed under precisely the strain Macmillan was trying to shoulder, the comparison with fascism.

Macmillan too would eventually abandon his model of "industrial self-government" in favor of a more conventional "middle way" between individualism and collectivism, a mixed economy in which "public" or "semi-public" enterprise in services combined with "self-controlled" private enterprise for major industry and "an outer fringe of 'Lionel Robbins private enterprise—real private enterprise.' "[107] Cole—wavering indecisively between enthusiasm for a Soviet-style model and something more balanced—had become by this point one of the leading advocates of planning by government on the left during the 1930s. Macmillan and Cole came together in 1936—in an initiative to convoke a "People's Front" against fascism, now understood to mean not Mussolini's bluster but Hitler's violent exploitation of the discontents of the unemployed—to hammer out principles of planning around which left and right could unite. They agreed that attacking the problem of unemployment should be government's primary mandate for intervention. And they adopted the theories of John Maynard Keynes as the basis for a working compromise. Neither thought "pure Keynes" went far enough—both, but especially Cole, wanted further warrant for "physical planning" (i.e., for industry policy, as distinct from monetary and fiscal policy) than Keynes provided. Neither regarded Keynes's theories as "a final answer to the economic problem" or a "permanent resolution" of the conflict between planners. They both saw those theories as supplying "the grounds for a short-term tactical compromise; an ideological bridge which could be temporarily shared by both without committing either in any one particular direction."[108]

Cole and Macmillan's People's Front against fascism was forged on the strength of a shared concern to prioritize unemployment. But macroeconomic stabilizing measures in accordance with Keynes's theories, even if supplemented by physical planning or industry policy, were means of creating or preserving jobs, and keeping those out of work on the dole and off the streets. Throughout the 1920s the reported national level of unemployment in Britain hovered around 10%. By 1932, headline figures were nearing 20%, higher in depressed areas. Many of those who lost jobs during these years found it difficult to get back to work. And for these people it was not at all clear that the coordination of economic activity envisaged under the new Keynesian consensus could bring much relief.

For William Temple—Oxford contemporary and friend of R. H. Tawney, and future Archbishop of Canterbury—the plight of the long-term unemployed became a preoccupation in the early 1930s. In 1933, Temple convened an informal committee of Anglican clerics and laymen to consider the question. They were A. D. Lindsay, master of Balliol; Sir Walter Moberly, philosopher, vice chancellor of Manchester University, and long-serving chairman of the University Grants Committee; George Bell, bishop of Chichester; J. H. Oldham, a returned Scottish missionary to India and energetic ecumenicist—"a churchman with a talent for organisation"; and Eleanora Iredale, who acted as secretary to the committee.[109] Temple asked Tom Jones—the former cabinet deputy secretary through whose offices Tawney's writings had reached senior ministers, now attached to the well-endowed Pilgrim Trust—to fund an investigation into the problem. The Pilgrim Trust commissioned Temple's committee to produce a report. Walter Oakeshott, a schoolmaster at Winchester College, later head of St. Paul's School in London; A.D.K. Owen, an executive at Political and Economic Planning; and H. W. Singer, a research student of J. M. Keynes, were hired to conduct a survey. Tawney provided informal advice.[110]

The inquiry's eventual report—*Men Without Work*, published in 1938—developed a critique of "the dole" as a disintegrating force. The whole ensuing inquiry, Matthew Grimley writes, had been "predicated on the assumption that the chief evil of unemployment was the effect which alienation from community had upon individual personality."[111] Unemployment induced "a gradual turning in of the individual upon himself."

> Is the fact simply that very large numbers of the human race are what might be called "unclubbable"? No doubt many of them are; but the probability is that unemployment has made many others unsociable by accentuating any tendency to shyness or diffidence that may have been there already.[112]

Not wishing to be seen discomposed drove those out of work to keep "out of the light," aggravating tendencies to "keep myself to myself."[113] This diminished prospects of a return to work: where ties of friendship or sociability at the pub could discover opportunities for employment, home-bound diffidence prolonged idleness. Diminished sociability helped to explain why some people stayed out of work for long periods. And state benefits were no solution to social endurable. If anything they compounded the problem by making that isolation sustainable. In cutting a person off from society, long-term unemployment starved the individual of opportunities to "develop his personality," and this was a deprivation the dole could not make good.[114]

The argument of Temple's committee was less that men needed jobs for the purposes of self-realization than that men should not be reliant upon work alone for the social interaction through which personality was drawn out of them. Their inquiry covered six different regions: the London borough of Deptford, Leicester, Liverpool, Blackburn, Crook in Durham, and the Rhondda valley in Wales. In some areas—especially the Rhondda valley, a former coal mining region—a "social spirit" survived the economic downturn and kept unemployed men and women integrated into the local community. But in part that resilience was a function of collective hardship: in Rhondda the whole community suffered; in prospering areas like Deptford and Leicester, the long-term unemployed moved toward the margins of a vibrant local associational life. *Men Without Work* did not discount the economic dimension of the problem: where a strong "social spirit" obtained, it noted, this had been forged during the sustained "relative prosperity" of the late nineteenth century; "fellowship" could not be synthesized out of thin air. But the report insisted that this "moral" problem associated with unemployment was one that money alone—even if it were superabundant—could not solve. Nor were privately endowed "unemployment clubs" necessarily the answer. In many areas these fostered anti-social sentiment by nurturing grievances among the unemployed, fracturing social unity in a manner that made such clubs comparable to the militant groups menacing Europe.[115] Men and women needed a social life to complement the roles of work and of family in helping them to "develop" "personality." But the clubs and associations constituent of that life had to be infused with the right kind of "social spirit": group membership had to be supplemented by a more general sense of belonging and obligation, by a more diffuse sense of solidarity.

Walter Oakeshott would later remember *Men Without Work* as a kind of inflection point in William Temple's public pronouncements: after 1938 Temple ceased "making general remarks about the value of human personality which cut no ice" and started describing in more specific terms the ways in which that "value" was compromised in contemporary Britain, and what should be done about it.[116] As we shall soon see, one of the areas of reform in which Temple's efforts would be concentrated between the publication of *Men Without Work* and his untimely death in 1944 was education. Members of the committee Temple had convened to write *Men Without Work* went on to anchor a discussion group called "the Moot." The Moot—which took its name from an old English word for "meeting," and whose membership included Oldham, Oakeshott, Moberly, and Iredale—was conceived as a forum for a "revival of Christianity," a "cell" of "Christian witness and service" contributing "to the social and political struggles of our time," working on the

basis that "to be changed a social system must be changed from within and in all its parts."[117] But it was also meant to be more than a talking shop for Anglican laity. The Catholic critic Christopher Dawson was invited to participate. But so too were a number of émigrés, known mainly to Moberly through the University of Manchester. The economist Adolph Löwe was invited, and through Löwe the Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim was soon taking part in the discussions.

Born in Hungary in 1893, Mannheim's relationship with Christian social thought in Britain was akin to Karl Polanyi's. In Budapest—where he lived during the war, following studies in Berlin, Paris, and Heidelberg—Mannheim had been a member of the Sunday Circle. Though he had refused to follow Lukacs over to Leninism, Mannheim had accepted a post in the reconstructed University under the Soviet regime, and saw no future for himself in Hungary under Horthy.[118] Mannheim left Budapest in 1919, and he too initially went to Vienna. But, unlike Karl Polanyi, Mannheim soon began to doubt whether there was a future for him *there*, either. His main credential was a doctoral thesis on epistemology, which he had defended in the University of Budapest in 1918. But his specific ideas were not likely to meet with approval in Vienna. Between the wars Vienna became a key forum for the development of logical empiricism—precursor to the analytic paradigm in philosophy which swept all before it in Britain and the United States after 1945.[119] Philosophers continued refining the strictures of an epistemology intended to reduce knowledge to its barest, unaffected "building blocks," thereby constructing a philosophy wholly devoid of contentious metaphysical claims.[120] In Budapest during the war, as we have seen, any prospect of realizing some such positivist utopia was abandoned. In Lukacs's Sunday Circle only the "metaphysically disposed" were welcome. Even the more positivist Galileo Circle had moved away from what Polanyi later described as "goody goody rationalism." The proposition that social order was stabilized by shared ontic conceptions of the world and of humans' place within it became axiomatic among Sunday Circle discussants, Mannheim among them. Vienna was not the place to pursue such conjectures between the wars.

Mannheim remained in Vienna for only a few weeks before looking farther afield. He moved to Frieburg in Germany, where he translated his doctoral thesis into German, before heading farther north from Frieburg to Heidelberg. There he was welcomed in the salon maintained by Max Weber's widow Marianne—well-regarded by virtue of his membership of Lukacs's Sunday Circle in Budapest.[121] In Heidelberg, Mannheim found further warrant and a particular cast for his interest in metaphysics in the lectures of Martin Heidegger.[122] In the home of Marianne Weber he met Alfred Weber, whose essays on "cultural sociology" became a mainstay of Mannheim's writings during

these years.[123] He went to Berlin and heard lectures by Ernst Troeltsch. In the place of positivist aspirations to discover transcendent laws of society, these thinkers worked toward the recognition that human being was essentially historical. Cultural forms were mutable and contingent. Like the logical empiricists in Vienna, and in keeping with Mannheim's aversion to the forms of metaphysics and their attending politics to which Lukacs had now resorted, Mannheim's interlocutors in Germany rejected the proposition that there was one true ontic ordination of the social world. But by contrast with the program of the logical empiricists in Vienna, these "historicist" thinkers insisted that there could be no society *without* shared ontic commitments.

Mannheim was interested in the moral dimensions of the problems planners were trying to solve in the 1930s. With the authors of *Men Without Work*, now continuing their inquiries in discussion at the Moot, Mannheim conceived of unemployment and the problems associated with it in terms broader than debate about economic planning could encompass. The "last twenty years," Mannheim wrote in 1943, had "revealed that not only economic laissez-faire produced structural maladjustment, e.g. mass unemployment, but that nearly every other sphere of social life has a chaos of its own"; as such, it was "not sufficient merely to say with the planning-minded economists, 'let us get things right in the economic sphere and the remainder of the life of society will then take care of itself.'"[124] "It would of course," Mannheim acknowledged, be "very desirable" if "everything beyond economics were arranged by the spontaneous self-regulating powers of group life." But since this was not so, some "interference with the life of the spirit" was inevitable.[125] Mannheim's ideas made an immediate impression upon the well-connected membership of the Moot, which became a kind of multiplier of Mannheim's influence. Before long his conception of "planning for freedom" was helping to shape the wartime government's reconstruction agenda.

The Education Act of 1944

When Winston Churchill made R. A. Butler president of the Board of Education in the summer of 1941, he expected Butler to be disappointed. It was a cabinet post—Butler's first—but domestic reform was "outside the main stream of the war," whereas previously he had been Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.[126] Butler was not disappointed. He thought education one of the "two [major] problems" in contemporary British government "most needing solution."[127] When Butler took office there was little impetus toward reform in education. But Butler saw a chance to distinguish himself. Over the next four years he generated the momentum he needed, creating and winning support for a major reform which raised school-leaving age and codified

aspects of administrative practice in elementary and secondary education in England and Wales which the former two rounds of legislative reform—the Forster Act of 1870 and the Balfour Act of 1902—had ignored or undermined. Later historians have looked askance at Butler's achievements, puzzling over the praise for an enactment that seems disappointing by comparison with later expectations of egalitarianism in education.[128] But contemporary estimations were overwhelmingly positive. It soon became "customary to genuflect whenever the Butler Act was mentioned."[129]

Butler was "unusual among conservative politicians in this period in believing that ideas were important in politics, and that conservative philosophy was neither too mystical nor too banal to permit coherent formulation."[130] He would become instrumental over the next decade in the effort to fashion a distinctively conservative political ideology. He pushed for the creation in 1945 of the Conservative Political Centre as "a mouthpiece for our best modern thought and to attract that section of the postwar generation who required an intellectual basis for their political faith."[131] He was appointed head of the Conservative Research Department in November 1945, which he described as the Tories' "thinking machine," and initiated a series of policy studies including *The Industrial Charter* (1947).[132] Butler was convinced that Britain's problems were only in part economic. "Political interest is shifting," he wrote in 1942, "from the soul of man to his economic position, which all seems very unhealthy."[133] The "forces of materialism" needed to be "kept in their proper place."[134]

Butler had been particularly shaken by the events of the spring and summer of 1940. Before the war he had advocated businesslike negotiation with Hitler. The Nazi Blitzkrieg sweeping through the France and the Low Countries precipitated new estimations of the gravity of the situation. Without a martial bone in his body—a childhood riding accident had left him incapacitated—his retiring persona was seen by many as a political liability. But Butler immediately turned his attention to matters of domestic reconstruction.[135] Among those he summoned for discussions was Karl Mannheim. Mannheim's book *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*—originally published in German in 1936—appeared in the sociologist Edward Shils's English translation that summer.[136] But more to the point several of Butler's appointees to the conservative party's subcommittee on educational reconstruction were members of the Moot. In a series of conversations, Butler and Mannheim "cleared the ground for definite action in the field of planning," finding that their views on reconstruction "were in full accord."[137] A paper by Mannheim entitled "Planning for Freedom"—in essence an excerpt from *Man and Society*—was circulated by the Conservative Research Department later that year.[138]

R. A. Butler held *some* reservations about Mannheim after their initial meetings. He understood Mannheim to be envisaging a pivotal role for the "aloof forbidding impersonal State." Butler himself preferred to talk of "community" or of "our island Volksgemeinschaft": "somehow," he explained, the word "state" "smells wrong."[139] But Mannheim's emphasis on the role of the state was not especially strong. Though the state would become the key agency of "coordination" of the "life of the spirit," it would act as far as possible as a subsidiary of "spontaneous" social forces: just as the government under Keynesian principles would regulate markets (mostly through the "socialization" of demand) to smooth out fluctuations in the trade cycle, the state would assume a role (in Mannheim's vision) in augmenting or stimulating social solidarity where it was attenuated. "We cannot create it," Mannheim wrote in *Diagnosis of Our Time*—describing "the problem of the New Spirit." "Only if it is already at work can we strengthen those tendencies in which we desire it to prevail."[140] "Planning for Freedom" involved not enacting "a general regimentation" of social life but constructing "an elastic mould for the growth of society."[141]

There was a further complication. Butler's first impression had been that Mannheim's program was "Christian" in its orientations,[142] and it is not hard to see why. Mannheim had been brought to Butler's attention by members of a Christian cell, the Moot. But Mannheim was not a Christian. His writings made frequent reference to "human personality."[143] This was part of the reason why Butler had mistaken his ideas for a form of "corporate Christian" conservatism. But like Polanyi, Mannheim sought to substitute the theological meanings Tawney and others ascribed to "human personality" for a secular alternative. And, like Durbin and Crosland, Mannheim sought alternatives not in natural theology but in social science. At Manchester College, Oxford, in 1938, Mannheim gave a series of lectures under the title "Planned Society and the Problem of Human Personality."[144] In these lectures, Mannheim described the "build[ing]," "moulding," "development," "growth," and "adjustment" of "personality" as the foremost imperative in democratic societies. But defining precisely "what we understand by personality" was not straightforward for Mannheim.[145] "In order to make you appreciate the difficulty of defining personality," he told his audience, "I only want to point out that one of the most recent writers on the subject, the social psychologist Floyd Allport, distinguished fifty meanings of the word in its current and scientific use!"[146] Once one began to consult American anthropologists and the neo-Freudian psychologists by whom they were informed, that was of course true.[147] But until recently the relevant discussions in Britain had been deaf to that polyphony. Though Mannheim purported to be concerned with personality, what he meant by that was not what British writers and critics informed

by protestant theology had come to mean by it. We have seen how Karl Polanyi sought to infiltrate the concept of human personality in Christian socialism with the meanings attached to that concept and its analogues in the writings of the young Karl Marx. Here we find Mannheim engaged in a comparable work of re-description.

In its longer form the essay of Mannheim's which circulated among conservatives in 1940 was subtitled "*a challenge to Christian thinkers by a sociologist.*"[148] "Sociology" was a nebulous term in interwar Britain. Many Christian writers and critics during this period—particularly those associated with the Christendom Group, with which T. S. Eliot had been involved—described their ideas as a "sociology."[149] Earlier the term had been taken up by the intellectuals associated with New Liberalism to describe an expanded concern with the "social problem" and the necessity of state intervention in social and economic life to solve that problem.[150] Sociology in the more familiar postwar guise, inspired by American innovations in the tradition of Max Weber, Vilfredo Pareto, and Emile Durkheim in *fin-de-siecle* Europe, was still viewed skeptically in Britain.[151] The mention of Weber, Pareto, and Durkheim brings us nearest to what he meant by the designation, though it still does not capture his specific meaning. Mannheim identified his own work with the nascent practice of the "sociology of knowledge." And as we shall see, the kind of sociology Mannheim practiced here owed less to Weber, Pareto, or Durkheim than to the German historical school of jurisprudence, particularly the lawyer Friedrich Carl von Savigny.

Before he became a proponent of "planning for freedom," Mannheim was an historian of capitalism, or at least a historian of conservative critiques of capitalism. And his research in this field led him to a conclusion akin to Durbin's—that a process of "transcending capitalism" was now in train. Mannheim based this conclusion less on economic or political developments—monopolistic tendencies in industry; changing structures of corporate finance, empowering managers; new powers of coordination assumed by the state—than on ideological developments. For Mannheim—comparable to Marx, in this respect—ideas were sociologically grounded. The clash of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary ideologies characteristic of social and political thought in Europe since 1789 was a function of the divergence in material interests between the rising middle class on the one hand, and an older aristocracy, allied for certain purposes with the proletarianizing workers, on the other. For Mannheim, capitalist economic rationality was an ideological expression of the material interests of the "rising capitalist bourgeoisie."[152] With the "substitution of commodity production for a subsistence economy," and a corresponding "change-over" in "the attitude towards things" and in "thinking about nature" from "qualitative" to "quantitative," a "consistently

abstract and calculating form of experience" became normative among certain strata of European society. That attitude came gradually to "include all forms of human experience," encompassing not only relations between men and women and the natural world but also social relations.

> In a patriarchal or feudal world the "other man" is regarded as a self-contained unit, or at least as a member of an organic community. In a society based on commodity production, he too is a commodity, his labour-power a calculable magnitude with which one reckons as with all other quantities. The result is that as capitalist organization expands, man is increasingly treated as an abstract calculable magnitude, and tends more and more to experience the outside world in terms of these abstract relations.[153]

What became of "all those vital relationships and attitudes" and "their corresponding modes of thought" which had been "suppressed by the rise" of this "consistent rationalization"?

> Did they merely sink into the past, or were they in some way conserved? If they were conserved, in what form have they been handed down to us?[154]

This was the question which aristocracies whose interests the rising bourgeoisie threatened asked in response. It was among "strata which were not directly interested in or were perhaps even menaced by the capitalist process" that the conservation of those "vital relationships and attitudes" attacked as "irrational" by the Enlightenment had been conserved. Mannheim's *Habilitationsschrift*—written in Heidelberg, later published in abridged form under the title "Conservative Thought"—was a study of the German counter-Enlightenment. In it he set out to reconstruct the "counter-logic" through which representatives of these threatened social strata opposed capitalism, showing how intellectual opposition was marshaled by "right-wing" adversaries of "rising capitalism" through the "gathering up" of "all those spiritual and intellectual factors which were in danger of suppression as the result of a victory for bourgeois rationalism."[155] It was here—Mannheim believed—in the rearguard action against the ideology of the French Revolution, fought by Prussian nobles convinced that their economic power was in jeopardy, that the critique of capitalism originated. And neither were these origins quite as obscure to English readers as they might at first have seemed: the German counter-Enlightenment, Mannheim argued, had taken its inspiration from the writings of Edmund Burke.

Among Mannheim's colleagues in Germany, it had been common to suppose that the struggle between these two contending ideologies—variously denominated progress and reaction, Enlightenment and Romanticism, Thomas

Paine and Edmund Burke—would prove inescapable in the twentieth century.[156] The "internal and external history of our time," Georg Simmel surmised in 1903, would be "written in the conflict and shifting interpretations" of these two "ways of understanding the individual's situation in the totality." If the enmity between capitalism and communism could be traced back to this original confrontation between ideologies of Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment, then Simmel's prediction was surely right.[157] But Mannheim insisted otherwise. He did not see the argument between these two contending ideological centers as fated to continue inconclusively. He believed that a synthesis between the two ideologies could be forged.

Alongside the romantic and Hegelian derivations from Burke in the German counter-Enlightenment, Mannheim discovered a third stream—the historical school of jurisprudence developed by Friedrich Karl von Savigny. Best known to English social and political thought through its influence upon Sir Henry Maine, this historical school mediated between the "diametrically-opposed value systems" of Enlightenment rationalism and counter-Enlightenment irrationalism, working toward a synthesis of modern rationality with premodern social vitality.[158] In the lawyer Savigny's writing, "old ways" and novel administrative and economic practices combined, integrating "rational" and "irrational" elements into a durable synthesis, adulterating the abstract schemes of natural law jurisprudence with concrete particulars specific to time and place. Mannheim was not a lawyer, but his "sociology of knowledge" was modeled on this historical school of jurisprudence. It worked along similar lines, approaching historically specific norms and practices as perspectives on a transcendent "totality," accepting that particular societies united around shared ontic commitments but seeking to find "common denominators" through which to relate those plural metaphysics to one another. The sociology of knowledge fostered reconciliation between different belief systems, and—more contentiously—qualitative adjudications of which yielded the most "comprehensive" and "fruitful" perspective on "totality."[159]

The expectation that such synthesis between contending ideologies was feasible was a product of a particular historical moment. Savigny (1779–1861) had lived through an era of "quiet opposition" of the estates antipathetic toward Enlightenment. Mannheim was deeply affected by the optimism attending hopes for liberal reform in Hungary in the early twentieth century. And in Britain in the early 1940s it seemed again that capitalism would be recreated with "a slightly less unsocial nature" through "chastening strokes from above and below" rather than by further revolutionary upheaval. In each successive context rationalist zealotry and reactionary revanchism were exceptional, and moderate enactment of progressive reform with due deference to the peculiar traditions and customs of the people concerned was the norm. In Britain

these tendencies were exemplified by the intermingling of modernist and medievalist idioms of reform, and in the moderation of class tensions by codes of domesticity and populist and patriotic affections.[160]

To realize the full promise of this moment of moderation in which transcending capitalism through gradual reform seemed possible, what Mannheim thought was needed was for the "socially-unattached intelligentsia" to constitute themselves a caste apart and to distill out of this atmosphere of moderate reformism a specific code of moral conduct. For Mannheim, writers and critics unaffiliated with any class, "men who are in a position to throw light" on the "course" of an increasingly complex "social process," an "organ of self-observation" generated "by history," were one of the great gains of the modern period.[161] During the nineteenth century many of these people had found "living by literary production" hard—particularly in Germany—and entered officialdom, "sell[ing] their pen to one government or another," oscillating between Prussia and Austria. It was these "unattached" minds, favoring no class over another, who were best placed to accomplish the synthesis Mannheim envisaged. They needed training in the methods of historical jurisprudence, of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, in order to do this work: Mannheim believed that "dilettantism" inhibited England's intellectuals from engaging in this work; what he needed to succeed in his endeavor was to "train ten to twenty sociologists" to overcome this dilettantism, he wrote late in his life.[162] But, as we shall soon see, influential figures among the cohort of writers and critics to whom Mannheim was looking to take up this work of synthesizing a "Summa" as a basis upon which to bring the "chaos" of mass society under control came to regard his ideas as "dangerous."

This synthesis between progressive and conservative forces was to become in the present moment the basis for official "planning for freedom." Notwithstanding a pervasive aversion in Britain to "interference" with "the life of the spirit," Mannheim wrote in 1940, "we would gladly consent to considerable interference at strategic points, provided it confined itself to fostering those elements in the education of human nature which make for peace, understanding and decency."[163] A "minimum sense of decency and moral obligation" could be instilled in society both domestically and internationally by exacting interventions.[164] The interpretative clarification necessary to achieve and sustain that synthesis was the work of the intellectuals. The policymaking which drove reform was the work of politicians. The process of coordination which Mannheim envisaged would bring these two cohorts into consultative relation with one another. "We need a small committee composed partly of intellectuals and partly of parliamentarians which meets weekly and watches changes in the situation," Mannheim declared at a July 1940 meeting. "It would be without public responsibility, but it would advise people."[165] This

committee would form the nucleus of a formally constituted order. Reaching consensus among themselves, this "intellectual elite" would then inform policymakers engaged in the more concrete activity of planning for freedom and journalists and opinion-makers who created climates for reform. Mannheim's vision for an intellectual elite in many ways anticipated F. A. Hayek's conception of the Mont Pelerin Society as a means of amplifying a program of reform by mobilizing "second-hand dealers in ideas."[166]

Mannheim's most avid follower among members of the Moot was Fred Clarke, director of the Institute for Education at the University of London (where a chair was created for Mannheim after the war). Clarke was one of Butler's appointees to the Conservatives' subcommittee on educational reconstruction, convened in 1941. That committee also included Walter Oakeshott, who had co-written *Men Without Work*. The subcommittee was chaired by Geoffrey Faber, the publisher and historian, another Moot member. As soon as its work began, this committee quickly widened its nominal brief. Instead of a narrowly focused examination of education policy, it would conduct a "far-reaching enquiry into the national 'crisis of culture' "—the want of social spirit which *Men Without Work* had discovered in places where unemployment laid that deficit bare, the failures of "spontaneous" cooperation which had materialized across the previous two decades as the world became too complex for the verities of Victorian liberalism to handle.[167] The education subcommittee would re-litigate many of the issues raised at meetings of the Moot.

The report which the Faber committee drafted was a compendium of the preoccupations of the *Men Without Work* researchers, together with a series of proposed solutions to the problems disclosed by that report, solutions inspired primarily by Mannheim. Social environment was not *determinative* of "personality." An "ultimate religious sphere" was the source of "human dignity or whatever we think essential to human beings," Mannheim wrote, in a suggestively flippant formulation.[168] But social environment was crucial: without it, personality remained unrealized, undeveloped. Protestantism had historically downplayed the importance of social institutions in putting individuals in touch with that ultimate religious sphere directly.[169] But the individualism to which the pursuit of salvation *solus cum solo* had led had proven dangerously destabilizing and demoralizing. It was now clear that men and women needed social life in order to express their personalities, to become themselves. The fact that men and women thrown out of work could be cast out of society illustrated that social ties had become too tenuous. But as *Men Without Work* had established, and as meetings of the Moot reiterated, the social environment in contemporary Britain was *not* properly discharging this educative function. And this in turn made the problem harder to solve. Individuals had

little sense of their place and function within larger social wholes, and thus had difficulty reorienting themselves to the complexity of modern social and economic life, and developing the necessary sense of a "duty to be responsible to the whole."[170] The conclusion toward which all this pointed was that State should become involved in disseminating a "new morality": the state would construct a "mold" within which society could grow, correcting for wider failures "to establish on a larger scale the methods of value adjustment, value assimilation, value reconciliation and value standardization which were always active in small communities." In small communities, these processes "could do their work spontaneously." In mass society, they had to be deliberately synthesized.[171]

Butler launched the Faber committee's interim report on the aims of education in September 1942. It recommended measures to counteract class privilege, such as abolishing fees at public schools and giving state schools as much independence in setting curriculum and hiring and firing as the public schools enjoyed. It proposed massive investment in technical education. More contentiously, it proposed that compulsory registration of teenagers be perpetuated in peacetime. Young people would engage in voluntary service with community groups regulated by government.[172] And it proposed that the state should actively promote religious education in the maintained sector.[173] The response was furious. "Stark totalitarianism," "Christian fascism," and "the importation of Hitler youth" were among contemporary descriptions of the registration and voluntary service proposals.[174] "The last thing we want," wrote one conservative critic, "is to have a brass-bound sausage machine to turn out thousands upon thousands of loathsome young prigs all classed in the same category."[175] F. A. Hayek would make Mannheim a key exemplar of the programs of "planning" at which *The Road to Serfdom* took aim.[176] Thereafter the Faber committee was sidelined, and the work of developing concrete proposals and drafting the bill was concentrated within the civil service.[177] The youth program and the reform of public schools went nowhere. The Education Act of 1944 envisaged a tripartite system of secondary education, consisting of grammar, secondary technical, and secondary modern schools, though the investment in technical education that the Faber committee had called for was never forthcoming.[178]

As a solution to the problems of social solidarity which preoccupied discussions at the Moot—the lack of the forms of social solidarity or fellowship without which human personality was inconceivable, the "question of moral relationships" formulated by Tawney in the prewar constitutional crisis—Mannheim's ideas proved untenable. But this was not because the concern to see that young people's "spiritual well-being" was looked after alongside their material needs—the concern Butler had expressed and which *Men*

Without Work and the Moot carried over from Tawney's critique of capitalism—was not widely shared. William Temple's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942 provided Butler with an ally in his campaign for reform. Through subtle politics, the two built an unassailable constituency for reform.[179] S.J.D. Green's describes the enactment as an "Anglican triumph," and it is true that Butler and Temple managed to secure provision for compulsory religious instruction in schools—in part because parliament waved that provision through, leaving Butler with the impression that most regarded church-state questions as an "out of date wrangle."[180] Green points to the mandate on religious instruction as evidence that Butler's "purposes" were "essentially religious."[181]

But it would be a mistake to suppose that instruction in religion was the only or even the primary means of attending to spiritual well-being and to these broader problems of social solidarity contained in the 1944 Act. For Tawney himself it was not the question of religious instruction or the content of the curriculum more broadly that mattered. It was the raising of the school-leaving age that mattered. "What really matters to young people," Tawney wrote to Fred Clarke in 1940, "is that they should grow up a little longer in the atmosphere of a spiritual society, such as a good school is, and very few factories can be."[182] The raising of the school-leaving age was a reform for which Tawney had been pushing—as author of numerous Labour and ILP pamphlets, most notably *Secondary Education for All* in 1922, and as a member of the Board of Education's Consultative Committee under Sir William Henry Hadow in the 1920s—for two decades.[183] It was a measure which well-organized interests had steadfastly opposed through the interwar period. The 1944 Act raised the leaving age to 15, with provision to raise it again to 16 at the minister's discretion. Butler—as we saw in the first chapter—described Tawney's contribution to the passage of his bill as "outstanding."[184]

Every secondary school was a kind of youth program, a spiritual society by comparison with the cold, mechanical rigors of the factory. Was this outcome so far removed from what Mannheim had been advocating? We saw that Butler sensed something amiss in Mannheim's talk of "the state." But we also saw that Mannheim was not envisioning anything like a return to the "god-state" prophesied in Edwardian Idealism and repudiated during the First World War. In Mannheim's outlook the state would become the key agency for coordination of the life of the spirit, it would act as an auxiliary to spontaneous social forces. Only where a social spirit was "already at work" could the state be engaged to "strengthen those tendencies in which we desire it to prevail." "Planning for Freedom" involved not enacting "a general regimentation" of social life but constructing "an elastic mould for the growth of society."[185] And was that not what Tawney envisaged in referring to good schools as forms of spiri-

tual society? Was that not what the Butler Act accomplished in raising the leaving age and allowing ample discretion to local authorities in deciding what kind of schools to build and what to teach—the construction of a "mould" within which "society" could grow?[186]

The sidelining of the Faber committee was a consequence less of heterodoxy than of a lack of subtlety. Some of its concrete proposals were ill-conceived. But the underlying vision—in which the state would become "an instrument" in a polycentric push to foster the kinds of "moral relationships" between individuals that capitalism systematically inhibited—was consonant with the arguments of the moral economists, and with the outcome eventually secured by Butler and Temple. None of this is to say that Mannheim's means of transcending capitalism were ultimately compatible with the critical tradition Tawney had established in the 1920s. But to understand precisely how Mannheim was at odds with that tradition, we need to look beyond the sidelining of the Faber committee and the question of the proper degree of state "interference with the life of the spirit."

Definitions of Culture

Mannheim was not discouraged by the Faber committee fiasco. "I can certainly not complain about a lack of response in this country," he wrote in 1945.[187] Within the Moot, Mannheim's standing was undiminished. But through the mid-1940s talk turned away from questions of state reconstruction—of the construction of molds within which society could grow, in Mannheim's terms—and toward questions of cultural leadership—questions, that is, about how the ensuing growth of society was best cultivated, and in particular about the role of intellectuals in that process. What was the proper role of people like Mannheim and his interlocutors at the Moot in fostering and directing the growth of society? What could intellectuals do about the attenuation of social spirit in modern Britain, about the lack of solidarity in all but exceptional places like Rochdale and the Rhondda Valley?

Though Mannheim talked of synthesis, this was not to suggest that the requisite sense of solidarity could be constructed from scratch. "Planning for freedom" involved coopting social forces already spontaneously growing. The sociology of knowledge was a means not of confecting new schemes of culture but of developing and refining and strengthening already-existing norms and customs. Intellectuals could not "create" these things. They had to begin with extant resources. But with this qualification, Mannheim did envisage a pivotal role for intellectuals in fostering the growth of social spirit. Working not independently but as a distinct order or elite striving toward internal consensus and then disseminating that synthesis so achieved through contacts

with legislators and opinion-makers, Mannheim's "socially unattached intelligentsia" would assume responsibility for organizing the sundry norms and customs actually extant in a given cultural moment into an evolving "Summa," a dynamic blueprint for social reform.[188]

Foremost among Mannheim's interlocutors at the Moot during the 1940s was T. S. Eliot. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888, the son of a Unitarian preacher, raised in a family of Boston Brahmins gone west on mission, Eliot moved to England in 1914. By the late 1930s he was among the most distinguished poets in the language. He was a cultural critic of profound influence. Eliot had not been associated with *Men Without Work*. He had played a prominent role in the 1937 Oxford conference, and it was through this involvement that he became a regular attendee at the Moot. But Eliot was wholly in sympathy with the concerns about the attenuation of social solidarity articulated in *Men Without Work*. Indeed, during the 1920s Eliot had done more than anyone apart from Tawney to develop and disseminate the critique of capitalism set down in Tawney's 1922 lectures. Eliot acknowledged a specific debt to Tawney's social criticism. The depth and consequence of that influence was long obscured by historians' recollections of Eliot's early associations with "reactionary" political and cultural figures, principally Charles Maurras and Ezra Pound. But as Stefan Collini has recently made clear in a series of important essays, Eliot's "later" period—beginning with this engagement with Tawney's critique and his conversion to Anglicanism in 1927—departed from these earlier associations in dramatic fashion.[189] Eliot's 1921 essay, "The Metaphysical Poets," came to be read by a generation of social critics as a counterpart to Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.[190] Both depicted cultural fragmentation in the seventeenth century—what Eliot described as a "dissociation of sensibility"—as the beginning of a period of instability and atomism and incoherence from which a recovery now seemed possible. By the late 1930s, Eliot's politics were readily associated with Christian socialism. Exchanges between Mannheim and Eliot brought the émigré's ideas into conversation with the critique of capitalism Tawney had set down in the 1920s.

The disagreements between Mannheim and Eliot were numerous and subtle. Mannheim envisaged a distinct intellectual elite meeting in isolation to forge a common program, a consensual formulation of the "minimum sense of decency and moral obligation" which all should be obliged to observe, and then addressing the wider world as a corporate unit. Eliot believed that "clerics" came together not to work toward a common program but to bring their differences into sharper focus. It was "not the business of clerics to agree with each other"; what brought them together was "the fact that they find each other the most profitable people to *disagree* with."[191] Where Mann-

heim "favoured the establishment of a highly organized group committed to collective action," Eliot "thought it more appropriate" that members of the Moot "confined their activities to discussion and informal contacts" with "influential members" of society more broadly.[192] There were echoes here of the disagreements between Tawney and Karl Polanyi a few years earlier.

These arguments over organization and the question of consensus in turn arose from a religious disparity. For Mannheim, clashes between different ideas fell to be resolved by processes of Gestalt "closure." Social groups and classes were held together by shared ontic commitments. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge was a means of discovering those commitments and articulating relationships between one group's commitments and another's. Worldviews were plural, not singular. But that was not to say that all was relative. Mannheim characterized his perspective not as *relativism* but as *relationism*: perspectives were plural, but they were not incommensurable; the task of the sociologist of knowledge was to mediate between different perspectives, to "discover a common denominator for the different perspectives."[193] Having discovered that denominator, moreover, Mannheim's sociologist then stood in a position to arbitrate between different outlooks, to decide which among them was superior. Paradigms were plural, but not all paradigms were made equal: some opened up better perspectives on totality than others. It was natural to ask "which of the various points of view is the best."

> And for this too there is a criterion. As in the case of visual perspective, where certain positions have the advantage of revealing the decisive features of the object, so here pre-eminence is given to that perspective which gives evidence of the greatest comprehensiveness and the greatest fruitfulness.[194]

When Mannheim issued his "challenge to Christian thinkers by a sociologist" in 1940, it was this developing "sociology of knowledge" that he was working with. His proposition was not that Christian perspectives were wrong, it was only that they were partial. And where in the past it had been possible to maintain one Christian standpoint in questions of personal ethics and another in public matters—"to say: 'As long as I am a fairly good Christian in my private life, in my personal relationships, I need not worry too much about the social and political order in which we live' "—that attitude would become "entirely impracticable" in a society that had reached "the stage of planning."[195] From that stage onward, "the organization of the framework of society to a large extent determines what is possible in private relationships."[196] The challenge then was to formulate a "perspective on totality"—encompassing a "minimum sense of decency and obligation," building outward into a conception of culture—around which the "social and political order" could be reconstructed in a fashion that both accommodated and transcended

Christian thinking. In the clash between different such formulations—in deciding which engendered "the greatest comprehensiveness and the greatest fruitfulness"—Mannheim relied on the principles of Gestalt psychology, with which he became familiar through his wife Julia, a psychologist.

It was put to Mannheim in a 1944 discussion at the Moot that it was mistaken to imagine that the clashes between different paradigms or "perspectives on totality" were amenable to human adjudication. It was proposed that we should instead leave that adjudication "in the hands of God."[197] To T. S. Eliot, this proposition represented "something more than a forceful figure of speech." These clashes of ideas and programs of reform, Eliot maintained, took place "between parties each of which can have only a partial justification and see only a partial goal."[198] They had to be litigated with abandon, and they must never be decided conclusively: "Each must fight to win, but for either to triumph would result in atrophy or disaster." The resolution of these clashes, in other words, must be regarded as providential, as a matter of divine prerogative, beyond human control. "The true aim is one which cannot be foreseen or intended: it is just destiny." Culture was not one of Caesar's things.

> [W]hile we can say that there is such a thing as "culture" . . . we cannot make it a direct object of activity. We can only aim at limited ends which we believe contribute to it. Culture might be described as that which cannot be planned, except by God.[199]

Eliot was talking here not of "the culture of the 'cultured' classes and elites" but of culture as a "whole way of life."[200] The former—the culture of the cultured elites and classes—presupposed the vitality of the latter—the more pervasive pattern of habits and norms within which discrete and distinctive group cultures took shape: "there is no 'culture,'" Eliot wrote in 1943, "without 'a culture.'"[201] Culture in this broadest sense, moreover, was inextricably bound up—Eliot believed—with religion. "I spoke at one point," he wrote in his 1948 book *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*, "of the culture of a people as an *incarnation* of its religion; and while I am aware of the temerity of employing such an exalted term, I cannot think of any other which could convey so well the intention to avoid relation on the one hand and identification on the other."[202]

To Eliot, then, Mannheim's sociology of knowledge was animated by a kind of promethean ambition. But there was more to Eliot's objection to Mannheim than affronted piety. To assert control over culture in the manner Mannheim envisaged was a kind of profanity. But it was also potentially damaging to what meager reserves of social spirit still prevailed. It was impious, but it also threatened those precious resources of residual solidarity and cohesion without which even Mannheim admitted no process of cultural recon-

struction could begin. "Generally accepted values," Mannheim wrote in *Diagnosis of Our Time*, were based either on "tacit" or "explicit" consensus.[203] "[I]n the past, custom represented such a tacit consensus"; but this tacit consensus sustained by custom was vanishing; it could "no longer be maintained"; it was too subtle to survive the rigors of mass society. "New methods" or sustaining consensus thus needed to be developed: persuasion, imitation, free discussion, and consciously accepted example would all "play a role."[204] In a "consciously planned" society, "religious and moral recommendations" would "not only lay down some principles," they would also stipulate "a set of concrete patterns of behavior, the image of satisfactory social institutions and a whole world view as a connecting link between them" A "consistent system similar to the Summa of St. Thomas" was what was needed, what the intellectual elite advising the parliamentarians would work to develop.[205]

Mannheim envisaged, in other words, a process of the codification of custom. Eliot found the prospect of an attempt to reduce tacit norms to an explicit code disquieting. To make culture "an object of direct activity" was to risk its "atrophy": the determination deliberately to foster a "common culture"—the synthesis of a set of "religious and moral recommendations" by an intellectual elite; the dissemination of that synthesis in the form of a "system" or "Summa"—risked destroying what tissues of social solidarity had survived the "dissociation of sensibility" and regenerated since. This discussion between Mannheim and Eliot elicited a series of subsequent reflections upon the importance of tacit or informal norms and conventions in holding social groups together. Michael Polanyi—Karl's younger brother, and a sometime Moot participant—drew on these exchanges between Eliot and Mannheim, developing his theories about the salience of tacit knowledge in science.[206] Michael Oakeshott made Michael Polanyi's writings integral to his arguments against rationalism in politics.[207] Eliot's resistance to Mannheim emphasized the subtlety of the non-economic sentiments through which solidarities subsisted in economic modernity. Subsisting in tacit forms, these solidarities resisted reduction to explicit precepts and integration into a "consistent system" of the kind Mannheim envisaged. They had to be handled informally and indirectly. The role of intellectuals in eliciting and articulating these solidarities was limited. In justifying the methods of his own cultural criticism, Eliot was also enumerating the merits of moral economists' approach: by writing about the solidarities discovered in the Potteries and elsewhere as *history*, they maintained an informality and indirectness that avoided the risks Eliot saw in Mannheim's program.

Eliot was a conservative. But in a certain sense so too were the socialists who developed the critique of capitalism reconstructed here. "All decent people are at heart conservatives," Tawney wrote in 1913, "in the sense of desiring

to conserve the human associations, loyalties, affections, pious bonds between man and man which express a man's personality."[208] Social solidarity was attenuated under capitalism, but the best prospect of reform was not to imagine some return to vanished Arcadia or to set about synthesizing new solidarities by tapping into primitive instincts, convoking the kind of dynamics Tawney had abhorred during the war. The best prospect of reform was to take those localized and fragmentary solidarities which had materialized and survived under capitalism—the solidarities which Tawney encountered in the prewar Potteries, which Karl Polanyi experienced in interwar Vienna, which the *Men Without Work* investigators identified in the Rhondda Valley—and build upon them.

4

E. P. Thompson

After 1950 the British economy entered an unprecedented phase of growth. Material living standards had been rising since the 1880s: except in regions beset by unemployment during downturns, real incomes rose consistently for most groups between the 1880s and the 1970s.[1] The 15 years after 1950 were the most acute phase of this expansion. GDP per capita rose by 40 percent between 1950 and 1966.[2] Unemployment was kept at historic lows—seldom exceeding 2%—throughout this period.[3] The distribution of the benefits of this expanding productive power, moreover, was becoming more equitable. By conventional measures the distribution of income and wealth drew nearest absolute equality in Britain during the twentieth century in the early 1970s.[4] Successive generations throughout the twentieth century had reason to expect that their grandchildren's lives would be more comfortable and prosperous than their own.

The critical tradition inaugurated by Tawney in the 1920s was ambivalent about prosperity. What would come to be called affluence in the late 1950s (after the Canadian economist John Kenneth Galbraith's 1958 book *The Affluent Society*) was dubious because it accumulated by virtue of "acquisitiveness": material enrichment served in some sense to accentuate the spiritual impoverishment which had given that sentiment license.[5] John Maynard Keynes made his priorities clear: once the economic problem had been solved, then acquisitiveness could be restored to its rightful place among the baser human motives; first grub, then ethics.[6] For the moral economists this order of priorities was problematic: economics and ethics had to be reconciled immediately. Tawney's own antipathy toward "Mammon" was especially keen, but it was not idiosyncratic: it tapped into a rich vein of social criticism in Britain that ran back at least as far as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle.[7] And yet, even while they scorned the wages of acquisitiveness, critics in this tradition—not least Tawney himself—recognized that pockets of social life which seemed to carry the promise of a reconstructed solidarity had formed in

regions graced by periods of capitalist prosperity. Rochdale was enriched by the growth of the cotton trade in the late eighteenth century. Reconstruction in Red Vienna was financed by taxes levied on financiers who had accumulated wealth under the Habsburgs. The Rhondda Valley—where Temple's *Men Without Work* investigators found forms of solidarity which kept the unemployed from receding into idiocy—had prospered in the coal mining boom of the nineteenth century.

The various ventures in "transcending capitalism" which we examined in the third chapter promised to overcome this ambivalence. Inspired by periods of rising prosperity and stabilizing reform, Durbin and Mannheim argued in their own ways that modernity's characteristic antinomies—between progress and reaction, capitalism and communism, economics and ethics—were now being overcome. Durbin drew on the twentieth-century human sciences to sustain his contention that the overthrow of capitalism was no longer necessary, and that cultivating emergent solidarities was now the key task of reform. Mannheim built upon Anglo-German conservative thought and contemporary sociology in developing his argument that laissez-faire was to yield not to proletarian revolution but to "planning for freedom." Both began from the proposition that capitalism had acquired what Tawney in 1950 called a "slightly less unsocial nature" than had earlier seemed conceivable. We have seen that the response to Mannheim's new synthesis was unreceptive. Durbin's ideas repackaged as "Croslandism" came to be repudiated by E. P. Thompson with comparable resolve, marginalized in favor of new restatements and reformulations of the critique Tawney had set down in the 1920s, for reasons that this chapter will make clear.

Tawney's history of capitalism pictured a precipitous rupture in the seventeenth century, when economics and ethics were dramatically torn asunder. But as we saw in the first chapter in drawing this contrast between the medieval and the modern, Tawney was dramatizing the contemporary disparity between the East End of London and the industrial towns of the north of England. The solidarities he sought to develop were not buried in the documentary record of social life in Elizabethan England; they were legible in everyday life in the Potteries. Karl Polanyi's history of capitalism brought the historical drama and the contemporary moment into closer alignment, demonstrating that medieval moral scruples had survived into the early nineteenth century and arguing that in the moment of their final abrogation by the political economy of Malthus, Ricardo, and Bentham, they had in fact taken new form in a "countermovement" against capitalist rationalization. The foremost postwar exponent of this critical tradition was E. P. Thompson. Picking up where Karl Polanyi had left off, Thompson sought new ways of describing these latent possibilities, these emergent forms of solidarity *under* capitalism,

in terms both historically grounded and commensurate with life in late twentieth-century Britain.

Romantics and Revolutionaries

By his father's estimation, E. P. Thompson "entered" the 1940s in "inherited danger" of becoming "a bit of a prig."[8] Edward J. Thompson was a Methodist minister and missionary to India (as *his* father before him had been). He was a lifelong Liberal, a scholar of Indian culture, a friend of Rabindranath Tagore and confidant of Jawaharlal Nehru. E. P. Thompson described his father as "a courier between cultures who wore the authorised livery of neither"—a perennial outsider.[9] His mother Theo—whom his father met while on leave in Jerusalem in 1918, where she was teaching French and Arabic in an orphanage—was the child of American missionaries to Syria. His elder brother Frank was gregarious, high-minded, generous, and intellectually brilliant. "Palmer," as E. P. was known until early adulthood, was willful, idle, and inarticulate. He was a "sea-lawyer" prone to making words bear his own particular meanings, given to grammatical infelicity—sore points in "a family of writers."[10] He had strengths of his own—he was intelligent, physically adroit, with an actor's presence (in 1940, before he had resolved to become a writer, his mother was encouraging him to apply to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art).[11] But his brother's gifts were held in higher esteem at home; their mother made no secret of her favoritism.[12] Frank went to Winchester, where he excelled in classics and mastered languages with ease. Edward went to Kingswood School in Bath, a Methodist institution where his father had gone before him, dour and philistine by comparison. (A friend rendered Edward "Hebraic" against his brother's aura of "sweetness and light.") Edward emerged from Kingswood "saturated with moral earnestness."[13]

Frank Thompson joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in March 1939 in his first year at New College, Oxford. For Frank, communism was an adventure. Before joining the party he had thought of entering the Anglican priesthood (Anglo-Catholicism held particular appeal for him).[14] After joining the party he enlisted in the army, and when the party (in disarray after the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the Soviet invasions of Poland and Finland) declared the conflict an imperialist struggle and made pacifism the party line, he ignored this dogma. Frank Thompson was undoctrinaire. He observed that communism appealed to two psychological types—the "uncontrolled romantic" and the "cold-blooded theorist," and regarded himself as the former.[15] He was "more inclined to love than analyse."[16] He was won over as much by affection for the writer Iris Murdoch—who became his girlfriend, and who was herself an ardent communist by this time—as by conviction in ideas. He was reckless,

and the course of his younger brother's life was set in part through the abandon with which Frank took to communism during the war.[17] He was recruited to work for the Special Operations Executive, and sent to North Africa and then eastern Europe to do dangerous work fomenting resistance to fascism. He was killed in Bulgaria in 1944, shot in a ditch alongside local partisans with a copy of Catullus and a Roman coin in his pockets. The circumstances surrounding his death became conjectural, confused by proto-Cold War posturing: British authorities grew reluctant to implicate their agents in pro-communist activity; Soviet authorities were slow to acknowledge foreign involvement in anti-fascist struggle in the Balkans.[18]

When E. P. Thompson joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1940 he was 17 years old, still a student at Kingswood.[19] These were good years for the party. Membership would swell to more than 50,000 in 1942, and the party won two seats in the House of Commons in the general election of 1945.[20] Like his brother, and like many of those who joined the party during this period, particularly among the Thompsons' contemporaries at Oxford and Cambridge, Thompson was inspired to join the movement in large part by anti-fascism. E. P. Thompson was no "cold-blooded theorist," but at the same time there was more than "uncontrolled romantic[ism]" to his early communism. In 1940 he was "electrified" by an essay on the Levellers by Christopher Hill.[21] At Cambridge he became involved with the party-affiliated literary journal *Our Time*, whose class rhetoric Frank thought ill-judged: "It is a mistake to hate people because of their class," he wrote to his brother after reading an issue.[22] Edward would later praise his brother's lack of dogmatism. But at the time he was more critical: at Winchester, E. P. wrote in 1945, his brother had assimilated a "rather easy cynical philosophy," encompassing a "lazy all-embracing humanism"; Frank's inclination "to love" rather than "to analyse" risked adultering communist doctrine "to the point of glossing it over."[23]

At Marxism's core by the middle of the twentieth century was the "economist" version of Marx and Engels's analytical method, historical materialism, expounded by the leadership of the Soviet Union—by Lenin and then by Stalin, first and foremost.[24] Man's consciousness, Marx had written, was determined by his social being: ideas were glosses on harder economic realities: the "base" of relations between different factors of production determined the social "superstructure" characteristic of a given historical moment. If communism meant historical materialism as interpreted by Stalin, Frank Thompson's Winchester "humanism" was an empty creed. But things were not so simple. The Marxism "available" in England "as we entered the Forties," Thompson would later write, was "more complex than is often supposed."[25] British Marxists in this moment did not hold to the dogma of the priority of

the economic consistently. They harbored a deep-seated reverence for prevailing traditions of popular struggle, traditions of dubious relevance in Marxist analysis.

The leading British Marxists of the 1930s were a group of scientists arguing on Marx's authority for a new understanding of the nature of scientific research as a practical, problem-solving affair of which the state should take charge. The Soviet delegation to a 1931 conference on the history of science had scorned the contemporary supposition that scientific advance was the achievement of other-worldly minds: Newton's physics, they argued, were inconceivable but for Newton's acquaintance with the practical economic needs of seventeenth-century Britain.[26] Men like the physicist P.M.S. Blackett and biochemist (and sinologist) Joseph Needham began rewriting the history of science as an exercise in practicality, emphasizing the service of specific economic needs, the involvement of craftsmen, and the importance of technique.[27] More influentially, the chemist J. D. Bernal began to argue that this practical activity should be more carefully *applied* toward contemporary economic and social needs. Scientists had cultivated an aloofness from affairs of industry and state, but that attitude should now yield—Bernal argued—to a determination to direct their energies to the solution of contemporary technical problems.[28] The state should assume a role in coordinating those activities, putting scientists to work in priority areas. At the beginning of the 1930s science had been seen as a cerebral, disinterested pursuit. By that decade's end, it had come to be seen as a practical affair in the direction of which the state should take a close interest. All this in virtue of the Marxist dogma that ideas were the product of economic relations.[29]

Alongside "the fantasies of Bernal," British Marxism in the late 1930s also encompassed ""he rhymes of [Stephen] Spender."[30] During the 1920s and early 1930s, communism had remained hostile to non-communist progressive parties, which were attacked as "social fascist." Leninist Marxism, with its rigid version of historical materialism, was the one true faith. But in 1934 the Comintern—the umbrella organization founded in 1919 to help the Soviets control their satellites, sometimes known as the Third International—had reversed this policy and begun trying to make common cause with all anti-fascist parties. This new inclusiveness also introduced communism to people of no formal party-political affiliation, and in this moment prominent cultural figures—not least the poets of "the Auden generation"—aligned themselves with the movement, against fascism.[31] The adventurers of the so-called International Brigade who went to Spain in 1937 and 1938 to fight in the civil war exemplified the idealism and enthusiasm of these fellow travelers.[32] Auden's poem, "Spain," was one of their anthems. There was little concern among this cohort with matters of dogma. But in the period of the Popular Front there

was likewise little concern among the doctrinaire to set the fellow travelers straight. We saw in the last chapter that Polanyi ventured a new interpretation of Marxism grounded in the unpublished early works and drawing on the writings of Georg Lukacs. But we also saw that his efforts ended in failure. There is no evidence to suggest that his innovations attracted any notice in CPGB circles.[33] It was doctrinal lassitude—rather than doctrinal sophistication—which made British Marxism in the early 1940s complex enough to accommodate interests in culture and consciousness alongside analysis of economic relations.

E. P. Thompson became a communist, then, at a moment when "uncontrolled romantics" and "cold-blooded theorists" intermingled in a movement galvanized by the enmity of fascism. Once that moment passed, with the onset of the Cold War, these two elements separated. What Frank Thompson had called the "New Thinking" hardened. Sentimental reverence for "Englishness" and the traditions and customs in which it subsisted was undiminished by the war's end, as was the conscientious idealism which moved Frank Thompson to write from Bulgaria in December 1943 about a "spirit abroad in Europe," "finer and braver than anything this tired continent has known for centuries."[34] But throughout the 1940s Marxism became less and less congenial to such sentiments. In A. L. Morton's *A People's History of England* (1938), cultural forces—religion, custom, moral sentiment—were made more consequential than orthodox historical materialism admitted.[35] Jack Lindsay and Edgell Rickword's *A Handbook of Freedom* (1939) drew even more liberally on "bourgeois" authorities and sources in constructing a tradition of democratic struggle as a precursor to communism.[36] The autodidact Christopher Caudwell in *Illusion and Reality* (1937) and *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938) created a body of work that Thompson himself would later read as "a polemic against mechanical materialism" of the kind the Comintern and its affiliates expounded.[37] But after 1945 these several essays came to be derided as exercises in "bourgeois eclecticism."[38]

Stalinism

These developments in British Marxism through the mid-1940s—when the defeat of fascism eroded the basis upon which the CPGB and other progressive elements had made common cause—are well-illustrated in the career of the economist Maurice Dobb. Dobb was university lecturer in economics at the University of Cambridge and a fellow of Trinity College. He joined the CPGB in 1922. (Before taking up his appointment at Trinity he wrote to his prospective colleague, Dennis Robertson, disclosing his communism. Robertson replied that there would be no problem provided Dobb undertook "to

give us a fortnight's notice before blowing up the chapel.")[39] Dobb had been as dexterous as anyone in the 1920s and 1930s in combining Marxism with other idioms.[40] Indeed, he had become a forthright apologist for the independence of communist intellectuals and had been criticized for that in the party press.[41] Dobb's own innovations involved combining Marxist political economy with the analytical methods of the "neo-classical" economics developed by Alfred Marshall and his successors in Cambridge. He wagered that Marx's macroeconomic conjecture about how capitalism worked system-wide—approached as the culmination of a development in political economy initiated by Adam Smith and continued by David Ricardo—could be complemented by microeconomic modeling pioneered in the so-called marginalist revolution in economic thought. Instead of a stark choice between historical or institutional methods and scientific methods in economics, Dobb saw possible combinations of the two.[42]

In assimilating institutionalist perspectives, Dobb had challenged the dogma of the priority of productive relations. In his 1926 book *Capitalist Enterprise*, Dobb saw economic questions as inextricable from their wider social contexts: "the problems of our social world" could not be approached in economic terms alone, "seldom consist[ing] exclusively of actions and motives susceptible of money measure," and were characterized instead by "a complex texture in which economic and other factors are entwined."[43] By the mid-1940s, however, economic factors separated from social factors in Dobb's mind. In his 1946 book, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, and in his contributions to the Communist Party Historians Group formed in the same year, Dobb became uncompromising in his insistence that economic factors took analytical precedence. Dobb's castigation by the CPGB's ideological enforcers for "bourgeois" tendencies, which became particularly vituperative after his 1932 pamphlet *On Marxism Today*, eventually had the desired effect.[44]

Studies in the Development of Capitalism, in turn, straightened out many of Dobb's comrades. For the Communist Party Historians Group, *Studies* was seminal—moderating and for a time marginalizing bourgeois tendencies. Dobb's book "demonstrated in a most striking way"—the medieval historian Rodney Hilton wrote—"the superiority of the Marxist approach to historical problems."[45] Following Dobb's example enabled historians to style themselves as "scientific" in approach—repudiating the eclecticism of *A People's History*; associating themselves with the scientists who had been Marxism's foremost exponents in Britain during the 1930s.[46] The protracted discussion of the merits and drawbacks of Morton's *People's History* could now be truncated, Christopher Hill believed, "simply [by] telling [Morton] to read [*Studies*] and rewrite accordingly."[47] Meetings of the Historians' Group in the late 1940s

would begin with Dobb furnishing the economic context within which a given period or issue arose for discussion.[48] By the late 1940s the Communist Party of Great Britain had reverted to rigid Stalinist orthodoxy. Truants and recidivists were eagerly pursued.[49] This "economist" turn through which Dobb led the communist historians—with the wider hardening of the "New Thinking" of which it formed part—separated the two elements of anti-capitalist revolt that had intermingled in the moment of the Popular Front into stark alternatives. Romanticism or revolution: that seemed to be Thompson's choice.

Seeing his choice in those terms, Thompson chose revolution. But was the choice really so stark? The hardening of Stalinist orthodoxy during the 1940s showered scorn on the moral sentiments that had inspired anti-fascism. Like Marx angrily annotating the works of Henry Maine late in his life, Marxists in 1940s Britain argued that the "mass of influences" which Maine had called "moral" were "derived" and "secondary."[50] "The economical before all else" became their slogan.[51] But even when this "economist" zeal reached its most fervent pitch, the advertence to the "economical before all else" was tempered by affection for culture, by a residual sense that traditions of popular struggle weighed more heavily on the minds of the British people than the logic of an analytical method.

This affection for culture was in part an exigency of the cultural Cold War. The Soviet Union early recognized the ideological threat posed by the vernacular appeal of American popular culture. In 1946, at the behest of Andre Zhdanov, the Russian authorities set about discriminating between "good" and "best" in Russian culture, attacking bourgeois tendencies in writers like Anna Akhmatova and heaping patriotic expectation upon composers like Dmitri Shostakovich. "Zhdanovism" came to Britain in 1947, when the CPGB established a National Cultural Council to coordinate the critique of the "slaughterhouse culture" of the United States. In 1949 the critic Christopher Caudwell would be held to posthumous account for the heterodoxy of his interwar writings.[52] Annual conferences convened under titles like "the American threat" heard earnest disquisitions on the pernicious influence of Hollywood and Madison Avenue.[53] Discriminations remained the preserve of local officialdom: Zhdanovism was called "Emilism" in Britain, after CPGB functionary Emile Burns. In NCC forums the formal hierarchy of interests in which culture was strictly subordinate to economics proved difficult to preserve. Platforms erected for the condemnation of American imperialism were soon coopted for the celebration of British culture—and particularly those aspects of British culture concerned with popular anti-capitalism. Delegates who arrived at conferences anticipating tedious, defensive denunciations of "coca-colonisation" heard tributes to vernacular tradition.[54]

The heterodoxy which the return to Stalin's economism during the 1940s was supposed to stamp out was thus smuggled back in under the cover of Emilism. In January 1951 this practice found official sanction in the new program adopted by the CPGB's executive committee, "The British Road to Socialism." While party policy would still be based on "the impregnable foundation of Marxist theory" ("the science embodying the experiences of the international working class, as developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin"), the Party was also heir—this document averred—to "the traditions of generations of struggle of the democratic and working class movement in Britain."[55] Many of those who had followed Dobb back to economist orthodoxy now began to think again. At the NCC's conference in April 1951 Rodney Hilton, representing the CPHG, argued for "the need to revive British historical traditions as a weapon in the struggle for national independence."[56] Forthright attempts to reconcile economist or scientific priorities *with* cultural interests became more common over the next few years, with each presented not as alternative but as complementary facets of socialist thinking. In 1953, A. L. Morton wrote that while Marxism was based on the "scientific understanding of the laws of movement of society," it coupled that understanding with the defense and development of "our rich mature humanist tradition"—setting before "peoples of the world" as "real prospects . . . things that to More or Milton were distant visions."[57] The scientific laws of movement vindicated earlier utopian promises, furnishing grounds for confidence and anticipation where previously there had only been wistful inspiration. Both scientific understanding and utopian vision were integral to Marxism in Britain, since both strengthened "the peoples of the world" in the struggle for emancipation.[58]

Not everyone welcomed this development. Eric Hobsbawm argued for a steadfast focus on the economic base.[59] Maurice Dobb fought a rearguard resistance.[60] But it continued apace. Ideas and the traditions in which they lived began to matter again—not as superstructural gloss on the machinations of the mode of production but as salient factors in historical change. Christopher Hill's 1954 essay "The Norman Yoke" was especially provocative.[61] It put the idea of Anglo-Saxon liberties back on the agenda for British Marxists. Prior to the French Revolution, Hill wrote, "the idea of 'Anglo-Saxon liberties,'" "discovered in the woods" before the Norman invasion, had been crucial in animating popular protest. But this "idea" had been jettisoned by socialists in Britain during the nineteenth century. The past from which it emanated was coopted by Edmund Burke for the counterrevolution. Tom Paine and William Godwin convinced British radicals that they could do without that past and the idea of Anglo-Saxon liberties it harbored: "reason" was all the basis radicals needed for their cause. But the failure of Chartism underlined the inadequacy of "the Paine-Godwin line of thought." Its "anti-authoritarian

individualism" tended toward "anarchism," forestalling combination and dissipating anti-capitalist energy. Working people needed a sense of the past and an induction into the idea of Anglo-Saxon liberties before they could become "conscious" of themselves "as a class with a specific function to perform." Marxism, Hill insisted in this 1954 essay, synthesized revolutionary rationality and conservative historicism to get beyond the impasses to which the Paine-Godwin line of thought had brought radicalism in Britain. "By combining Burke's sense of history with Paine's sense of justice," Marxian socialism constituted "an approach to the study of the past and to political action immeasurably superior to any which had preceded it." The scientism or economism of Dobb's *Studies* stood thus moderated by a belief in the continuing power of the idea of Anglo-Saxon liberties.

> Once the role of the working-class movement in modern industrial society has been grasped, nostalgic yearnings for an idealised past give place to a scientific programme of action for building the future out of the present. But even a scientific programme can be sterile if it is not infused with an imaginative spirit like that which saw the enemy as "the French bastard and his banditti."[62]

When British Marxism abandoned the moment of the Popular Front—the moment in which "cold-blooded theorist" and "uncontrolled romantic" had made common cause against fascism—it did so without much conviction. British Marxists kept a weather eye out for means of re-integrating "the idea of 'Anglo-Saxon' liberties" back into a nominally materialist creed. The cultural Cold War provided ample such opportunities. And so by the mid-1950s, orthodox Marxism in Britain—except in especially exacting exponents like Dobb and Hobsbawm—was a tensile, accommodating creed. It was full of loopholes and parochial exceptions through which traditions of popular struggle could still be revered. In "The Norman Yoke," Christopher Hill had looked to William Morris to exemplify the union of "scientific programme" and "imaginative spirit" he envisioned. In works like *News from Nowhere*, Hill averred, "we have a Marxist imagination re-interpreting the age-old dream expressed in the idea of 'Anglo-Saxon liberties.' "[63] By this point E. P. Thompson was the acknowledged authority on Morris in the CPGB: in 1952, caucusing before an NCC conference on Britain's Cultural Heritage, the Communist Party Historians Group resolved to solicit a contribution on Morris from "Cde Thompson."[64] And when it appeared in 1955, Thompson's biography of Morris used Morris's example to the same end as Hill had done in 1953. Thompson made Morris the pioneer of a genre of social criticism which he called "Scientific Utopia."[65]

All of this suggests that even during the phase of more severe doctrinal exactitude in the late 1940s, British Marxism was not a strict discipline. The

impulse "to analyse" could readily be combined with the impulse "to love" in ways that recalled the moment of the Popular Front. The "theorists" were never all that "cold-blooded." There was always a degree of controlled romanticism admitted among Marxist intellectuals. But Thompson's reproof of his brother's "lazy all-embracing humanism"—his insistence upon the need to temper the instinct "to love" with a capacity "to analyse"—pre-dated the stiffening of Stalinist orthodoxy in the mid-1940s. It was not Stalinism itself, in other words, which bid Thompson choose between romanticism and revolution. Stalinism rationalized a temperamental need peculiar to Thompson, his "Hebraic" concern to order and "control" his romanticism. Another contemporary discourse which could meet that psychological need was the critical program of F. R. Leavis.

The *Scrutiny* Movement

The Thompsons were "a family of writers."[66] Edward was a writer before he was an historian: indeed, he never undertook any professional training in history.[67] He came to Cambridge to read history, but after getting his BA in two years, returned on a scholarship for a further year's study in English. In the Communist Party during the 1940s, he was distinguished as a member first and foremost of the Writers' Group, not of the famed Historians' Group.[68] His earliest published writings were essays in literary criticism. Choosing revolutionary socialism over romanticism did not immediately change this. In form and style Thompson's biography of William Morris was less readily recognizable as a work of history than as a work of criticism. Literary criticism was by now a more common medium for the development of Marxist ideas, following the examples set by Leon Trotsky and Georg Lukacs.[69] In the United States, Edmund Wilson and the writers around *Partisan Review* made literary criticism the most influential form of Marxism among intellectuals.[70] And in Britain, where Lukacs was still unknown and where Trotsky's influence was less pronounced than in New York, Christopher Caudwell and A. L. Morton played an equivalent role.[71] None of these was as significant an influence upon Thompson as the criticism of F. R. Leavis.

The so-called *Scrutiny* movement—named after the periodical Leavis published in collaboration with his wife Q. D. Leavis and a number of colleagues—was a complex organ.[72] F. R. Leavis was the son of a local piano retailer. He described his family's background as "entirely typical of the nineteenth-century graph: Unitarian by 1820, radical reformer by 1880, and agnostic pacifist by 1914."[73] He spent his whole career in Cambridge. Through students who went on to become English masters, through *Scrutiny*, and through the manuals and handbooks for teachers which he published with colleagues (including Denys Thompson and L. C. Knights) in the 1930s and

1940s, Leavis shaped a generation of English teachers and cultural critics in Britain. The politics of the *Scrutiny* movement have proven difficult to parse. By general estimation Leavis himself was "too idiosyncratic" to relate to any of the major political groupings.[74] Some have suggested that *Scrutiny* was without politics, or was even "anti-political."[75] But in the 1940s and 1950s a distinct grouping emerged at the margins of the *Scrutiny* movement, outriders of a new kind of radical politics that married Marxist sociology with Leavisite cultural criticism. In 1947 Raymond Williams—a south Wales working-class scholarship boy educated at Jesus College, Cambridge—launched a journal aiming "to unite radical Left politics with Leavisite literary criticism."[76] Richard Hoggart's 1957 book *The Uses of Literacy* helped to give rise to a school of "cultural studies" dedicated to describing the enervating effects of mass culture on radical politics.[77] Stuart Hall's writings for the journals *Universities and Left Review* and *New Left Review* and his later collaborations with Hoggart at the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies were shaped by early engagements with Leavis.[78] A loosely knit grouping centered around these three figures has since attracted the designation "left Leavisism."[79]

Leavis himself was profoundly influenced by Tawney's and Eliot's twin critiques of capitalist rationalization in its effects upon English culture. As Stefan Collini has recognized, Leavis absorbed Tawney's problematic, through Tawney's own works and through T. S. Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility" thesis.[80] It is true—as Chris Hilliard has argued—that across the 1930s and 1940s, the focus of the Scrutineers' criticism would shift from seventeenth-century developments to nineteenth-century social and economic thought. They concentrated on the spread of utilitarianism, a doctrine defined to include everything from Newton's physics to the liberalism of John Stuart Mill. They took an especially close interest in developments in industry and in advertising since the late nineteenth century.[81] This latter concern was part and parcel of a preoccupation with the example and influence of American ideas and practices, anatomized for them in the works of Robert and Helen Lynd and Stuart Chase, readers in turn of the work of Thorstein Veblen.[82] But it is also the case that this chronological reorientation did not alter the basic pattern of the argument with modernity which Leavis and his colleagues and students sustained across three decades, an argument inspired by and encapsulated in Tawney's critique of capitalism and Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility" thesis.[83]

Left Leavisism was sustained by the close association that developed in the 1940s between Leavisite criticism and adult education.[84] Adult education expanded dramatically after 1945, on the strength of increased public funding and growing demand. [85] This was not a simple expansion of the system under which Tawney and Polanyi had worked. Adult education earlier in the twen-

tieth century had mainly meant working men's education. But by the mid-1940s "the constituency of adult education, at least in the humanities, was . . . becoming more middle-class—and more feminine."[86] Behind this demographic shift, in turn, was a growing appetite for "participation in the arts." [87] Middle-class men and women came to tutorial classes not to study the economics and history which had been Polanyi's metier as they had been Tawney's before him, but rather to study literature—expressing the same emergent popular desire for "participation in the arts and education" to which Allen Lane's paperbacks and an expanding BBC were beginning to minister.[88] In the 1930s, literature had been the "Cinderella of the curriculum" at Oxford, whereas "by 1947 it accounted for the largest number of tutorial classes in the Oxford system."[89] Leavis had long cultivated a following in adult education. In 1933 he asked his publisher to send a copy of *Culture and Environment* to Tawney, "being a power in the WEA."[90] But he had little success before this postwar surge of interest in the arts made literature the most popular subject.

Many of those who went to work in adult education during this period were drawn to it by the same sense of moral and political purpose that had informed Tawney and Polanyi earlier. But that sense of purpose did not necessarily carry over unmodified from the teaching of economics and history—Tawney's and Polanyi's undertakings—to the teaching of literature. Leavis's ideas built a bridge between history, economics, and literature. In the early 1930s, Leavis had written that education too "could be a cause" to rival Anglo-Catholic social thought and Marxism for the subscription of writers and critics troubled by the problem of "moral relationships" in modernity.[91] Marxism and Anglo-Catholicism were means of responding to the problems of dissociation or disintegration disclosed in the interwar critique of capitalism. But irrespective of which rubric one read under, there was "an enormous educational job to be done": mass culture was crowding out more edifying forms of literature and taxing powers of discrimination between "good" art and "bad" unbearably.[92] Any fix for the dissociation of sensibility would depend upon some such powers of discrimination, upon the renewal of faculties for ordering and articulating "experience."[93] Leavis's educational program was designed to provide this "training" in "critical awareness."[94] And providing that training in accordance with the *Scrutiny* approach came briefly after 1945 to enjoy a degree of prestige among reformers comparable to that which teaching history and economics had commanded for the previous three decades.

Thompson became lecturer in literature in the extra-mural delegacy of the University of Leeds in 1948. Some adult education tutors became familiar with Leavis after taking up their appointments.[95] Thompson had been taught by an English teacher "strongly influenced" by Leavis at Kingswood, so he

needed little further instruction in Leavisite methods.[96] In his 1949 contribution to a conference on "The American Threat to British Culture," convened by the National Cultural Committee of the CPGB, Thompson opened his own paper by recalling a conversation in America with a New England professor of English lamenting the chances he missed by returning to America too soon after the war. "Boy," Thompson recalled his interlocutor saying, in a conversation about the scarcity of fresh meat in the Middle East, "I could have set up a *chain of slaughterhouses* throughout the Holy Land! My God, I could have *cleaned* up!" "Why do we wince," Leavis and Thompson had asked in *Culture and Environment*, "at the mentality that uses this idiom?"[97] "I did not make this story up,'" Thompson needled his audience, framing the same implicit question.[98] By the early 1950s Thompson was using Leavis's *Culture and Environment* to structure his classes.[99] Nor did this renewed Leavisism countermand Thompson's communism. Indeed the two proved readily compatible, and Thompson had no difficulty pursuing a Leavisite agenda within the doctrinal parameters of an increasingly exacting CPGB. He unearthed proletarian poets and published reviews in quasi-official publications correcting them on their catechism and approving of certain techniques deemed consistent with Marxian epistemology.[100] He developed a critique of the romantics' habit of "default" on or lapse into "disenchantment" with revolutionary movements.[101] And he railed against the influence of American culture in Britain.[102] In each of these pursuits, Thompson could maintain his literary interests (and deploy Leavisite critical approaches) in a manner broadly consistent with Stalinist orthodoxy.

The moment of "left Leavisism" was short-lived. Chris Hilliard has recently explained why.[103] Leavis's ultimate aim was to educate a "responsible minority" to whom the tasks of maintaining literary standards and thereby sustaining culture would fall. But the key figures in left Leavisism—Williams, Hoggart, Thompson, Hall—were interested not in training a minority but in fostering popular self-assertion. The practices and approaches expounded by Leavis and Thompson in *Culture and Environment* were useful in this endeavor. And the zeal of the *Scrutiny* movement helped them to sustain the sense of moral and political purpose associated in adult education with the teaching of economics and history in tutorial classes in literature. They wished to educate a people—not minority culture but popular anti-capitalism was their primary concern. For this reason, attempts explicitly to align a Leavisite program of "training in critical awareness" and "radical left politics" proved transient. But these early encounters with Leavis carried permanent importance for Thompson. Thompson kept returning to the Leavises' works long after left Leavisism had disbanded.[104]

Thompson had become a communist and found a sense of purpose in the fight against fascism. But by 1945, fascism was defeated. To sustain the same

sense of purpose—all the more important now in order to honor his brother Frank's memory—Thompson needed means of redirecting his moral energies. Both the Stalinist and the Leavisist methods of "controlling" romanticism offered them. Stalinism had been an anti-fascist creed during the war. By 1945 it was refocusing its ideological animosity on capitalism. After 1945 it was primarily to Stalinism—albeit in the flexible British permutation described here—that Thompson looked for an ideological orientation. But the latitude which adherents of Stalinist orthodoxy were allowed within the Communist Party of Great Britain enabled Thompson to canvass the Leavisist alternative to which he had been introduced in adolescence. His alignment with Stalinist orthodoxy committed Thompson to a program of state-based collectivism. But, using the latitude allowed British Stalinists to canvass this Leavisist alternative, Thompson developed a critique of individualism—inspired by Leavis and deriving through Leavis from Tawney and Eliot—to complement his commitments to Stalinist anti-capitalism. In 1956, as we shall soon see, Thompson's commitment to authoritarian collectivism would lapse. After 1956, repudiating Stalinism, Thompson fell back on that established anti-utilitarian critique. He found himself back in the predicament which Tawney and Polanyi had confronted before him: abhorring individualism for its moral desolation, but mistrusting collectivist alternatives for their authoritarian tendencies.

Thompson's Stalinism seemingly started him a long way outside the critical tradition Tawney had established in the 1920s. But then, as we saw in the second chapter, there were degrees of antipathy toward collectivism among these critics of capitalism: Polanyi's involvement with the Christian Left proved him more amenable than Tawney had been to techniques of "baptism by the hose." Thompson was less averse still to the imposition of norms and the regimentation of responses. His reconceptualization of crowds as forums in which relatively sophisticated political ideas found expression was one indication of this.[105] But, like Polanyi before him, Thompson arrived at length at the same problem in social theory which Tawney had set down a generation earlier—a conviction that introducing dynamics of coordination and cooperation characteristic of twentieth-century forms of collectivism created more problems than it solved. The social problem which Tawney framed in the 1920s had been reformulated in the 1930s in response to the rise of fascism. By the mid-1950s it had reverted to its initial terms.

Socialist Humanism

Joseph Stalin died in 1953. In February 1956 his successor Nikita Khrushchev made Stalin's "mistakes" the subject of a "secret" address to the annual party congress. In June 1957 the full text of that address—with its admission that

judicial murder, repression, and abridgement of democratic process had become administrative tools under Stalin—was published in the *Observer*.[106] The official line held that all this was the consequence of the "cult of personality" which had formed around Stalin himself. But among intellectuals associated with the CPGB, the interpretation of Marxism long accepted as "received orthodoxy" now came under closer scrutiny. In July 1956 Thompson and the historian John Saville launched a forum for doctrinal debate.[107] They were reprimanded by the party executive, but they persevered—inspired in part by developments in Poland, where popular protests brought a reformist faction led by Wladyslaw Gomulka to power. In October 1956 the people of Budapest revolted against Soviet rule. In November 1956 Soviet tanks rolled into the city to put down the uprising. Inflamed by the revolt and appalled by the Soviet response, Thompson and Saville risked a breach with the party, convinced that the repression in Budapest put the lie to Khrushchev's apologetics, confirming that the problem was not personal to Stalin but intrinsic to the theory which his successors still extolled.

Thompson went back to his brother Frank's wartime letters to reorient himself. "There is a spirit abroad in Europe," Frank had written at Christmas in 1943, "finer and braver than anything that tired continent has known for centuries."[108] Stalinism had "crabbed and confined this spirit," Thompson wrote in November 1956, after quoting from his brother's letter—that was its "crime."[109] Since 1944, Thompson had been determined to temper the impulse "to love" that ran so strong among England's wartime communists with a propensity "to analyse." But for all his criticism of his brother's "lazy, all-embracing humanism," for all his own earnest refusal to "gloss over" the particulars of Marxian doctrine, the impulse "to love" ran deep in Thompson, too: he wanted to moderate that impulse with a more rigorous approach, but not at the cost of repudiating it entirely. And that—he came to believe—was what Stalinism had done. In its ardor for reform and its derision of "class morality," Stalinism dishonored the instinct Thompson thought integral to communism. The tanks on the streets of Budapest—crushing a people expressing the "spirit" his brother had died fomenting a decade or so earlier—made that plain.

The people of Warsaw and of Budapest had "written their critique of Stalinism upon their streets and squares."[110] Thompson formulated his own critique in essays in November 1956 and July 1957.[111] Repudiating Stalinism did not mean abandoning communism. "Stalinism," Thompson now averred, "has never been the same thing as the world Communist movement."[112] The "false consciousness" engendered in schoolchildren, novel-readers, and "rank-and-file party members" by Stalinist propaganda had never become definitive. It was "always encroaching," but it had "always [been] resisted by the people's

traditions, their experiences in life."[113] These people's traditions were not of themselves enough to constitute a communist movement. Relieved of the stultifying effects of Stalinism, those traditions and experiences needed resituation within a restored framework of communist theory. In other words, Thompson remained true to his communist convictions (reserving particular scorn for ex-Stalinists who became anti-communists), and to his belief that there had to be *more* to communism than his brother's uninterpreted impulse "to love." Stalinist analysis was misconceived, but it was still necessary "to analyse." "*How* are we to thrust that love into the context of politics and power?"; "*how* [was] this 'love' to be expressed in human relations and embodied in history?"—those were the questions.[114] In his critique of Stalinism, Thompson returned to his earlier uncertainty about how these two impulses could be combined. That meant returning—with newfound disdain for Stalinist interpretations, with a fresh pair of eyes—to the writings of Karl Marx.[115]

The pivotal issue for Thompson was Stalinism's conception of human nature. In Stalinism, economic interests, configured as class interests, became "the only 'real' sources of human motivation."[116] In its attack upon capitalism, Stalinism accepted the very premise that capitalism's British critics since Tawney in the 1920s had been challenging. "The injury that advanced capitalism did, and that market society did," Thompson would say in a 1976 interview, reiterating that earlier critique, "was to define human relations primarily as economic."[117] Stalinism—Thompson now saw—induced a similar myopia, a comparable form of "economic automatism":

> The Stalinist is fixated by Pavlov's dogs: if a bell was rung, they salivated. If an economic crisis comes the people will salivate good "Marxist-Leninist" belief. But Roundhead, Leveller, and Cavalier, Chartist and Anti-Corn Law Leaguer, were not dogs; they did not salivate their creeds in response to economic stimuli; they loved and hated, argued, thought, and made moral choices.[118]

This notion of human beings as "economic automata" was associated for Thompson with a denial or belittling of "conscious human agency in the making of history," with the representation of men and women as "ants, adjusting their society to upheavals in the terrain." "But men," Thompson countered, "make their own history":

> [T]hey are part agents, part victims: it is precisely the element of agency which distinguishes them from the beasts, which is the *human* part of man, and which it is the business of our consciousness to increase.[119]

In Stalin's hands, Marx's analytical method of historical materialism denied that what men and women thought of as "moral choices" made any difference.

"Moral authority" was removed from "the individual conscience" and reserved for "the leadership of the Party."[120] This "intensity of self-abnegation" and "sense of acting as the instrument of historical necessity" and "intense loyalty to the Party" were comprehensible responses to the "conditions of revolutionary struggle" which many communists had endured—conditions it was easy to overlook "in our parochial island."[121] Thompson had heard about these conditions from the Bulgarian partisans with whom his brother fought, the police beatings, the infiltration of agents, "indescribable torture." Communists *were*—by and large, by virtue of these experiences, as Stalin had said—"people of a peculiar cut."[122] But Stalinism had turned "virtues"—"the emphasis on hard, completely selfless, unbreakable, steel-like qualities"—"into instruments of destruction."[123] Practicing this "hardness" meant dismissing popular self-assertion without the sanction of the party as an impertinence—to be dealt with as ruthlessly as any perceived threat to "the dictatorship of the proletariat."[124]

The "Road to Socialism in Great Britain" was supposed to bring "the impregnable foundation of Marxist theory" and "the traditions of generations of struggle of the democratic and working class movement in Britain" into alignment. But who could now credit Stalinist assertions of respect for vernacular traditions? A hundred years earlier—as Thompson reminded readers, quoting the revolutionary leader Kossuth—British radicals showed solidarity with popular revolt against the Habsburgs in Hungary. And now? On October 25, the *Daily Worker* (the CPGB's newsheet) urged its readers to "send telegrams to the Hungarian Government condemning counter-revolutionary violence [i.e., the popular uprisings] and standing by the Government and people."[125] Thompson fulminated:

> No, no, no, no! This is not work for us. Shame on this indecent haste, shame on this breach of solidarity, shame on those who wished to rush in the moral armaments of the British working class behind Gero's secret police, to destroy these students and young workers in the streets![126]

Britain's radical traditions mandated solidarity with the Budapest uprising. The undertakings of the 1951 program proved a sham. Empty promises like those made in 1951 concealed "a colossal contempt, a vast all-embracing attitude of patronage towards working men and women."

> This is the political expression of Stalinism: its veiled hostility to democratic initiatives in every form. Man is an appendage of the "instruments of production": the creative man at the heart of labour from whom all instruments of production, all politics, all institutions flow, has escaped from the categories of Stalinist ideology.[127]

There could be no reconciliation of the impulse "to love" and the impulse "to analyse" under Stalinism.

Thompson's allusions to Kossuth and British solidarity with Hungary's 1848 illustrates that something older than memories of the anti-fascist spirit of the Second World War was stirring in 1956. In the same week as the repression in Budapest, British paratroopers landed on the Sinai peninsula, intervening in a conflict between Israel and Egypt.[128] Anthony Eden's Conservative government insisted that British and French troops were there to resolve the conflict and restore order. But it soon emerged that the landings were part of a plot between Israel, France, and Britain to wrest control of the Suez canal (nationalized months earlier) back from the Egyptians. British ministers had calculated that the United States—which was not privy to the plan—would acquiesce. They were wrong, and indeed Dwight Eisenhower forced them to withdraw: the crisis set off a run on sterling; the British needed American loans to avert a currency collapse; Eisenhower made loans conditional upon the abandonment of the military action. The juxtaposition between events in Budapest and this intervention in Egypt made Britain seem to many to be guilty of the same kind of imperialist aggression the Soviets visited upon Hungary. Instead of offering comfort to the Hungarian people in their anti-imperialist struggle, Britain was busy securing its interests further east. "The Prime Minister [Anthony Eden] has told us that 50 million tons of British shipping are at stake in his dispute with President Nasser," the journalist Malcolm Muggeridge wrote at the time. "What is at stake in Central Europe are rather more than 50 million souls."[129] The debacle at Suez is generally taken to mark the end of the British Empire. But it also served to revive a politics of conscience in Britain—a "middle-class humanitarian and Christian-missionary conscience," in Thompson's words—which had lain dormant since the end of the Second World War.[130]

Nor was November 1956 the only stimulus to this revival of liberal humanitarianism in Britain. In May 1957 the British successfully tested a hydrogen bomb off a remote Pacific island. Thermonuclear weapons were many times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Popular demonstrations calling for unilateral nuclear disarmament were soon fomenting. A popular movement—the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament—was convened by an assembly of familiar progressive types. The Anglican cleric John Collins chaired; an organizer from the Aneurin Bevan's left wing of the Labour Party acted as secretary; former members of Richard Acland's Common Wealth Party were among the participants. At a February 1958 meeting the populist writer and broadcaster J. B. Priestley and the historian A.J. P. Taylor addressed a crowd larger, more diverse, and much more willful than organizers anticipated. The sobriety and restraint of the

organizers—who thought that the best way to advance their cause was to mobilize a detachment of "the Establishment" in private to make a few well-placed calls—was confounded by the energy of the meeting.[131] Collins's organizing committee had trouble keeping anti-nuclear protests constitutional. Elements calling for "direct action" were not readily coopted.[132] From Easter 1958, marches between London's Trafalgar Square and the Aldermaston nuclear reactor in Berkshire attracted immense crowds—100,000 in April 1960.[133] In Thompson's estimation the Aldermaston demonstrations manifest a "spirit of antagonism" to the "myopia" of "orthodox" politics.[134] The "cock crow of the Hungarian uprising" and the "offence of the bomb against human personality" had revived honorable traditions of popular protest in Britain—the modes of political expression nominally honored in "The British Road to Socialism" but contemptuously crushed by Stalinist forces where they had erupted in Budapest, an action in which the CPGB had acquiesced.[135]

This resurgent politics of conscience became integral to Thompson's critique of Stalinism. And in the midst of this welling up of popular political energies, newly skeptical toward the "received orthodoxy" of Stalinism, Thompson began to see life in politics in the late 1940s and early 1950s in a new light. He began to think about how this "middle-class humanitarian and Christian-missionary conscience" now finding expression in the Aldermaston marches had been occupied during the intervening period. He realized in retrospect that a "sickening jerk of deceleration" in the pace of social reform had set in after 1948.

> "History," so pliant to the heroic will in 1943 and 1944, seemed to congeal in an instant into two monstrous antagonistic structures, each of which allowed only the smallest latitude of movement within its operative realm.[136]

In this light Thompson found new ways of rationalizing the domesticity and political apathy into which many people's lives had settled at the end of the "Second Thirty Years' War." This was a period in which "humanist" values had found no outlet in "active social life." To save these values from decay they had been preserved in a "deep-freeze of mysticism": "within Christian myth," symbols had been found "unpolluted by the language of power." It had seemed to many people that "it was within traditional institutions and Christian doctrine that the true values of love and of community had been conserved." And it was true "to a certain degree" that these values could only have been "saved from decay" by such means during this period.[137] Thompson would come to see his own allegiance to Stalinism during these years as a means of giving suppressed humanist values sublimated expression.[138]

Stalin's conception of the human was not Marx's conception of the human: this was the central thrust of Thompson's argument. We saw in the second

chapter that Marx's early writings could sustain humanist readings, substantiating a conception of human personality commensurate with the ideas R. H. Tawney derived from the theology of the Incarnation. But Thompson's socialist humanism was not at first informed by these early writings. Forgotten no sooner than they had been discovered in *Christianity and Social Revolution* and the pages of the *New Statesman*, the early works collected in the Leipzig edition in 1932 were effectively unknown to British communists by the mid-1950s. Thompson had gleaned what he needed to sustain his humanist reading from the *Theses on Feuerbach*, from *Capital*, and from various of Marx's collaborations with Engels. He admitted that isolated passages in Marx and Engels *could* be read as warrant for Stalinist doctrine. "But implicit within their historical method, explicit in their own moral evaluations, there is a total rejection of such nihilism."[139] "Stalinist ideology, which reduces the moral consciousness to class relativism, or to Pavlovian behaviourism, forgets the creative spark without which man would not be man."[140] Marx and Engels showed no such amnesia. But in all this Thompson read Marx and Engels as *consistent* with a humanist orientation, rather than as progenitive of such an orientation. (Karl Polanyi and the Christian Left, as we have seen, had found it hard enough to extract a conception of "human personality" out of the more explicitly "humanist" early writings. Thompson was working initially without the benefit of those documents.) Although his "socialist humanism" was nominally a Marxist doctrine, its more direct inspiration was the "Marxist imagination" of William Morris. At this point it was still—for Thompson—in Morris's "discoveries," not in Marx's own early writings, that a "humanist" Marxism took shape.[141] Morris's "discoveries about man's potential moral nature," Thompson insisted, "were not icing on the Marxist gingerbread"; they were "complementary to the discoveries of Marx."[142] And behind Morris stood the old "idea of 'Anglo-Saxon liberties' ": if we return to Christopher Hill's characterization of Morris as a "Marxist imagination re-interpreting the age-old dream expressed in the idea of 'Anglo-Saxon liberties,' " Thompson's "repeated stress" on Morris's "genius as a moralist" represents the infusion of Marxism (now distinct from Stalinism) with older traditions of popular struggle.[143] In supplanting Stalin's "economic automata," Thompson first looked to the figure of the "free-born Englishman."

Over the ensuing three years, Thompson would reformulate his socialist humanism by reinforcing Morris's Marxist imagination and the idea of Anglo-Saxon liberties with the same "notion of the 'fully human' " which Polanyi had extracted from Marx's early writings two decades earlier. When Thompson wrote his first critiques of Stalinism in 1956 and 1957, Marx's early works had still been hard to come by in Britain. When they were "discovered" anew in 1958, they came from Paris—imported in French translation by a French

Canadian studying at Oxford, the moral philosopher Charles Taylor.[144] Taylor was associated with the burgeoning *Universities and Left Review*, the journal that would eventually join forces with Thompson and Saville's *New Reasoner* to found the *New Left Review*. By 1960 the early writings of Marx were well-known in *New Left Review* circles. Thompson was soon conversant in the terms of the Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844, using them to elaborate on his notion of socialist humanism in subsequent essays.[145] In his first attacks upon Stalinism, Thompson's humanism had been formulated by applying Morris's "Scientific Utopia" and the idea of Anglo-Saxon liberties as interpretive glosses to the conventional oeuvre of Marx and Engels. By 1960 Thompson's conception of the human found sharper definition in the "notion of the 'fully human' " intimated in Marx's early works. And that conception of human personality centered a critique of capitalism derived—through Leavis, through Tawney himself—from Tawney's writings in the 1920s.

At this juncture the basis upon which Thompson repudiated Evan Durbin and his intellectual successors among the Labour revisionists becomes clear. Tony Crosland's "gaiety" offended Thompson's "Hebraism."[146] Crosland's openness to American cultural influence stood at odds with Thompson's Leavisist and Emilist parochialism.[147] But above all Thompson rejected the proposition that managerial and welfarist reforms had transcended capitalism. It was true that the Leninist-Stalinist conjecture that socialism would be constructed "upon the debris of a smashed society" was false.[148] The sharp Leninist distinction between "bourgeois revolution" (the transition from feudalism to capitalism) and "proletarian revolution" (the transition from capitalism to socialism) was false.[149] Just as capitalism had taken shape within feudalism, socialism could develop without any abrupt disintegration of capitalism. The "advances of 1942–48 *were* real": "socialist *potential*" had been "enlarged"; "socialist forms, however imperfect, have grown up 'within' capitalism."[150] An equilibrium had developed, an "equilibrium *within* capitalism" which could be "tipped back towards authoritarianism" or "heaved *forward*, by popular pressures of great intensity, to the point where the powers of democracy" ceased to be "countervailing dynamics" holding capitalism in check and became "the active dynamic of society in their own right."[151] Durbin and Crosland's post-capitalist agenda was at best a means of sustaining, and more likely a method of dissipating, the popular pressures which had created this equilibrium. In transcending capitalism, Thompson believed, Durbin and Crosland forfeited the promise of a peaceful transition to socialism on the verge of that prospect's realization. Theirs was a "permanent defensive ideology of defeatism and piecemeal reform."[152] Thompson by contrast sought to precipitate the "heave forward" from democratic supervention of capitalism to socialism. How would that be achieved? By building on the positives already extant

within capitalist society, cultivating solidarities like those Thompson encountered in Halifax more broadly.[153] "To foster the 'societal instincts' and inhibit the acquisitive": this, Thompson now argued, re-describing the program which Tawney and Polanyi before him had expounded, was the essence of revolutionary politics.[154]

Crosland might have argued that the "Durbin-Crosland front on the future of capitalism" was doing the same thing, and working within the same critical tradition—seeking "to foster the 'societal instincts' and inhibit the acquisitive," following on from Tawney in the 1920s—but calling it reform instead of revolution. In the late 1950s when the visiting American sociologist Daniel Bell attended a meeting of the editors of *Universities and Left Review* and reported back to Crosland that these members of the incipient New Left regarded "Croslandism" as their "chief enemy." Crosland was exasperated by the New Left's antipathy toward his ideas. "One should not waste one's time writing books," he wrote in reply to a New Left critic, "for no one reads them."[155] His implication was that his critics were imputing positions to him which he did not hold, making adventitious distinctions between his ideas and their own. But the difference between what Crosland proposed and what Thompson envisaged was real. For Durbin and Crosland after him, utilitarianism was (as Durbin had earlier acknowledged) "bred in the bone." Their ideas were means of making a social order sustained on utilitarian terms "slightly less unsocial."[156] They had no alternative conception of human personality to set against the utilitarian orthodoxy. The revolution Thompson envisaged involved supplanting this utilitarian anthropology with a new "kernel of human relationship"—an objective to be achieved by building on solidarities that had developed "*within* capitalism" but eventuating in a radical departure from that existing dispensation.[157]

In his antipathy toward Crosland's tilt at "transcending capitalism," we can also see how and why Thompson set himself against Mannheim's agenda, rejecting that other claimant to the heritage of Tawney's moral critique of capitalism in the same movement. One way of rendering Thompson's argument with "Croslandism" might be to say that where Durbin and Crosland after him supposed that modifications to social consciousness were enough to solve the social problem, for Thompson it was necessary to reconstitute "social being."[158] To "foster the 'societal' instincts and inhibit the acquisitive" meant more for Thompson than forging stronger fetters for capitalism, making the "beast" "slightly less unsocial" still. It meant working toward replacing the kernel of human relationship around which capitalism had developed—the capitalist mode of production with its "characteristic human relationships" of "exploitation, domination, and acquisitiveness"—with a new "kernel of co-operative productive relationships."[159] There would be cultural

change, but it would take place in tandem with economic revolution. Thompson made similar arguments against the approach developed by Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1960).[160] A near-contemporary of Thompson's at Cambridge, another adult education tutor and sometime left Leavisist, Williams had constructed a "radical tradition" embracing Edmund Burke in the 1790s and George Orwell in the 1940s in a sustained revolt against utilitarianism. Williams's model of long revolution held that in time culture determines social being. On this basis the growth of the anti-utilitarian radical tradition *Culture and Society* reconstructed would eventually undermine the utilitarian orthodoxy, rendering its conceptions of self and society untenable, imposing new meanings on economic life. Williams, in turn, was working at least in part from a template supplied by Karl Mannheim in the other venture in transcending capitalism which we examined alongside Durbin's earlier.[161] Williams's claim "for the primacy of 'cultural history' "—his claim that " 'culture' determines 'social being' "—recalled Mannheim's conception of *Weltanschauungen* as the foundations of social order.[162] In distancing himself from Williams, Thompson was arguably also rejecting this other venture in transcending capitalism.

Like Mannheim's practice of the sociology of knowledge, Williams's construction of a radical tradition knitting a diversity of different thinkers together on the basis of a shared antipathy toward utilitarianism lost in historical specificity and particularity what it gained in scope and reach. In constructing "*The* Tradition"—reconciling romantic and revolutionary in a common revolt against utilitarianism—Williams became "isolated" from "*any* tradition."[163] "To take account of human creativity," Williams wrote in *The Long Revolution*, "the whole received basis of social thinking, its conception of what man in society is, must be deeply revised."[164] "Yes," Thompson replied, "but Marx wrote something of this sort . . . back in the 1840s." And socialists in Poland, Britain, and France were just now turning to those early writings to open up precisely the questions about "what man in society is" that Williams framed.[165] The abstraction of Williams's account represented "a tendency to 'write off' the socialist tradition" as it was actually developing in the here and now.[166] Thompson would make similar complaints against the American sociologist C. Wright Mills, another under Mannheim's influence, and with whose ideas about the social role of intellectuals Thompson was otherwise impressed.[167] Mills dismissed the British New Left's affection for working people as a holdover of a Victorian "labor metaphysic" now thoroughly discredited. Thompson responded that those "links" to working people were crucial to the British intellectuals: they were determined to see themselves not as synthesizing a culture from scratch but as cultivating and developing "nameless solidarities"

like those Tawney had discovered in the Potteries and Thompson got to know in Yorkshire.[168]

Thompson was interested in ideas, but he was interested in them primarily as means of making new solidarities already extant under capitalism more articulate, as the means by which intellectuals could "foster the 'societal instincts' and inhibit the acquisitive." Mannheim, Williams, and Mills to varying degrees intimated that ideas alone could solve the social problem posed by Tawney in the 1920s, the problem of how individualism could be abandoned without recourse to collectivism, the problem upon which radical intellectuals in Britain refocused after 1956. Thompson resisted that suggestion. For Thompson, ideas were only means of making the solidarities he had found in Yorkshire more articulate.

The synergies between Thompson's developing socialist humanism and the critique of capitalism Karl Polanyi had developed out of Tawney's pioneering contribution now come into clearer focus. Polanyi saw the affinity between his own work and Thompson's developing critique immediately. He wrote to his brother Michael in January 1958, referring him to Thompson's July 1957 essay "Socialist Humanism," explaining that he regarded "[his] own position" as "somewhat akin" to Thompson's.[169] Across the next decade Thompson would substantiate the "notion of the 'fully human' " advanced in Marx's writings, making full use of the early works, in order to develop and extend and defend the restatement of Tawney and Polanyi's critique in "Socialist Humanism." If there was a kinship between the conception of human personality which Thompson expounded and those conceptions around which Karl Polanyi had earlier reformulated Tawney's critique, the affinities between Thompson's work and Polanyi's before him would soon grow closer still.

The Making of the English Working Class

In the summer of 1959 a schoolmaster commissioned by the publisher Victor Gollancz to edit a series of historical texts for use among sixth-form students and undergraduates asked John Saville to write about working-class politics in Britain in the nineteenth century.[170] Saville had other commitments, but suggested E. P. Thompson to do the work. *The Making of the English Class* soon "burst the bounds of the series for which it was first commissioned."[171] Published in 1963 and favorably reviewed, reissued in a paperback edition in 1968, *The Making of the English Working Class* was a prodigious success, comparable only to *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* four decades earlier in the range and depth of its influence, putting even Tawney's book in the shade. Thompson became a giant of the English profession, even while eschewing affiliations

with university departments. His influence abroad was perhaps even more profound: Mexican revolutionaries, working classes in Asia, North America, and Africa, craftsmen in modern France, and the rebel slaves of Demerara all had their stories revisited and retold in departments across the world by historians inspired by Thompson's example.[172] *The Making of the English Working Class* was surely the most widely read and most influential work of history published in English during the twentieth century.

How did the book take shape? By 1959 Thompson was no stranger to working-class politics in nineteenth-century Britain. But his major earlier project had concentrated on arguments among intellectuals vying for leadership of the socialist movement in the time of William Morris, H. M. Hyndman, and the Social Democratic Federation. Through his work on Morris, Thompson had become interested in provincial trade union activists far removed from the London intellectuals. Tom Maguire, the autodidact Yorkshire organizer subject of a rich biographical essay by the CPHG eminence Dona Torr, proved particularly captivating.[173] Thompson's wife Dorothy was an historian of Chartism.[174] But for the starting point of *The Making of the English Working Class*, Thompson turned not to late Victorian socialism and trade unionism or to the climacteric of Chartism in the 1840s and 1850s in which Dorothy was expert but rather to "Radical London" in the 1790s. The artisan tradesmen and shopkeepers who founded the London Corresponding Society in 1792 had been regarded within the CPHG as "the first political association in England which consisted largely of working people."[175] Thompson thought "popular Radical" the better term: from its Covent Garden headquarters the LCS reached out to "the coffee-houses, taverns and dissenting churches off Piccadilly, Fleet Street and the Strand, where the self-educated journeyman might rub shoulders with the printer, the shopkeeper, the engraver or the young attorney."[176] Further afield it "touched" the "older working-class communities" among "the waterside workers of Wapping, the silk-weavers of Spitalfields, the old dissenting stronghold of Southwark."[177] Popular movements in London had often lacked "coherence" and "stamina," being "more heterogenous and fluid" in "social and occupational definition" than Midlands or Northern centers. Their susceptibility to "intellectual and 'ideal' motivations" was a compensating virtue.

> New theories, new arguments, have generally first effected a junction with the popular movement in London, and travelled outwards from London to the provincial centres.[178]

The "greater sophistication" of London Radicalism issued from "the need to knit diverse agitations into a common movement." The LCS furnished an

example from which the intellectuals of the New Left in the early 1960s could learn.

But if Thompson was taking his theories and arguments from Radical London, his book "was written in Yorkshire," and was "coloured at times by West Riding sources."[179] The Thompsons had lived in Halifax since 1948, when Thompson had taken up his post in the extramural delegacy of the University of Leeds. As well as primary source material available to him locally, Thompson drew upon discussions with students in his tutorial classes. Thompson had sought work in adult education "because it seemed to be an area in which I would learn something about industrial England, and teach people who would teach me."[180] Since Tawney's epiphany in the Potteries, generations of extramural lecturers had come north with commensurate hopes, expecting to find communities kept close by a keener sense of solidarity than obtained in the south, islands of relative cohesion amidst a broader sea of social atomism. Attention to the texture of social life in the communities from which students came was acute: one contemporary of Thompson's working in North Yorkshire collaborated with his students to produce a 500-page history of the area.[181] The Thompsons took a similar interest in local history, with particular attention—drawing again on Torr's work on the Leeds trade union organizer Tom Maguire—to the forms of socialism that had developed in these northern communities. "Through Dorothy and Edward Thompson there was a living connection to those early days of West Riding socialism," the historian Sheila Rowbotham wrote in 1983, remembering a visit to Halifax as a young woman. "Edward Thompson [told] . . . me about that northern socialism, how for a time preoccupation with changing all forms of human relationships had been central in a working-class movement."[182]

In *The Making of the English Working Class*, the wool and worsted weavers of the West Riding are one of three groups through whom Thompson advances his arguments about the effects of industrialization on working people. By the early 1960s, debate about whether standards of living improved or deteriorated during the Industrial Revolution had been drawn out over decades. In a controversy first stirred by J. L. & B. Hammond's *Labourer* trilogy, "optimists" led by J. H. Clapham argued that increases in real wages across the period 1780–1860 indexed material enrichment, refuting evidence compiled by the Hammonds and later "pessimists" documenting profound proletarian immiseration.[183] In Maurice Dobb's CPHG, the pessimist case was recapitulated on new grounds. Instead of conceding that available statistics indicated improved material outcomes, Eric Hobsbawm and others applied new statistical rigor to challenge the optimist case on narrow economic grounds.[184] There *were* material improvements, but not until late in the day.

The "catastrophist" view articulated in Friedrich Engels's *Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844 was thus upheld.[185] Thompson had no wish to re-litigate this whole argument. He conceded that there had been *some* material improvements. But he insisted with the Hammonds that these improvements had been attended by profound "discontent," and that the "explanation" for this unrest "must be sought outside the sphere of strictly economic conditions."[186] Thompson focused on the formation of an "exploitive relationship" between "working people" and a rising "master-class." And he focused more specifically on one particular characteristic of this exploitive relationship as it obtained in the context of the Industrial Revolution. It was the depersonalized nature of relations between worker and employer that for Thompson accounted for the demoralization of the "working people" during this "classic" phase of industrialization.[187] "[N]o lingering obligations of mutuality—or paternalism or deference, or of the interests of 'the Trade'—are admitted."[188] "There is no whisper of the 'just' price, or of a wage justified in relation to social or moral sanctions, as opposed to the operation of free market forces."[189]

> Antagonism is accepted as intrinsic to the relations of production. Managerial or supervisory functions demand the repression of all attributes except those which further the expropriation of the maximum surplus value from labour. This is the political economy which Marx anatomised in *Das Kapital*. The worker has become an "instrument," or an entry among other items of cost.[190]

To see this relationship looming, it was necessary to look—Thompson insisted—beyond the cotton mills about which the Hammonds had written in *The Village Labourer*. No "complex industrial enterprise" could be conducted on such terms; in the cotton mills, the "new managerial technique" developed by Andrew Ure—forerunner of Frederick Winslow Taylor—was already in operation by 1830.[191] It was among outworkers—field laborers, artisans, and weavers—that the new economic reality was thrown into sharp relief: "Here, as old customs were eroded, and the old paternalism was set aside, the exploitive relationship emerged supreme."[192]

Across three chapters treating field laborers, London artisans and Yorkshire weavers in turn, Thompson chronicled this erosion of "old customs" and supersession of the "old paternalism." For laborers, enclosure of commons involved "a rupture of the traditional integument of village custom and of right" through the "drastic, total imposition" of capitalist conceptions of property. For artisans, cheap unskilled labor flowing into cities from rural areas made the dignity and status of their trades all but impossible to preserve: guild organizations which had regulated trades since Elizabethan times were

dissolved, craftsmen found their income and their status dramatically diminished, leaving them by 1850 "among the most pitiful figures" in Henry Mayhew's London.[193] Weavers in Lancashire who had welcomed the advent of machine looms for the brief "golden age" they brought in the 1790s were by 1810 finding work hard to come by. Laborers driven off the land by enclosure took up weaving for work, and the weavers soon found the currency of their skills debased. Yorkshire—where weavers worked not with cotton but with wool—fared better initially. Wool combers regulated access to their trade more successfully, but by the 1820s they too had been reduced to "indescribable" difficulty by newcomers.[194] In each instance, Thompson argued, it was less the replacement of manpower by machines than surplus labor that occasioned distress. In each particular, Thompson focused less on the depression of wages than on the re-description of workers as "instruments," on their "depersonalisation" into "entries among other items of cost."[195]

In Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, the dissolution of the moral scruples limiting conduct in commerce was a fait accompli by the time when Thompson's unfortunates found their situations deteriorating. The "spiritual blindness" which excused their misery was "not a novelty but the habit of a century."[196] The triumphant formulations of the science of political economy ventured in the 1830s—the reconstruction of men and women "solely as beings who desire to possess wealth," the "abstraction of every other human passion or motive"—were belated consolidations of a pattern of social thought now deeply entrenched. Polanyi as we have seen suggested otherwise. He argued that older moral sentiments affecting economic life had survived intact until this point. He had argued that the rise of capitalism was complete only in the 1830s. The movement to normalize economism had given rise to a spontaneous countermovement advancing redefinitions of human personality and new forms of solidarity to replace what was dissolving. But as we have also seen, Polanyi's interpretative innovations had not been embraced. Tawney's remained the authoritative position in these matters. Thompson's argumentation makes this clear. He took his readers to believe that moral sentiment and customary practice had become irrelevant in economics by the early nineteenth century. He set out to persuade them otherwise.

We saw earlier that Polanyi's venture failed in part because he could not marshal evidence to sustain his arguments. Thompson was more innovative and resourceful in this respect. Examining the conventional sources on agricultural labor, he admitted, it was "possible to suppose that customary sanctions had long lost their force." Better then to look beyond the conventional sources. Most studies (including Polanyi's and Tawney's) had concentrated on the attitudes of paternalists—justices of the peace, magistrates, persons of note. Thompson recreated the scene from a different perspective.

> [I]f one looks at the scene again from the standpoint of the villager, one finds a dense cluster of claims and usages, which stretch from the common to the market-place and which, taken together, made up the economic and cultural universe of the rural poor.[197]

Taking this perspective "from below," new historical realities materialized.[198] Capitalist conceptions of property "had been encroaching" for centuries prior to enclosure, but they had "co-existed" with "self-governing and customary elements" which had "persisted with remarkable vigour in many places."[199] "Customary notions of craftsmanship," "together with vestigial notions of a 'fair' price and a 'just' wage," making "social and moral criteria" central to what would later be reduced to "strictly 'economic' arguments," survived in Thompson's account into the early nineteenth century and in some places into the early twentieth century.[200]

Indeed, even while dissolving some customary practices, capitalism generated other new concentrations of skill and power. "We must always bear in mind," Thompson insisted, "this overlap between the extinction of old skills and the rise of new."

> One after another, as the nineteenth century ran its course, old domestic crafts were displaced in the textile industries—the "shearmen" or "croppers," the hand calico-printers, the hand wool combers, the fustian-cutters. And yet there are contrary instances of laborious and ill-paid domestic tasks, sometimes performed by children, which were transformed by technical innovation into jealously defended crafts.[201]

Card-setting in wool, the work of children in the 1820s, became the work of complex machinery overseen by skilled workmen by the 1850s.[202] What was true of craft industries was also true of communities: if destruction and dissolution was the predominating effect of capitalism on communities, it was also the case that in periods of prosperity brought on by economic reform, new norms and customs and a stronger sense of social solidarity sometimes formed. Thompson was particularly attentive to this process as it had happened in Lancashire and in Yorkshire beginning in the 1790s. In addition to a sense of status and self-respect in their work, the northern weavers through this period developed new "solidarities." Unlike city artisans, the provincial weavers were bound together by a common fate.

> As their way of life, in the better years, had been shared by the community, so their sufferings were those of the whole community; and they were reduced so low that there was no class of unskilled or casual labourers below them against which they had erected economic or social protective walls. This gave a particular moral resonance to their protest . . . they appealed to essential rights and elementary notions of human fellowship.[203]

What this new sense of social solidarity "brought to the early working-class movement" could "scarcely be overestimated."[204]

Thompson's claims about the survival of customary practices and "vestigial notions of a 'fair' price and a 'just' wage" defied the conventional supposition that the rise of capitalism and the attendant dissolution of all these older inhibitions was accomplished during the seventeenth century. It was one thing for Thompson the writer and critic to follow the *Scrutiny* movement in loosening the chronology of Tawney's and Eliot's critiques, applying the "dissociation" thesis to developments in the late nineteenth century. The marks of the *Scrutiny* movement's influence over Thompson are still readily discernible in the pages of *The Making of the English Working Class*—not least in Thompson's reliance on the writings of George Sturt, author of *The Wheelwright's Shop*, which had been a recurrent point of reference for Leavis.[205] But it was another thing entirely for Thompson the social historian to break with the established historiographical position locating the rise of capitalism in the seventeenth century. It is true that this position was under renewed consideration by the late 1950s.[206] But historiographical authority for the proposition that the "traditional social doctrines" Tawney had seen dissolving in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were still inhibiting conduct in economic life in the early nineteenth century was still untenably sparse. Only Karl Polanyi had previously tried to make the argument Thompson developed in *The Making of the English Working Class*. And Polanyi had failed to carry the profession with him.

Was Thompson following Polanyi's lead? Several observers have noticed or alluded to affinities between Thompson's book and Polanyi's.[207] Thompson never cited Polanyi in print. My research has discovered no reference to Polanyi in Thompson's unpublished correspondence, no evidentiary smoking gun demonstrating beyond doubt that Thompson followed Polanyi. But then my research remains necessarily incomplete: most of Thompson's papers remain inaccessible to scholars, under embargo at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. In the absence of irrefutable evidence it remains conceivable that Thompson did make his break with Tawney's orthodox chronology without reference to Polanyi. But my claim is that *The Great Transformation* probably was among Thompson's key sources in writing *The Making of the English Working Class*.

It does seem clear that Thompson developed his own version of the critique of capitalism pioneered by Tawney in the 1920s—a critique, that is, framed around a conception of human personality derived not from sacred but from secular sources—without Polanyi's help. Polanyi immediately recognized their critiques as "somewhat akin," but it is unlikely that Polanyi was among the sources through which Thompson developed the conception of human personality which he used against Stalinism and then against

capitalism. Polanyi's readings with John Macmurray of the early Marx were long forgotten by the mid-1950s. Thompson started out by reading the more conventional oeuvre of the writings of Marx and Engels through the lens of William Morris's utopian imagination. Thompson did soon turn to the early writings of Marx to clarify the conception of the human that he opposed to Stalinist and liberal economism. At that point his path converged with that which Polanyi had traced earlier, but Thompson seems to have reached that point of convergence independently.

Is it possible then that Thompson proceeded from that point to develop a means of validating socialist-humanist meanings of personality in and through historiographical narrative *without* reference to Polanyi? Absent incontrovertible evidence we cannot exclude the possibility. But it seems highly unlikely, particularly once we pay closer attention to the means by which Thompson defended his departures from Tawney's authoritative chronology. The surest indication that Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* was among Thompson's key sources in writing *The Making of the English Working Class* is the characterization that the two books make the Speenhamland system bear. Polanyi had depicted the measure as a last "vain attempt" to forestall the imposition of capitalist logic, justifying his argument that it was not until the early nineteenth century that the rise of capitalism was complete. Polanyi had no evidence to support his interpretations of the motive behind the measure, and could summon little authority for that reading, falling back eventually on something the economist William Cunningham had written half a century earlier. Polanyi's contemporaries were unyielding. But scarcely two decades later Thompson proceeded along precisely the line of argument Polanyi had anticipated: "the final years of the eighteenth century," Thompson wrote, had seen "a last desperate effort" to "reimpose" the customary strictures "against the economy of the free market."[208] Speenhamland was evidence of this: in subsidizing wages by reference to bread prices, the Berkshire JPs were acting out of both necessity and humanity: "when the custom of the market-place was in dissolution, paternalists attempted to evoke it in the scale of relief."[209]

In Thompson's hands, this would become a credible account of the significance of the Speenhamland system. Indeed, since validated by Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class*, this account of the emergence of the system—as the issue of expiring moral scruples limiting conduct in commerce—has stood largely unchallenged.[210] How did Thompson succeed where Polanyi failed? The way was clearer for Thompson to challenge Tawney's authority than it had been for Polanyi earlier, because the long intermission between the rise of capitalism in the seventeenth century and the Industrial Revolution (and with it the formulation of the principles of modern political economy) in the nineteenth century had become puzzling to many

historians during the 1950s.[211] Anomalies were accumulating, setting the preconditions for a paradigm shift in place.[212] But Thompson did not simply reiterate Polanyi's earlier effort. The explanation for Thompson's success where Polanyi had failed is not simply that times had changed. We saw that Polanyi's major shortcoming was his incapacity to produce evidence. But we have also already picked up some sense of how Thompson overcame this difficulty. Polanyi had concentrated on the justices of the peace who conceived of Speenhamland. Thompson adopted "the standpoint of the villager," reimagining the scene from a new vantage point. Like Polanyi before him, Thompson acknowledged that "the old legislation against forestallers and [regraters]" had been "largely repealed or abrogated by the end of the eighteenth century."[213] Like Polanyi, Thompson insisted that the sentiments which those instruments had once enacted "endured with undiminished vigour." [214] Customs and traditions—of the "just wage" and the "fair price"—survived across all walks of economic life: in agriculture; among urban craftsmen; in weaving communities in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Where Polanyi had put his surviving moral considerations into the minds of "old-fashioned JPs" and "Tory paternalists," Thompson discovered them at work among "the people," "in popular tradition," informing and explaining the activities of the "sophisticated" urban "crowd."[215]

Thompson's success where Polanyi had failed was a complex phenomenon. Growing perplexity concerning the separation of capitalism's seventeenth-century rise from the nineteenth-century social disruption of the Industrial Revolution made historians more amenable to new interpretations. Thompson's evidentiary resourcefulness and imaginative boldness opened up new ways of making the argument that the old norms survived. But we should not discount the importance of the simplicity and resonance which Thompson's concept of the moral economy brought to the argument.

To describe the norms and sentiments affecting and limiting conduct in economic life that had fallen into disuse in the seventeenth century, Tawney recalled the mellow rhythms of Elizabethan England. He talked of tradition and custom and lore. Polanyi kept that terminology while trying to project the same limiting qualities intact into an epoch of technological revolution. In both men's work the sense of reverence for a distant past was misleading. What they were trying to describe was not a recoverable past but an emergent present. The power of tradition and custom to stabilize social life in medieval England was the best analogy Tawney could find for the forms of solidarity he had discovered in north-west England, for the forms of life closer than individualism admitted but freer than collectivism allowed he had encountered when he moved to Manchester to teach in Rochdale and Chesterfield and Longton. Polanyi followed Tawney's lead by retaining this terminology even

as he sought to bridge the gap between remote past and quickening present by making dissolution and regeneration simultaneous—in the conjecture of the "double movement."

But in both Tawney's hands and Polanyi's the antique terminology of tradition and custom and convention obscured the modernity of their message. Tawney had faced questions about how a "bridge" between the "two societies" intimated in his books could be built. For Polanyi the problem became acute. What difference did tradition make in the time of Napoleon? Was not the appeal to tradition the instrument of reaction? These are among the questions that informed the historians' incredulous reception of *The Great Transformation*. These were questions Thompson never faced. Inspired in a similar way by the social norms he discovered in Halifax, Thompson perfected their common project by finding new words to articulate what his precursors had been trying to describe. The idea of the moral economy made the tradition and custom and lore which Tawney and after him Polanyi had contemplated less readily dismissed as anachronistic, more obviously relevant to the social and economic problems of the twentieth century. Here was a means of making the dissolution of older non-economic norms and the advent of the new political economy simultaneous, and—more importantly—of synchronizing both processes with the emergence of new conceptions of the human and forms of solidarity. Here was a means, in other words, of challenging orthodox assumptions about men and women as utility-maximizing agents not by recourse to a distant past or appeal to a remote future but in real time.

The discussion Thompson developed had begun as a means of working out precisely how far back from market utopia toward Hobbesian sovereign power twentieth-century politics needed to go. Tawney's instincts had taken him all the way back to the seventeenth century. The "question of moral relationships" which Tawney traced back to the seventeenth century did not really arise for Polanyi until the late eighteenth century. "The watershed lay somewhere around 1780."[216] This made natural theology and Enlightenment thought pivotal where Christian theology had been decisive earlier. But it also made it easier to recognize the means by which in this moment of transformation what Thompson would call the "older moral economy" assumed new forms. Polanyi thus brought the critical tradition Tawney had established a step nearer to finding means of describing the experiences of social solidarity by which its leading exponents had been inspired. The social spirit that obtained in Rochdale and in Red Vienna could be reckoned the regeneration of older solidarities in new forms. Capitalism could be seen as a system within which new kinds of solidarity emerged, in something like the way feudalism had earlier accommodated the rudiments of capitalism. In dissolving older social forms, capitalism brought forth new solidarities.

Thompson has been accused of setting "moral economy" and "political economy" in antinomian relation, of driving the two discourses inexorably apart.[217] But in fact what he devised was a means of bringing an older insistence upon the human meanings implicated in commerce and newer understandings of how commerce works together. "Too often in our histories," Thompson wrote in a 1971 article, after quoting from Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, "we foreshorten the great transitions."

> We leave forestalling and the doctrine of a fair price in the seventeenth century. We take up the story of the free market economy in the nineteenth.[218]

Thompson established that this "great transition" extended over centuries, but he used this new history of capitalism to argue that the transition was inconclusive, and indeed ongoing, and that the advent of the "free market economy" was not nearly so final or definitive as it could be made to seem. The "story of the free market economy" reached back into the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries. But likewise the significance of "forestalling" and the "doctrine of the fair price" and the moral economy of which they formed part extended through the nineteenth century into the present moment.

New Lefts

Thompson's rejuvenation of the moral critique of capitalism drew together a diverse array of sympathetic intellectuals in the late 1950s. It put a provisional framework around the entrepot "New Left"—the movement that yoked together a residual "left Leavisism," the "cultural studies" movement to which that eventually yielded, several distinct permutations of Marxism, and an incipient Christian communitarianism in a brief, fraught period of coordination.[219] This group's journal—the *New Left Review*, formed through the amalgamation of the Oxford-based *Universities and Left Review* and Thompson and Saville's *New Reasoner*—was soon beset by in-fighting. In 1962 dwindling circulation, accumulating debts, and Stuart Hall's resignation as editor brought matters to a head. A new "Team," representing a younger generation, spearheaded by Perry Anderson—an Oxford radical from a wealthy Anglo-Irish background, who materialized as a kind of white knight—took charge.[220] Schooled in philosophy and psychoanalysis and an admirer of contemporary French intellectuals, Anderson and his Team believed that their predecessors had been provincial in their political interests and theoretical orientations.[221] They proposed to develop and disseminate an interpretation of Marxism that stood radically at odds with Thompson's socialist humanism. They argued that the parochialism of English intellectual life had affected the "first New Left,"

inhibiting their politics.[222] They insisted that new theoretical bearings needed to be taken from contemporary debates on the continent.

Anderson regarded attempts informed by structuralism in France to reformulate Marxism as a non-historicist, philosophical system as uniquely promising. The most complete such attempt, Louis Althusser's *Reading Capital*, would be published in 1967.[223] Thompson regarded these efforts with derision. Recasting ideas which Thompson thought essentially historical into an abstract philosophical scheme recalled Stalinist interpretations of historical materialism: to Thompson, this was a recrudescent, " 'closed' Marxism," "alien and schematic" in "manner and matter," "an extraordinarily intellectualized presentation of history" in which class was "clothed" in "anthropomorphic imagery" and frozen in aspic:

> "It"—the bourgeoisie or working class—is supposed to remain the same undivided personality, albeit at different stages of maturity, throughout whole epochs; and the fact that we are discussing different people, with changing traditions, in changing relationships both as between each other and as between themselves and other social groups, becomes forgotten.[224]

Thompson did not dispute the need for a sophisticated theory around which to organize popular anti-capitalism. Indeed, he agreed with Anderson that the English working class "*needs* theory like no other." There *had* been "victories for 'the political economy of the working class' " in "the ferment of 1945." The "capitalist class" had been "almost fought to a standstill," was "held prisoner within its own state machinery." Revolution was impending, unfinished.

> It has got no further because, being pragmatic and hostile to theory [the British working class] does not know and feel its own strength, it has no sense of direction or revolutionary perspective, it tends to fall into moral lethargy, it accepts leaders with capitalist ideas.[225]

Underlining and ministering to the *need* for theory to discipline reformist energy—a capacity "to analyse" to organize the propensity "to love"—had been Thompson's recurrent concern since the early 1940s. But Thompson did not accept that English reformers needed to import theory from Paris. It was true—he admitted—that his own thinking was cast in a peculiarly English "idiom." But no Marxism which could not "at least engage in a dialogue in the English idiom" was likely to get far in England. And was that idiom quite as parochial as this younger generation were wont to suppose? Wasn't the notion of England's intellectual "insularity" at least in "some part" a "Parisian myth"?

What gave these questions urgency in the early 1960s was that frames of reference were now widening to include the world outside of Europe. As

Thompson recognized immediately, the idiom of Paris appealed to Anderson and his cohort because its notionally "universalist" remit transcended global divisions between first, second, and third worlds. France's intellectual life had been shaped by Catholicism: its atheists retained the universal orientation of their theological opposites. The abstract, non-historicist Marxism toward which Althusser was striving was notionally applicable across time and space. Being "intellectualised" so thoroughly as to rid it of any local particularities, Anderson's conception of class could transcend the divisions between global north and south which preoccupied a younger generation. These "arguments within English Marxism" are sometimes approached as though Anderson's charge was simply that Thompson's Marxism was embarrassingly crude.[226] While there was some element of this in Anderson's critique, the more substantive criticism of Thompson's thinking and writing in his "native" English idiom was that it precluded his addressing the questions and problems raised when European or transatlantic frames of references were replaced with global fields of inquiry.[227]

As frames of reference in social and political thought widened to include worlds beyond America and Europe, the emphasis on human personality sustained by capitalism's leading critics in Britain from Tawney through to Thompson came under new scrutiny. Talk of human personality was regarded by many in the developing world as a cynical conceit. "Leave this Europe," wrote the Martinique-born physician Franz Fanon in 1961, agitating for the overthrow of colonial rule in North Africa, "where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all corners of the globe."

> For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience. Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration. . . . That same Europe where they were never done talking of Man, and where they never stopped proclaiming that they were only anxious for the welfare of Man: today we know with what sufferings humanity has paid for every one of their triumphs of the mind.[228]

"Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different." Thompson quoted Fanon at the outset of his long argument with Anderson, flagging his awareness of the gravity of the looming challenge to his ideas.[229] The discourse of the idea of "Anglo-Saxon" liberties and of "free-born Englishmen" came in this context to seem doubly discontinuous with unfolding arguments about colonial oppression and global inequality. In geographical scope they were limited, and in their thematic focus upon "Man" they were conceited.

In 1956, the sense that Britain had become just another imperialist nation—its interference to protect its economic interests in Egypt putting it in the same frame as the Soviets who had just sent tanks into Budapest to crush a popular uprising—had sown disaffection among a younger generation. The antipathies Anderson expressed toward England's intellectual life were a legacy of that moment. But the shock of November 1956 also stirred the dormant "middle-class humanitarian and Christian-missionary conscience" into life. It was in part to the traditions of internationalism and anti-imperialism which that "conscience" had fostered that Thompson appealed in answering Anderson's charge of parochialism. English intellectuals had been enthusiastic internationalists in the 1930s, Thompson argued. Indeed, at times not insularity but an "excess of international preoccupation" had seemed the material "vice": Orwell's "lampoons" against the "deracinee elements of the Thirties" itemised these excesses; accentuating "Englishness" since the late 1930s had been "a 'brake,' a corrective, a control."[230] And yet even with these correctives applied, the British intelligentsia throughout the twentieth century had sustained a vibrant internationalism. The "jingoistic," indifferent, "myopic," and paternalist attitudes which Hyndman, the Webbs, and Ramsay MacDonald had struck toward India played that tradition "false." Among "authentic" expositors "resistance to imperial rule" had been consistent. Labor and communist politicians and intellectuals had made common cause in this connection with the "strong middle-class anti-imperialist tradition" comprising J. A. Hobson, Leonard Woolf, and C. P. Trevelyan—the tradition from which Thompson *pere* hailed.

This tradition of left-liberal anti-imperialism and internationalism in Britain had been a salient force in shaping the "Third World." It had fostered consensus around independence for India in Britain, and in the "interpenetration" of English liberal and socialist ideas and Indian nationalist ideas—a process that Thompson had seen taking place as a boy, when Nehru and Gandhi came to visit his father in their Oxfordshire home, taking breaks between discussions to join the boys at backyard cricket—a "rhetoric of constitutionalism" had found its way into modern Indian discourse. Independence for India had been achieved peacefully. Similar stories could be told about Ghana, Burma, and Ceylon. And if there were as many instances like Angola or Algeria—marred by "bitterest colonial war," "genocide, torture and vicious repression"—it was arguable that "the transfer of powers in India (for Asia) and Ghana (for Africa)" were "events of equal importance for the emergence of the Third World" as any of those other cases.[231] Was Thompson's preoccupation with the idea of Anglo-Saxon liberties and the concept of the free-born Englishman, then, pure parochialism and sheer irrelevance? Or was there some case to be made for the continuing salience of

the English "historical-empirical" tradition in which this "culture of constitutionalism" was brought (out of Roman Law origins) to "maturity" for the Third World?

The emergence of the Third World challenged the critical tradition Tawney had pioneered. It gave rise to the charges of insularity and irrelevance and duplicity leveled by Anderson against Thompson. None of this persuaded Thompson that the forms of solidarity which he had encountered in Halifax—in experiences akin to those in which Tawney in the Potteries, Karl Polanyi in Vienna, and the *Men Without Work* investigators in the Rhondda Valley had found inspiration—were any less important. In fact, Thompson's emphasis upon these experiences became stronger through the years of argument with Anderson. In a 1971 exchange with the Polish émigré Leszek Kolakowski, who belittled Thompson's Marxism on the basis that he had not lived under Stalin, Thompson counterposed to Kolakowski's negative experiences of Stalinism his encounters with the forms of solidarity he was trying to find terms to articulate. In 1947 he had been to Yugoslavia with a group of young British volunteers to help the youth brigades enthused by Tito's rhetoric of public service to build a railroad connecting a remote coal mine with the main network. He had learned there, he explained, that "within the context of certain institutions and culture," men and women "can be conceptualised in terms of 'our' rather than 'my' or 'their.'" In his life and teaching career in Halifax, more importantly, Thompson had come into contact with ways of life which he "would have found it difficult" otherwise to imagine.

> I have learned a great deal from working people in the past, and I hope to continue to do so. I have learned, from particular working people, about values, of solidarity, of mutuality, of scepticism before received ideological "truths," which I would have found it difficult to discover in any other ways, from the given intellectual culture. For the values of *egalité* are not ones which can be thought up, they must be learned through living them.[232]

In Anderson's damning 1968 survey, the "strategic band" of the culture from which fertile new conceptions of self and society were supposed to issue was found to be barren in Britain, sterilized by a "white" intellectual immigration, determined to do their bit to sustain the "leathery individualism" which had made Britain a headquarters of counterrevolution.[233] But for Anderson this strategic band was the university faculties of humanities and social sciences and the metropolitan coteries. Thompson believed that he had found such things—promising, inarticulate new solidarities—on the railroad in Yugoslavia and in the West Riding of Yorkshire. For Thompson it was not to "the Ancient Universities" or "the self-conscious metropolitan coteries" but among the country's more obscure recesses that one should look

for illumination. "Much of the best in our intellectual culture," he wrote in 1965, "has always come . . . from indistinct nether regions."[234]

In the early 1960s as vividly as ever, "events" seemed to many young people "more 'real,' more critical, more urgent" elsewhere, "outside" Britain's "stubborn, tradition-bound, equable island."[235] This relative equanimity legitimated the Parisian myth of English insularity. But this assumed that the relatively equable nature of social and political life in Britain was a drawback. But was that really so, Thompson asked? "[T]he *difference*, the lack of violence," Thompson wrote in 1963, "might this not matter too?"

> Might it not (*sotto sotto voce*) even have some soupcon to offer to the discourse of international socialism? While we strain to catch the idioms of the Third World, of Paris, of Poland, of Milan, might there not be a growing discourse around us, pregnant with possibilities, not only for us but for other peoples?[236]

The challenge was to find ways to make that growing discourse articulate, to elicit and describe the dynamics at work in the Potteries and in Halifax in terms commensurable with contemporary social and political thought. This discourse Thompson judged "pregnant with possibilities" was elusive, "strange"; "we can scarcely interpret it"; it was "an idiom we have ceased to understand."

> It comes from a philistine sub-culture. It is mere English. It has no articulate spokesmen—they are all kneeling in the presence of other, more sophisticated voices.[237]

In other words, what Thompson had to go on were less arguments than "the fruits of experience." To Anderson's charge that the strategic band of the culture from which new forms of sociability emanated was barren, Thompson replied that he had encountered (not in senior common rooms or metropolitan coteries but in England's northern provinces) new solidarities which confounded Anderson's charges. He was not—Thompson hastened to add—aligning himself with the self-conscious anti-rationalism of the student radicals, who had taken to "humbl[ing] themselves before the splendour of a second barbarism" as "masses of illiterate peasants from the most backward parts of the world" populated a new proletariat.[238] "I like no more than you do," Thompson wrote to Leszek Kolakowski in 1971, "certain surrenders to irrationalism, certain dispositions to capitulate intellectually before the self-indulgences of a western white guilt, certain tendencies to look for a new set of 'vehicles' among the defeated, the merely violent, the criminal."[239] But he *was* insisting against the implication of Anderson's and Kolakowski's arguments (as Thompson read them) that culture and rationality were not "the

perquisites of intellectuals," that "workers or 'illiterate persons' " were not "inert and culture-less," " 'vehicles' waiting in line for intellectuals to drive," that these people were privy to "an active, value-formative cultural process." The challenge was to find arguments adequate to these "fruits of experience": the solidarities his students and neighbors in Halifax lived by were "so deeply assumed that they remained almost nameless," subsisting "almost beneath the level of articulacy."[240] The challenge for Thompson—as it had been for Tawney and Polanyi before him—was to give those solidarities names, to make them articulate. His means of doing that was writing history, "from below."[241]

Tawney had approached this challenge five decades earlier by projecting the disparity between East London and Lancashire onto an epic historiographical canvas in which older solidarities disintegrated in the seventeenth century. Karl Polanyi had reformulated Tawney's approach by keeping those older solidarities intact through to the end of the eighteenth century and then describing them regenerating in the early nineteenth century when the imposition of the free market dissolved their historical forms. Thompson had followed Polanyi's approach in *The Making of the English Working Class*. But in his later work—in *Whigs and Hunters* (1975) and in *Customs in Common* (1991)—Thompson concentrated on the eighteenth century. He focused on interactions between "patrician" and "plebeian" cultures. He found evidence that at certain junctures people threatened by capitalist rationalization had been able to turn the discourses which generally favored the beneficiaries of that process to their own advantage. Constitutionalism and the rule of law at certain moments became means of making this "philistine sub-culture" articulate and advancing its protagonists' ends—of resisting the dissolution of older customs, of making new powers accountable for the effects of their activities upon the disenfranchised, of sustaining new forms of solidarity.

Whigs and Hunters neither achieved the same effects nor enjoyed the same success as *The Making of the English Working Class* had done in 1963.[242] Critics regarded the publication of *Customs in Common* in 1991 as an anti-climax.[243] If the concept of the moral economy was the means Thompson, and Tawney and Polanyi before him, had been looking for to describe the norms and sentiments affecting economic activity by which they had been struck in Lancashire and Red Vienna and Yorkshire, how are we to account for these disappointments? Why did the moral critique of capitalism pioneered by Tawney in the 1920s and developed by Polanyi and Thompson after him begin losing traction just when it looked set to come into its own? During the 1960s and 1970s, emergent anti-humanist discourses turned social and political thought in Britain as elsewhere hostile to the kinds of claims about what it is to be human around which the moral economists' critique of capitalism had revolved. At just the moment when Thompson found this new way

of describing the norms and sentiments Tawney and Polanyi had rendered "tradition" and "convention," the basis upon which the claim that these norms and sentiments did and should matter began to crumble. Just when a bracing new terminology in which to advance the critique's constructive claims was discovered, the foundations of that critique were compromised. Theological and then natural-theological conceptions of human personality had been the cornerstones around which the moral basis of the critique had been constructed. Processes of secularization had undermined Tawney's original theological conception of the human. But now new anti-humanist pressures created by postcolonial and philosophical challenges to Europe's self-image began to compromise the secular alternative to which Polanyi and then Thompson had turned. Even as the success of *The Making of the English Working Class* seemed to reinvigorate the critique of capitalism which Tawney had pioneered in the 1920s, the capacity of its exponents to sustain their constructions of the moral was cast in doubt.

After Marx

The gravity of the challenge which these new anti-humanist pressures posed for the critique of capitalism central to Thompson's work was laid bare when Thompson realized that the conception of human personality he had derived from Marx was untenable. In his exchange with Thompson in the early 1970s, Leszek Kolakowski reiterated the familiar and now more credible charge that Marxism was indictable for Stalin's crimes.[244] Thompson still disagreed.[245] But if Thompson refused to set Marxism aside as *congenitally* flawed, he acknowledged in the early 1970s that the need for revision was even more profound than he had seen in the late 1950s. Kolakowski had written that Marx's writings were underpinned by certain trans-historical values: they "presuppose a non-empirical *potentia* which actualizes itself, but which places itself outside of history and therefore cannot be inferred or deduced from historical knowledge."[246] The forms that "actually-existing socialism" had taken by its lights across the previous five decades made Marx's ideas less defensible. Thompson agreed that "Marx's partially-concealed notion of the 'fully human' attaining towards realisation in his history" was no longer credible. But that was not because Marx was answerable for Stalin's crimes. It was rather because his "notion of the 'fully human'" had "prove[n] to be an inadequate, insufficiently-defined concept." It had not been able to "stand up the scrutiny of our sad, 20th century evidence." Having been "exposed" to "investigation" by "Fascism," by "a seemingly compliant working-class in consumer capitalist society" and by "Stalinism," Marx's "notion of the 'fully human'" had been found wanting. It was a notion—as we saw in reconstructing Polanyi's efforts

to distill it from the early writings—about which Marx had been "perhaps over-reticent." But the benefit of the doubt was no longer enough to sustain the validity of that notion. The "idea" of the "perfect thing," of unalienated society, was evidently not immanent in each individual. The more hopeful anticipations of the activation and realization of that notion of the fully human—of a "great transformation"—had been unfulfilled.

But could such organizing anthropological conceptions simply be set aside or done away with? Could history be written without such conceptions? Could anti-capitalism continue without some organizing conception of human personality? Kolakowski had insisted that this organizing "potentia" was non-empirical: it was a kind of hermeneutic key supplied by the historian extraneously. Thompson insisted that this *potentia* was generated in the process of historical inquiry itself: rather than being imposed from without, it was substantiated within through the interaction between argument and evidence. The lesson of Marxism's failure for Kolakowski was that the historian should refrain from introducing any such "non-empirical potentia" into his or her work. Kolakowski insisted that historians should leave the place in their analytical frameworks where previously the "non-empirical potentia" had been unoccupied.[247] But Thompson was unwilling to follow Kolakowski's lead. He thought that some notion of human personality was pivotal—that in the disappointment of Marx's notion of the fully human, the historian immediately sets about formulating and testing further hypotheses, further "notions" of what it is to be human.

> [I]f Marx's partially-concealed notion of the "fully human" attaining towards realisation in his history proves to be an inadequate, insufficiently-defined concept (as I think we must now agree) then the historian cannot simply dismiss it from service and leave a de-structured vacancy: he must set about re-fashioning a concept which will stand a better chance of standing up to the scrutiny of our sad, 20th-century evidence.[248]

Althusser's project had been to rid Marxism of historicist notions of the "fully human." Gareth Stedman Jones has stated the point best: if Marx's writings were predicated upon "the wholeness, self-sufficiency and transparency of the human subject, for the moment alienated in religion, private property and the state or for the moment submerged by capitalist exploitation prior to release in a revolutionary denouement," Althusser's "vision of the human" by contrast was "that depicted in Lacan's version of Freud, a fractured being forever vainly in search of full subjectivity."[249] Althusser's writings (like Fanon's anti-colonial scorn for metropolitan discourses on "Man") were informed by decades-long philosophical arguments in France concerning the corruption and redeemability of the concepts of the human

around which modern epistemologies and projects of social amelioration revolved. In these debates—as Stefanos Geroulanos has shown, in an illuminating study centered around a fresh reading of Alexandre Kojèves's interwar lectures on Hegel—a critique of bourgeois individualism initiated in the 1920s and inflected by stronger atheist intellectual traditions engendered profound skepticism toward axiomatic notions of the human.[250] Some writers in postwar France did seek to redeem modified or novel forms of humanism, but the drift of the cognate French discussion did not bode well for the moral economists' project. Michel Foucault's 1968 figure captured the implication of this complex new anti-humanist skepticism vividly: the concept of "man" was a "recent invention" in European thought and was liable soon to pass out of focus again, "like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea."[251]

Thompson was determined to hold back this tide. He explained his abhorrence of Althusser's project by underlining that an axiomatic conception of the human was just as important to him as it had been to Karl Polanyi and to Tawney before him.

> If I thought that Althusserianism was the logical terminus of Marx's thought, then I could never be a Marxist. I would rather be a Christian (or hope to have the courage of a certain kind of Christian radical). At least I would then be given back a vocabulary within which value choices are allowed, and which permits the defence of the human personality against the invasions of the Unholy Capitalist or Holy Proletarian State. And if my disbelief, as well as my distaste for churches, disallowed this course, then I would have to settle for being an empirical, liberal, moralistic humanist.[252]

In fact it was not at all clear that postwar liberals *could* accommodate Thompson's humanism, at least in its strong version, in its insistence that *some* specific notion of the fully human was needed to anchor the critique of capitalism, to lend histories of capitalism coherence and meaning. Postwar liberal political theory tended toward the view Thompson imputed here to Kolakowski: in decommissioning Marx's notion of the fully human, it was best not to engage any replacement, to leave a "de-structured vacancy" where previously there had been an organizing theological or natural-theological axiom. Postwar liberalism made a virtue of this vacancy which Thompson abhorred. Isaiah Berlin warned that the temptation to try to realize "positive" forms of liberty was dangerous and to be resisted: the very idea that prescriptive notions of the fully human could be shared and harmonious had made us susceptible to terrible forms of authority.[253] Judith Shklar argued that a scrupulously preserved "nonscheme"—the permanent vacation of the imaginative role once reserved for notions of the fully human—was necessary to foreclose

the possibility of a return to the horrors of the 1930s and 1940s.[254] History would thus become a succession of isolated, incoherent episodes. Politics would be confined to piecemeal technocratic patches for particular problems. But that was all to the good: "why anyone would yearn for transformative politics at the end of twentieth century" was unclear to Shklar.[255]

Thompson stayed true to Marx, after his own idiosyncratic fashion, even once it was clear to him that Marx's notion of the fully human was noncredible. But as his 1978 remark about the want of a "vocabulary" permitting "the defence of the human personality" suggests, it is not clear that he saw real alternatives. Thompson could not "stomach" theological conceptions of the human—and processes of secularization had now undermined that basis for moral claims in any event. Nor was the "empirical, liberal, moralistic humanis[m]" Thompson alluded to in the same passage a promising prospect: postwar liberals of Thompson's generation largely came to see humanism based on a strong conception of human personality as a dangerous conceit. Between postcolonial derision of the metropolitan discourse on "Man," new philosophical skepticism toward the idea of the centered subject, and the postwar liberal preference for a "nonscheme" where once there had been notions of the fully human, Thompson was hard pressed in the later twentieth century to find "a vocabulary within which value choices are allowed, and which permits the defence of the human personality." And lacking a concept of the human—trying in vain to fill the "de-structured vacancy" the supersession of Marx's notion of the fully human had created—made the description of the solidarities that had inspired Thompson's research still more difficult.

In a prolix 1979 essay, "The Poverty of Theory," Thompson developed an attack on Althusser's structural Marxism into an argument for the further exegesis of Marx's and Engels's late schematic conjecture of "historical materialism" as a means of redeeming a Marxian humanism. Few people can have read "The Poverty of Theory" in its entirety. Fewer still will be persuaded that there was a viable way forward intimated there. The problem of sustaining "the defence of human personality" after the notion of the fully human intimated in the early Marx stood discredited became—for Thompson, at least—intractable. Unable to see any alternative, Thompson kept trying to draw blood from Marx's and Engels's stones.[256] The futility of this enterprise helps to account for the frustration of his later historiographical writings and the sense of disappointment with which they left many readers.

Was there an alternative—for Thompson, then? We have seen that when Polanyi began to doubt that Marx could furnish a conception of the human to supplant Tawney's theological notion as a means of challenging the utilitarian orthodoxy, he changed tack. Polanyi had not set about seeking another secular conception of the human to stand for a time—as Marx's writings had

done—in the stead of the original theological conception. Rather, Polanyi had concentrated on the history of political economy, zeroing in on the moment when recourse to strong claims about what it is to be human had become necessary for those who wished to preserve a place for non-economic considerations in the discussion of social problems. Instead of challenging utilitarianism head-on, Polanyi wondered whether its authority might be subverted by more subtle means. He proposed to disaggregate Adam Smith from the increasingly economistic approaches of those conventionally seen as Smith's intellectual successors. He suggested that political economy might be reinvented so that the norms and sentiments denoted by the concept of the moral economy came to be seen not as impositions from without but as integral to thinking about politics in commercial society. Is there any evidence to suggest that Thompson followed Polanyi in this regard? Was this an alternative which Thompson also explored—this strategy challenging utilitarianism not from without by recourse to strong claims about the human but from within by establishing that it had always been an aberrant development in economic thought?

Thompson certainly did not reproduce Polanyi's history of political economy in the same terms. Donald Winch has criticized Thompson's readings of Adam Smith and his nineteenth-century successors as indiscriminate, limited by the expansive conception of utilitarianism which Thompson had adopted from F. R. Leavis.[257] Elie Halévy's influential readings of Victorian social and political thought also left their marks upon Thompson.[258] Winch is of course right to observe that Thompson was an impatient reader of nineteenth-century political economy. But at the same time there are passages in *The Making of the English Working Class* which suggest that Thompson's readings in this connection were more exacting than Winch admits. Consider, for instance, Thompson's distinction between "working-class" or "popular" radicalism and "middle-class" or "utilitarian" radicalism. In the 1790s (in Thompson's exegesis in *The Making of the English Working Class*) there had been no daylight between the two positions: Francis Place, founder of the London Corresponding Society, could represent both.[259] But by the 1830s, Place for Thompson had become an ardent Malthusian.[260] Meanwhile, "working-class" or "popular" radicalism had found articulate exponents in William Cobbett and John Fielden, and the new antipathy between these two stances boiled down to the limitations which "popular" radicalism applied to the implementation of "utilitarian" radicalism's prescriptions for reform.[261] The formalization of schemes of property rights was not in itself regarded among working people as actionable. But if "property-relations violated, for the labourer or his child, essential claims to human realisation, then any remedy, however drastic, was open to discussion."[262] This "touchstone"—whether or not "essential

claims to human realisation" were left inviolable—stood as an "insurmountable barrier" demarcating "popular" radicalism from "the ideology of the middle-class Utilitarians." Followers of Cobbett and Fielden, in other words, refused to follow disciples of Malthus and Ricardo in modeling human affairs on naturalistic scenarios like Townsend's island of goats and dogs:

> If Malthus's conclusions led to the preaching of emigration or of restraints upon the marriage of the poor, then they were faulted by this touchtone. If the "Scotch feelosophers" and Brougham could do no more than destroy the poor man's rights under the old Poor Law, leave the weavers to starve, and sanction the labour of little children in the mills, then this touchstone proclaimed them to be deigning rogues.[263]

There was seldom any explicit justification offered for prioritizing "claims to human realisation" in this way. It was "sometimes less an argument than an affirmation, an imprecation, a leap of feeling."[264] But at least for a time it had been "enough," preserving working-class radicalism unadulterated by its middle-class contemporary, keeping "radicals and Chartists from becoming camp-followers of Utilitarians or of the Anti-Corn Law League."[265]

Thompson never made this unreflective affirmation of the surpassing value of the human being the basis for his own anti-capitalism. He continued to justify his own claims about the transcendent importance of human personality on the basis of the stronger claim elucidated in Marx's early philosophical writings—the claim as Polanyi had parsed it that each person carries within them the "idea" of the "perfect thing," a society enriched by the division of labor but unafflicted by the sense of estrangement which this had hitherto meant for most people.[266] But *The Making of the English Working Class* kept a more minimal claim in reserve. Even without defining human personality in any limiting sense one could insist upon a distinction between human affairs and the natural world. Making that distinction could invalidate the supposition that social thought should proceed on the basis of a posited identity between humans and animals.

In *The Great Transformation* Polanyi had moderated the claim that human personality held surpassing value by emphasizing not *why* human personality was invaluable but *that* there *was* something invaluable about human beings, something that defied reduction to the naturalistic terms of nineteenth-century political economy. In *The Making of the English Working Class* and in subsequent writings, Thompson continued to make the stronger anti-utilitarian claim—not simply *that* individual human beings defied reckoning in the terms of utilitarian calculus but *for* a particular understanding of what a person is, a conception gleaned from the combined writings of William Morris and Marx, a "notion of the 'fully human.' "[267] But at the same time

Thompson's account of the development of radical social and political thought through the early nineteenth century left the way open for a retreat to that more limited claim. Nor did Thompson lose sight of this possibility later. If anything, Thompson's readings of political economy became more judicious, and in particular more alert to the distinction between humanistic and naturalistic approaches which Polanyi had brought into focus. "It is not," he was concerned to clarify in "The Poverty of Theory," in a discussion of the correspondence between Marx and Charles Darwin, "that Marx supposed that Darwinian analogies could be taken unreconstructed from the animal to the human world." Marx—Thompson took care to note—had explicitly "reproved a correspondent who, with the aid of Malthus, was supposing that."[268]

Thompson was conscious of the declension toward which Polanyi had pointed. He was alert to the ways in which the more minimal claims about what it is to be human that had been integral to political economy *before* that declension had helped workers and radicals after 1800 to justify their anti-capitalism. But he never pushed very hard at the door that Polanyi had left ajar. Thompson kept a more modest claim about what it is to be human in reserve. In lieu of a strong conception of human personality comparable to Tawney's theological claim or the historical anthropology distilled from the early writings of Karl Marx, this more modest claim was that human affairs and the natural world were radically discontinuous, such that any attempt to posit animal regularities in human society was misconceived. This was a means of confounding the utilitarian calculus without offending late-twentieth-century anti-humanist skepticism. It insisted that more than rational self-interest and reckonings of utility animated social life. But it avoided extravagant claims about what it is to be human. And yet, even after he had concluded that the basis in the early Marx upon which he grounded his stronger claim about what it is to be human was untenable, and even once he realized how difficult it would prove to find an alternative basis upon which to sustain the same kind of claim, Thompson did not seek to activate this more moderate approach.

Why did Thompson not revert to this more modest claim—which he had kept in reserve in *The Making of the English Working Class*, as we have seen—once Marx's notion of the fully human was discredited, opening up a "destructured vacancy" at the heart of Thompson's critique of capitalism? Some readers may wonder whether there is really anything to explain here. And certainly what is most significant for my purposes in all this is that this possibility *has* remained unexplored—that although this way of developing and reinvigorating the critique of capitalism created by R. H. Tawney in the 1920s was remarked upon at least one juncture in the history of that critique, it has yet to be pursued. This question about *why* it remained unexplored despite

Thompson's difficulties after Marx is secondary. But in bringing this chapter to a close, I offer an explanation for Thompson's reticence in this connection which may help readers concerned to keep faith with Thompson to see this more as a prospect that he *could* not pursue than as a prospect that he *would* not countenance. There were specific contextual considerations which made going down this road seem unpromising to Thompson. Not being affected by those specific considerations, we might find ourselves now more willing to proceed where Thompson seems to have hesitated. Understanding that it was these specific considerations that held Thompson back might make what could otherwise seem a dramatic departure feel more straightforward.

To identify these concerns which I am suggesting blocked Thompson's path here, it is necessary to recall the terms of Perry Anderson's attack on Thompson's ideas. Anderson charged that Thompson's ideas were provincial, that they had nothing to say to people outside England, that they would grow irrelevant and obsolete as global perspectives became predominant in social and political thought. We have seen that Thompson answered these charges in part by pointing toward the export of constitutionalism to India and Ghana as evidence that principles of solidarity cultivated in England retained a global relevance. In time Thompson found another way to meet Anderson's challenge. He proposed that the norms and sentiments constituent of the moral economy—the "traditions" and "customs" and "conventions" affecting and limiting conduct in economic life by which he had become like Tawney and Polanyi before him preoccupied—were pertinent to problems of scarcity, and more particularly to the problem of famine and its effective redress. Led in part by historians and social scientists working his concept of the moral economy into discussions of scarcity, Thompson would come to frame his concerns about food riot in eighteenth-century England by reference to famine in 1840s Ireland, 1940s India, and in the contemporary Third World.[269]

In this process, Thompson began to favor a narrower meaning of the concept of the moral economy. The emergence of the term marked the culmination of a decades-long effort by historians working in the critical tradition inaugurated by Tawney "to discover and write about all those areas of human exchange to which orthodox economics was once blind." [270] Thompson's participation in this critical tradition helps to explain how he came to think about the phenomenon of the food riot as an instantiation of the continuing importance of tradition and custom and convention amidst capitalist rationalization in the first place.[271] The vividness of the terminology Thompson developed to convey the significance of the norms and sentiments previously designated tradition and custom and convention had served further to "encourage" historians to theorize everything economics left out. But under Anderson's critical scrutiny, concerned to justify his endeavors in non-parochial terms,

Thompson proceeded in the 1970s and 1980s to limit his use of the term "moral economy" to certain specific scenarios. In this narrower use, Thompson made the term refer to the practices and animating ideas of the eighteenth-century food riot, encompassing both "an identifiable bundle of beliefs, usages and forms associated with the marketing of goods in times of dearth" and "the deep emotions stirred by the dearth, the claims which the crowd made upon the authorities in such crises, and the outrage provoked by profiteering in life-threatening emergencies," imparting a "particular 'moral' charge to protest."[272] In thus narrowing the focus of the concept of the moral economy, Thompson bought into arguments about scarcity and famine and the proper policy and institutional responses. By these means he answered Anderson's charge of parochialism, asserting the relevance of his work to the discussion and solution of urgent contemporary social and economic problems in the developing world. *Narrowing* the meaning of his concept of the moral economy actually served to *broaden* Thompson's appeal, enabling him to sound less like an enthusiast for certain provincial social rites and more like a contributor to a global discussion about how to prevent starvation.

This narrowing of the meaning of the moral economy in Thompson's later writing matters because it helps us to understand why Thompson continued to see Adam Smith as his intellectual adversary.[273] Focusing on food riots made the complementarities between the moral economists' critique of capitalism and Adam Smith's ideas about politics in commercial society much harder to recognize. Polanyi's suggestion had been that re-reading Smith might give the moral economists' critique of capitalism a way of reconstituting political economy from within: recovering the "humanistic foundations" which Smith had given to that system of thought would invalidate the feature of political economy which Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson had railed against—the reduction of human beings to profit-making animals—*ab initio*. But joining issue with Smith on the question of trade in times of scarcity made those humanistic foundations harder to see. And by the same token the suggestion (which was only "in part" facetious) that the best way to help developing nations avoid famine would be "to send them experts in the promotion of riot" was not likely to commend Thompson's ideas to the latter-day utilitarians.[274] The discussion tended toward "caricature of both positions." Moral economy and political economy came to seem poles apart. "The one becomes a vestigial, traditional moralism, the other a science 'disinfested of intrusive moral imperatives.' "[275]

Michael Ignatieff and Istvan Hont have held Thompson himself to account for this. They are right to, though the plea in mitigation offered here—that Thompson was corralled into this confrontational posture vis-à-vis Smith on scarcity by his need to make his own writings on riot relevant to the modern

world—might warrant a reconsideration of Thompson's culpability. But the real question is whether we are bound to honor Thompson's own belief that Smith was his intellectual adversary—a belief that closed off the aperture Polanyi had pried open in the 1940s, the opening through which the moral critique of capitalism developed between the wars might have overcome the obstacle which the anti-humanism of the later twentieth century posed to its regeneration. The answer—surely—is that we are not so bound. Thompson's unwillingness or incapacity to canvass the possibility his own writings contemplated—the prospect, that is, of reconstituting the critique of capitalism handed down from Tawney around minimal claims about what it is to be human integral to political economy before the goats-and-dogs declension—was an effect of contingency, a consequence of factors pressing upon Thompson but irrelevant to us now.

In E. P. Thompson's writings the critique of capitalism pioneered by Tawney and developed by Polanyi reached the peak of its influence, but only at the moment when the basis of its moral claims was melting into air. Polanyi had anticipated this moment and had seen a means of regenerating the critique in new terms, attaining its ends—the reinstatement to mainstream social and political thought of everything economics left out—by subtly different means. There are indications that Thompson contemplated the same possibility. There are reasons why he never pursued it. In the conclusion to this book we turn to look again at this road not taken to ask where it might take us now.

Conclusion

R. H. Tawney's critique of capitalism had been animated by apprehensions of social disintegration in the late Edwardian moment George Dangerfield would memorialize as the "death of Liberal England." By the late 1930s credible observers confidently predicted that the terminal crisis of capitalism was at hand.[1] By 1950 the crisis seemed to have been averted. Capitalism had "acquired a slightly less unsocial nature."[2] Changing patterns and structures of ownership in industry, reforms to corporate finance, and the commitment to "socialising demand" which underpinned the welfare state in Britain fostered a sense that the "beast" was "more malleable" than had once been supposed.[3] Many people who shared Tawney's fears about social disintegration now came to believe that its cause—capitalism—was in the process of being transcended. The most pressing economic problems seemed to have been solved. That helped to focus attention on the residual need for measures on what C.A.R. Crosland called the "socio-psychological plane," a need which postwar sociology grew confident that it could meet.[4] By 1960 optimism was widespread: fears of social disintegration receded beneath heightening expectations about an affluent future. But expectations soon outran capacities, sowing new discontents. The particulars of the postwar settlement were soon subject to reconsideration. The social problem had been addressed for a time but not solved. By the early 1970s new fears were fomenting about the stability of the social order in Britain.[5]

Over the course of the 1970s that earlier optimism diminished and fears about Britain's future prospects intensified.[6] Some of the difficulties which had brought Edwardian England to the brink of civil war resurfaced. Protests against anti-Catholic discrimination in Northern Ireland precipitated the "Troubles," pitching British forces and republican and loyalist paramilitaries into guerilla war. The corporatist pact between government and trade unions unraveled, precipitating a period of protracted industrial conflict, culminating in the "winter of discontent" in 1978–79. A "second-wave" of feminists

resumed arguments with patriarchy. Meanwhile the prodigious heightening of expectations proceeding unabated through the century's first seven decades—expectations of social reform and unceasing improvement in material living standards, of personal happiness and fulfillment in love and in work, of the maintenance of Britain's international status as an economic power and a "force for good"—set new social fault lines.[7] "Fixed income groups" that were resentful of welfare spending and preoccupied by inflation acquired new political power. They had been fighting an intermittent insurgency against welfare spending under the banner of "anti-waste" since the 1920s.[8] But through the 1960s they drew up a dossier of moral and social grievances to embellish their economic complaints and found compelling figureheads to carry their claims.[9]

The "question of moral relationships" in Britain was back on the agenda.[10] But the moral economists of this book's title—whose critique of capitalism took shape amid twentieth-century Britain's other great crisis of capitalism—failed to rise to the occasion. Tawney and Karl Polanyi were survived by E. P. Thompson. But Thompson's capacity to reinvigorate the critique which Tawney had pioneered five decades earlier was hampered by a new skepticism concerning strong prescriptive claims about what it is to be human around which the critique revolved. Marx's "notion of the 'fully human' " with strong concepts of "human personality" in general fell afoul of new postcolonial, philosophical, and postwar liberal antipathy toward European humanist discourses. Processes of secularization in Britain made a return to Tawney's earlier theological iteration of the same moral critique of capitalism nigh inconceivable.

This new anti-humanist skepticism—interacting with processes of secularization to invalidate the bases upon which Tawney and Thompson had raised their moral claims—need not have been the end of the line for the moral economists' critique of capitalism. It was now much more difficult to make prescriptive arguments about what it means to be human. But if both theological and secular bases for the anti-utilitarian claim that human personality held infinite value had now eroded, the critique of capitalism reconstructed here harbored the means of its own regeneration. Tawney had set about invalidating utilitarianism by countering its reductive focus on pecuniary motives with strong prescriptive theologically-inspired claims about what it is to be human. Thompson persevered in that endeavor by seeking secular equivalents for Tawney's theological claims in defiance of the pervasive new incredulity toward such claims. But in the meantime Karl Polanyi had pointed out that the same objective of destabilizing utilitarian orthodoxy might be served by rewriting the history of political economy to re-inscribe a bright line economists had once drawn between human beings and the animal world. Modern-day economists were mistaken to imagine with the utilitarians that

humans interacted with one another in a manner modeled by goats and greyhounds on the island of Juan Fernandez. It might be that no more was required now than to acknowledge that mistake and to factor back into political economy the "passions" and "motives" which the utilitarians had marginalized. The moral economists were theorists of everything economics left out. But what began as a critique of economics from without developed over the course of the twentieth century into an attempt to reconstitute political economy from within.

Is there any indication that mainstream economics proved receptive to this suggestion? In the third chapter we studied an early attempt to translate Tawney's critical perspective back into the language of contemporary economic theory. We realized there that the welfare economics developed in interwar Britain was a failure in this respect: attempts by Evan Durbin and others to turn Tawney's moral critique into a technique for evaluating policy proved abortive because they relied on an unreconstructed utilitarianism with which Tawney's ideas were incompatible. Among economists these early efforts to adapt economic theory for an age of interventionist social policy were soon dismissed as fruitless, and for substantially the same reasons—on the basis of their fidelity to a version of utilitarianism too crude to cover the complexity of the new dispensation. But the interwar welfare economics was not the last juncture at which the moral economists' critique of capitalism intersected with mainstream economic theory.

This concluding chapter examines two of these later intersections. One—the work of E. F. Schumacher—can be dealt with briefly. The other—Kenneth Arrow's "impossibility theorem," and the renaissance in social choice theory it initiated—warrants more sustained attention. Under the aegis of social choice theory, which developed out of the failures of welfare economics between the wars, economists became interested in "enriching" the conceptions of the individual central to their models: individual utilities remained the primary units of analysis, but new ways of "handling" these utilities materialized.[11] In using these new techniques social choice theorists started to factor back into political economy some of the "passions" and "motives" which the utilitarians of the early nineteenth century had excluded. Tawney's history of capitalism was among the resources economists drew upon to facilitate this reconceptualization of economic man. By virtue of the theory of social choices, economics at the end of the twentieth century was in some ways *more* attentive to the solidarities and sentiments the moral economists had made their own than it had been at the beginning of the period. This makes the fixation on material inequality in contemporary debate about capitalism more perplexing, but also more readily remediable. Social choice the-

ory shows us how the reconstitution of political economy toward which the moral economists' critique of capitalism moved might actually work.

Small Is Beautiful?

In his 1973 book *Small Is Beautiful*, the unorthodox economist E. F. Schumacher positioned himself as an intellectual successor to R. H. Tawney.[12] Schumacher had moved to England from Germany in 1930 and read economics at New College, Oxford, before finding work in government. He was a member of William Beveridge's Full Employment Committee in 1943 and 1944.[13] After the war Schumacher became long-serving economic adviser to the National Coal Board. He eschewed increasingly abstruse theoretical controversies in academic economics in favor of practical experiments in problem-solving, advocating the embrace of "intermediate technology" in developing countries and identifying innovative examples of corporate governance. In conceptualizing contemporary social problems, Schumacher followed the lines of argument laid out by Tawney and his successors over the previous four decades. Though it was "true" that "all men are brothers," Schumacher wrote, echoing *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, it was also true that "in our active personal relationships we can, in fact, be brother to only a few of them, and we are called upon to show more brotherliness to them than we could possibly show to the whole of mankind."[14] Unemployment was irremediable by cash benefits, since it was a deprivation less of income than of the sense of self-worth generated through work. The economic problem that took primacy for Keynes was not only *not* (as many now argued) solved, it was misconceived: there could be no protracted suspension of ethics while acquisitiveness did its prolific work. The supposition that economics could generate solutions to the question of "moral relationships" was mistaken. It was symptomatic of a broader myopia which imagined that "meta-economic" and metaphysical presuppositions were eradicable. Economic analyses were "fragmentary"; "statistics never prove anything"; better decisions were made by people who could "see" social problems "whole."[15] In some ways Schumacher represented a reversion to the theological bases upon which Tawney had raised his initial version of this moral critique. The "modern experiment to live without religion"–Schumacher insisted—had "failed."[16]

Schumacher gave his 1973 book an epigraph from *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. But at the same time he recognized that the question of moral relationships as he approached it was framed in terms at variance with those Tawney had encompassed in the 1920s. Schumacher returned to Tawney's remarks in *The Acquisitive Society* about the need to create an environment

in which "egotism," "greed," and "quarrelsomeness" were not the qualities "encouraged" by society. Tawney's words, he wrote, had "lost none of their topicality." But they were now overlaid by a new agenda.

> [T]oday we are concerned not only with social malaise but also, most urgently, with a *malaise* of the ecosystem or biosphere which threatens the very survival of the human race.[17]

Schumacher's book was an immense success, illustrating the continuing popular resonance of the questions the moral economists had raised. But it is not at all clear that Schumacher's arguments advanced any nearer a solution to those questions than the historians had done. Schumacher's conception of the "dignity" of "human personality" *seemed* to second Polanyi's recall of a period in the history of political economy before human affairs and the natural world collapsed into one another promised. Schumacher's most consistent argument was that human beings assume particular dignity by virtue of their dominion over and radical aloofness from the natural world: we benefit from nature's regularities, but we are not bound by them, and our own affairs do not manifest the same regularities—despite the best efforts of social scientists to discover patterns in human affairs akin to the laws of physics.[18] Something like the "humanistic foundations" Karl Polanyi found eroding in political economy between Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) was what Schumacher reverted to when he needed to "make explicit" his "view of human nature."[19] But in the same book Schumacher also drew on a variety of distinct conceptions of the human. He cited modern Catholic social thought, and the papal encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* in particular.[20] He drew on the writings of Thomas Aquinas. Meanwhile he also looked to the figure of *homo faber* to fill out his conception of the human.[21] He devoted an essay to envisaging a Buddhist critique of utilitarianism, explaining that he simply wanted to challenge the "meta-economic basis of western materialism" with the metaphysics of a modern faith: choosing Buddhism for that purpose was "purely incidental"; the teachings of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam could have served just as well.[22]

None of these resources was necessarily incompatible. The writings of Aquinas do provide warrant for defining the human in contradistinction to the animal. Catholic social thought had placed particular emphasis on the dignity of manual work. Warrant could be found in contemporary Burmese culture for the same estimations of the dignity of the human and the sense of *noblesse oblige* properly informing human dominion over the animals.[23] But could all these bases hold simultaneously? Karl Polanyi had set Christian theology aside on the basis that it was rendered inapt by the division of labor and the advent of commercial society. Could Aquinas now be so readily dusted off

and set alongside modern-day Catholic social thought, Buddhism, and the rites of the Burmese to furnish global capitalism with fundamental principles of human dignity? Intellectual confusion exacts its price, as Schumacher himself warned.[24] Small is beautiful, but capitalism expands—that is what the division of labor achieved—an immense upscaling of economic activity, supplanting a face-to-face economy with an infinite series of anonymous transactions. What solidarities were conceivable under these specific circumstances? Schumacher's bent was practical, but his thought was utopian: the effect was not to solve but to evade the social problem as Tawney and his successors had framed it.

Individual Values and Social Choice

Schumacher avoided theoretical controversies in postwar economics in favor of a focus on practical means of curing social and ecological malaise. A quick glance at any of the dozen or so volumes central to the continuing discussion of welfare economics as it developed in Britain and the United States in the 1940s and 1950s helps us to understand why.[25] Economics during this period became increasingly technical. This was in part an effect of war. The mobilization of intellectual resources in the United States especially made the liberal arts utile.[26] Mathematicians went to work for organizations like the Office for Strategic Services and later the RAND Corporation, turning their minds to the solution of practical problems. Advances in econometrics introduced new exactitude into economists' quantifications. Growing use of mathematical notation to validate arguments made the discipline still more forbidding to the uninitiated.

Kenneth Arrow's work exemplifies this trend. Arrow had trained first as a mathematician at City College of New York. His graduate studies in mathematics at Columbia were interrupted by wartime service mapping weather for the U.S. Army. *Individual Values and Social Choice* was conceived when Arrow was working as a consultant to the RAND Corporation, which was engaged in research under contract with the U.S. Air Force. In the 1950 paper which introduced his proof—developed more thoroughly in Arrow's 1951 book *Individual Values and Social Choice*—Arrow explained that he would be using a form of notation unfamiliar to many economists.[27] His 1951 book was received with skepticism by economists in Cambridge—dismissed as an unwieldy combination of "algebra" and "ethical nonsense."[28] We might leave the algebra where it lies, but the ethics hold real interest for us. Arrow's famous "impossibility theorem"—more correctly his General Possibility Theorem—concerns the process by which a set of individual preferences or values is reconciled to reach a collective decision. It is focused, in other words, on the same

intermediate domain separating "individualism" from "collectivism" which preoccupied Tawney and his successors.[29] But to make sense of Arrow's theorem and its approach to this intermediate domain, we need some understanding of the methodological debates in economics out of which Arrow's work emerged.

In Britain by the late 1930s welfare economics was stuck in a blind alley. The new utilitarians held that redistributive policies added to overall utility on the basis that a pound in a poor man's pocket added more to aggregate utility than the same pound in a rich man's pocket. Neoliberals attacked this approach as epistemologically fallacious: we cannot compare the value of the same pound to different people, because we cannot know one another's minds. Neither party to this argument was willing to acknowledge that welfare economics involved value judgments. The welfare economists focused on quantifying aggregate welfare: social policy added to overall welfare, therefore it should be enacted. But after Robbins's influential attack on the welfare economists, toting up individual utilities (by comparing the poor man's utility with what the rich man derived from the same pound) came to be seen as methodologically unacceptable. Most welfare economists stopped trying to aggregate utility and switched instead to an alternative definition of the optimal economic state. Drawn from the work of the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, this conception defined the optimum as a state in which no individual could be made better off without making another worse off.[30] If it had been possible earlier to proceed as though welfare economics were a straightforward exchange of factual propositions, the reversion to Pareto's conception of the optimal state made that more difficult: it became clear that in deciding how to define the optimal economic state which social policy should aim to achieve, economists were making value judgments. For all that Pareto optimality acquired the status of common sense among economists across the 1940s and 1950s, it was acknowledged as a normative rather than an empirical proposition.[31]

It soon became evident, moreover, that prioritizing Pareto optimality was not the only normative judgment economists were making in theorizing and evaluating social policy. Pareto optimality was a stricter condition of action than the initial focus on aggregate utility had been. It tended accordingly to sanctify the status quo. But the Pareto principle was also relatively indeterminate. Where it permitted policy action, i.e., where it was clear that the overall welfare could be improved without making anyone worse off, further choices still had to be made about precisely what action to take. The repeal of an indirect tax would improve everyone's position given an appropriate redistribution of other tax burdens. But many possible scenarios could achieve that end. Which among these was actually to be implemented? Focusing on Pareto optimality defined a range of possible policies, but it furnished no protocol

for choosing between these.[32] Welfare economists working in the United States in the 1940s came to believe that it was necessary to articulate a framework within which to think about the process of reconciling individual values and preferences to reach a collective choice.[33] Doing so would require economists to enumerate the conditions they were building into their models of social policy. That Pareto's principle defined the optimum state for an economy was one such condition. An alternative to the Pareto principles was the British economist Nicholas Kaldor's "compensation principle," holding that if in a choice between two economic states *x* and *y* compensation paid under *x* can make everyone better off than they would be under *y*, we should choose *x*—whether or not the compensation is actually paid.[34] Both the Pareto principle and Kaldor's compensation principle served to stipulate that certain orderings or combinations of individual preferences between two alternatives ruled a collective decision for one over the other *out*. But even where one or both was applied and permitted a decision in favor of a particular course of action, this was typically indecisive in itself. Other conditions of consistency and rationality in the ordering of individual preferences were routinely imposed on the process of getting from individual values to collective choices.

Acknowledging that the process of reconciling individual values to reach a collective decision was complex and value-laden (i.e., that not all processes of aggregating individual preferences were good or valid processes, and that in assessing what was a valid or good process reasonable minds could differ) gave rise to new difficulties. Where economic activity had been understood to be coordinated by markets, it had been feasible to suppose that individual values interacted to produce collective decisions spontaneously. Beyond believing in the beneficence of laissez- faire, there was no need for procedural decisions about how to make decisions—i.e., about how to aggregate individual preferences to make social choices. But the end of laissez-faire and the advent of planning had superseded that earlier simplicity. Economists began to think about decision-making less on the model of markets than on the model of the ballot box: decision by voting (directly at the ballot box; indirectly through legislative process) came to be regarded as integral to economic life. Welfare economists became veritable invigilators monitoring the process by which individual preferences were aggregated to reach social decisions.

Which specific conditions should be applied in evaluating processes of social choice? Pareto optimality or Kaldor's principle or some other conception of the optimal state at which social policy aimed to realize? And—remembering that none of these principles was dispositive—what further conditions besides? By 1950 a range of conditions were routinely being drawn upon—modules among which engineers of particular protocols of collective choice could select as they saw fit in striving to perfect an ideal model. Means

of modeling the interaction between these different conditions were also becoming more common. These mathematical models isolated paradoxical phenomena. Among these was the so-called "voters' paradox"—described in Arrow's work as "well-known," though he later confessed that he knew little about this; routinely traced back now to the calculations of the eighteenth-century French mathematicians and politicians the Marquis de Condorcet and J. C. de Borda.[35] The voters' paradox indicated that even a seemingly straightforward and uncontentious mode of getting from individual preferences to a social choice was liable to produce *irrational* outcomes in certain scenarios. Arrow explains:

> Let A, B, and C be the three alternatives, and 1, 2, and 3 the three individuals. Suppose individual 1 prefers A to B and B to C (and therefore A to C), individual 2 prefers B to C and C to A (and therefore C to A), and individual 3 prefers C to A and A to B (and therefore C to B). Then a majority prefers A to B, and a majority prefers B to C. We may therefore say that the community prefers A to B and B to C. If the community is to be regarded as behaving rationally, we are forced to say that A is preferred to C. But, in fact, a majority of the community prefers C to A. So the method just outlined for passing from individual to collective tastes fails to satisfy the condition of rationality as we ordinarily understand it.[36]

That a majority should prevail and that the process should be rational were not necessarily compatible conditions to apply in designing a system of collective choice: this was the implication of the voters' paradox. The rediscovery of this paradox in the midcentury United States was part and parcel of an emergent inquiry into the compatibility of the different conditions welfare economists were imposing on their idealized processes of collective choice. Was the voters' paradox an aberration, or did it indicate a more systemic problem?

Arrow's provocation was to demonstrate that the specific "difficulties" itemized in the voters' paradox were in fact examples of a "general" problem.[37] Arrow surveyed contemporary discussion among welfare economists and identified a set of four conditions which were widely regarded as necessary components of any system of collective choice. [38] He then modeled the interactions between those four conditions. In his arresting 1949 proof, Arrow demonstrated that this modest selection of "reasonable looking" conditions—formulated not as a sufficient set of conditions which could support a system of choice between them, but as the necessary set of conditions which any ideal system must include—were actually impossible to satisfy simultaneously.

> For *any* method of deriving social choices by aggregating individual preference patterns which satisfies certain natural conditions, it is possible to find

> individual preference patterns which give rise to a social choices pattern which is not a linear ordering.[39]

The imposition of certain "natural conditions" on the process actually made getting from "individual values" to "social choice" impossible.[40]

It is possible to interpret Arrow's impossibility result as nihilistic, as authority for the proposition that getting from individual values to social choice by rational and otherwise acceptable means is impossible. The aspiration to rational *social* choice and the experiment in mixed economies in which it issued should therefore be abandoned in favor of a return to laissez-faire. Ballot-box decision-making is invariably irrational. The only rational and *consensual* social choices are those made through markets. Some of the citations of Arrow's work in postwar political science in the United States tend toward this interpretation. But this was not the spin Arrow himself put on his result. Raised in modest circumstances in New York City during the Depression, Arrow had embraced socialism in his youth, and leaned left throughout his life. His "impossibility theorem" was not designed to frustrate reformers or delegitimize social policy—to negate the possibility of social choice per se. Indeed, it can be seen as an attempt to facilitate social choice. The conditions economists were insisting that any estimable process for aggregating individual preferences must meet were in fact too demanding. We should be less exacting in our demands, more willing to sanction systems of collective choice which do not satisfy those conditions: this was the proposition Arrow's impossibility theorem put to his colleagues.

The significance of Arrow's enterprise both in its own terms and in its bearing upon our discussion becomes clearer once we see that what Arrow wanted his economist-colleagues to re-think was a residual individualism. Of the four conditions Arrow took to be widely regarded among welfare economist as the minimum necessary constraints which any system of aggregating individual preferences to reach a collective choice must incorporate, one was a stricture against "collectivism"—the condition of non-dictatorship, according to which no one individual's or group's preferences could be allowed to prevail over everyone else's—and the other three were bulwarks of "individualism."[41] Welfare economics was notionally an attempt to take the discipline beyond laissez-faire. Arrow's finding was that assumptions about "individualistic behaviour" died hard.[42] Welfare economists were thinking so much in terms of an older utilitarian atomism that theorizing a new dispensation replete with possibilities for genuine social choice was inhibited. If the task undertaken by welfare economists was to theorize this intermediate domain between individualism and collectivism, these residual assumptions were making the task impossible. The perpetuation of older assumptions about "individualistic

behaviour" was making it difficult to envisage systems of social choice other than laissez-faire individualism and collectivism or authoritarianism.

Arrow was not calling his colleagues to account here for their failure to sympathize with or support radical reformist aims. He was taking them to task, rather, for their incapacity to describe what was actually happening. His contention was not that economists should build more interpersonally sympathetic individuals into their models in order that individuals in the real world might love one another. His argument was rather that there were solidaristic dynamics at play in economic life now which economists needed to encompass to do their descriptive work properly—dynamics which they were failing to capture because of their continuing fidelity to older "individualistic" assumptions.

> Part of each individual's value system must be a scheme of socio-ethical norms, the realization of which cannot, by their nature, be achieved through atomistic market behaviour.[43]

This was an empirical observation more than it was an aspirational proposition: if they were adequately to theorize processes of reform which were actually happening in non-dictatorial politics all around them, economists needed to find a way of factoring this "scheme of socio-ethical norms" into their models. It was left largely to Arrow's successors to devise the means of doing this—of making the individuals integral to economists' models more than the atomistic profit-makers early-nineteenth-century utilitarians had normalized. In a moment we shall turn to the work of the most distinguished of Arrow's successors, Amartya Sen. But it is worth pointing out that when Arrow tried to think about how this "scheme of socio-ethical norms" developed and affected individuals, and how those processes might be encompassed in economic theory, he seems to have thought about what he variously called "custom" or "convention" as the relevant coefficient—using the terms, that is, which Tawney (and Polanyi after him) used to describe what Thompson would redescribe as the "moral economy."[44] Arrow seems moreover to have looked to Tawney's history of capitalism to account for the ancient salience and modern desuetude of these things.[45]

Amartya Sen

Nihilism was one possible (if misconceived) response to Arrow's proof that if economists' assumptions about individual behavior and expectations of rationality were to be upheld, then genuine social choice was impossible. There were certainly some in the American academy who took this view.[46] A more constructive response was to recognize that there is more at play in politics

and economics in commercial societies than naked utilitarian self-interest and cold rationality, and to set about making political economy sensitive to these sentiments and solidarities. This constructive response to Arrow's provocation is best exemplified by the economist Amartya Sen.[47]

Born in Santiniketan—his maternal grandfather taught Sanskrit at Rabindranath Tagore's school; his mother had been a student there—Sen came across Arrow's work at the Presidency College in Calcutta among friends who were "broadly attracted to the left" but also "worried about political authoritarianism."[48] He read *Individual Values and Social Choice* not as an "argument for nihilism" but rather as a "positive contribution aimed at clarifying the role of principles in collective choice systems."[49] Sen came to Cambridge in 1953 to read for a second BA and found his teachers unimpressed by the importance of Arrow's work.[50] He was undeterred. With Arrow's impossibility theorem for a starting point, across a career in Indian, British, and American universities, Sen has distinguished himself as one of the most innovative economists of the postwar period. He would publish the speech he delivered in accepting the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1997 under the title "The Possibility of Social Choice."[51]

For Sen the question has not been *whether* a non-dictatorial politics of reform is possible, but *how*. The challenge has been to modify the formal analytical strictures under which economists work, supplanting older assumptions about "individualistic behaviour" with new conceptions of the individual more reflective of real lives. Arrow had suggested relatively minimal modifications to the working assumptions of welfare economists to overcome the "impossibility" his proof identified. He focused on the requirement for universality—the insistence that to be valid a system of collective choice must cover all contingencies irrespective of particularities of time and place. If we could rule *out* certain preference patterns as inconceivable, suspending this universality requirement, the "impossibility" result would be resolved and the other "natural conditions" would become sustainable. "Custom" or "convention" were ways to think about how a "scheme of socio-ethical norms" affecting a given set of individuals might work, ways of pre-ordaining individual preferences to prevent certain combinations which made values difficult to reconcile rationally from arising at all. Sen has taken a more radical view. "Once the nonbasic nature of the usual principles of collective choice is recognised," Sen explained in his 1970 book *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, the argument for their retention was much diminished.[52] What had once been taken to be "natural" laws which all systems of collective choice must obey stood revealed as acculturated expectations readily renegotiated. In manipulating these conditions, Sen has also taken an irreverent line toward some related professional strictures. While Arrow let Robbins's injunction

against interpersonal comparisons of utility stand, for instance, Sen insists that there are certain kinds of interpersonal comparisons which are "not entirely beyond our intellectual depth to think about"—choices in the nature of "choosing between being person *A* in social state *x* or being person *B* in social state *y*."[53] Disregarding the neoliberal injunction against interpersonal comparison opened up social choice theory at Sen's hand to concepts and considerations of equity and fairness, bringing Sen into critical conversation with John Rawls—with whom Sen and Arrow co-taught a seminar at Harvard University in 1968–69.[54]

The summative or representative aspect of Sen's iconoclasm—and the aspect which holds most interest in our discussion here—has been his assault upon utilitarian reduction of human beings to rational calculators, his disdain for the analytical uses of "the insular economic man pursuing his self-interest to the exclusion of all other considerations."[55] Whatever its applications in traditional economics, this conception of the human is "not," Sen insists, "a particularly useful model for understanding problems of social choice."[56] Legitimating interpersonal comparisons tended to some degree to insinuate sentiments of sympathy into individuals otherwise analytically devoid of such considerations. But Sen went further than this. Such exercises in imaginative sympathy—the expression of preferences "defined over the position of being any individual in any social state," given in the form "I would prefer to be Mr. *A* in state *x* rather than Mr. *B* in state *y*"—were a means of forcing preference-orderers to take account of the lives of others.[57] But Sen maintained that it was not only thus—through preference-givers turning circles under scrutiny—that sentiments like sympathy infiltrated the domains of self-interest. It would be a "mistake," Sen insisted, to carry on assuming as economists had long done that it was only in this artificial way that non-economic sentiments came up for discussion, "that preferences as they actually are do not involve any concern for others."[58] Considerations deemed extraneous in classical political economy were actually integral to economic lives:

> The society in which a person lives, the class to which he belongs, the relation that he has with the social and economic structure of the community, are relevant to a person's choice not merely because they affect the nature of his personal interests but also because they influence his value system including his notion of "due" concern for other members of society.[59]

Sen spelled out more clearly how he saw what Arrow had called "socio-ethical norms" falsifying economists' residual assumptions of "individualistic behaviour." He did so, moreover, with specific reference to ongoing work in contemporary "historical studies" in Britain—citing a 1955 survey of developing trends in modern British history as an indication that historians had some-

thing to teach economists about the way society textured personality, among other ways by inculcating certain notions of social solidarity or "'due' concern" for others.[60]

The moral economists had challenged utilitarian orthodoxy by raising strong claims for the "invaluable" or "infinite" importance of human personality—falsifying reductive concepts of economic man by articulating strong prescriptive claims about what more and what else besides making profit it means to be human. We have seen that when sustaining such claims became more difficult in the 1970s and 1980s, the moral economists' critique of capitalism ran out of steam. Earlier in this chapter we canvassed E. F. Schumacher's inventive but unconvincing efforts to substitute for Tawney's theological conception of human personality a versatile synthesis of distinct spiritual traditions. Did Sen harbor a strong conception of human personality to oppose to a reductive and recalcitrant "economic man" orthodoxy? Sen made some reference to Marx's humanism. In a recent discussion of contemporary Europe's indifference to the problem of unemployment, Sen rehearsed the *Men Without Work* study's arguments about the "psychological" ill effects of unemployment, citing early and late works by Karl Marx.[61] There might be more to say about Sen's conception of the human and its provenance by comparison with Thompson's conception of the human and its provenance by reference to the two men's familial relations to Rabindranath Tagore.[62]

But on the whole Sen handled the question of what more and what else besides cold rational calculators men and women happen to be less in the manner of Tawney and Thompson (using theology and natural theology to substantiate a strong conception of human personality) than in the manner of the later Polanyi (maintaining a more basic distinction between human nature and animal regularity to expose utilitarian reasoning as misconceived, insisting that there is something distinctive or special about human beings without need to specify what). "That all men are human," Sen quoted from an essay by the philosopher Bernard Williams in his 1972 Radcliffe Lectures *On Economic Inequality*, "is, if a tautology, a useful one, serving as a reminder that those who belong anatomically to the species *homo sapiens*, and can speak a language, use tools, live in societies, can interbreed despite racial differences, etc., are also alike in certain other respects more likely to be forgotten":

> These respects are notably the capacity to feel pain, both from immediate physical causes and from various situations represented in perception and in thought and the capacity to feel affection for others, and the consequences of this, connected with the frustration of this affection, loss of its object etc. The assertion that men are alike in the possession of these characteristics is, while indisputable and (it may be) even necessarily true, not

> trivial. For it is certain that there are political and social arrangements that systematically neglect these characteristics in the case of some groups of men, while being fully aware of them in the case of others; that is to say, they treat certain men as though they did not possess these characteristics, and neglect moral claims that arise from these characteristics and would be admitted to arise from them.[63]

This proposition that there are certain common characteristics which mark human beings off from the rest of creation was a more modest claim than either Tawney or Thompson or Polanyi in his Marxian phase had made on behalf of human personality. But it was a claim that was just as capable of challenging the reduction of men and women to cold and solipsistic utilitarian calculators. It was a claim much less liable to strain credulity in the anti-humanist atmosphere of late-twentieth-century intellectual life. And it was a claim that carried radical ramifications for economics—advanced here not from an enthusiastic fringe but by one of the discipline's most distinguished postwar theorists.

Histories of the Future

The moral economists' critique of capitalism was fundamentally optimistic: its starting point was that certain "solidarities" loomed unarticulated under capitalism, anticipating a social life closer than individualism admitted but freer than collectivism allowed. If the demise of this critical tradition in the late twentieth century tends to diminish that optimism, the vitality of social choice theory helps to redeem it. Discrete intersections between postwar social choice scholars' quest to theorize a non-dictatorial politics of reform and the moral economists' mission to raise "nameless solidarities" discovered in the north of England and elsewhere "to the level of articulacy" bespeak a profound complementarity. Under the aegis of social choice theory, the reconstitution of political economy toward which the moral economists' critique of capitalism moved became conceivable. But this does not mean that the historians' moral critique of capitalism should simply be set aside now as prologue to twenty-first-century social choice theory. There is still a role for history—indeed history may now be as important as ever.

One implication of the development of social choice theory in Sen's handling is that there is no one timeless system for reconciling individual values to reach social choices out there awaiting discovery by empyrean economists. "[W]hile purity is an uncomplicated virtue for olive oil, sea air, and heroines of folk tales," Sen wrote at the end of his major monograph on the topic, "it is not so for systems of collective choice."[64] Durable solidarity is not achieved

by approximate realization of some universal model. It is an improvised, practical accomplishment of particular peoples in specific times and places. Social choice theory is a framework for thinking about the kinds of "impurity" or irrationality a given society embodies and needs, an application for elucidating and building upon systems of collective choice already operating in real time. Such systems range from the relatively modest and self-contained—like the statutes and ordinances of a Cambridge college or the administrative procedures governing municipal planning decisions—to full-scale principles of social order. The commercial societies characteristic of the developed world in the modern period are systems of collective choice in this more expansive conception. The critique of capitalism past and present has been in this sense an exercise in "postulating principles of collective choice which this existing mechanism does not satisfy."[65]

Social choice theorists readily acknowledge that the formal rigor of their enterprise needs to be complemented and moderated by a capacity for "informal explication and accessible scrutiny."[66] This is in part because part of what determines whether the specific mix of "impurities" that constitutes a system of collective choice is *right* for a given domain is whether or not it is *seen to be* right. If the "bounded rationalities" that define any successful system of collective choice (we might call these combined "impurities" a corpus of "custom," or—better still—a "moral economy"), it follows that any given system of collective choice belongs to the people whose values it encompasses and whose decisions it makes, and that the success or failure of that system will depend in part on how readily a person can see the system as responsive to his or her own concerns.[67] Social choice theory is not a means of inventing a system of collective choice for a given society out of thin air. It is a device for improving the ways in which real groups and societies actually make decisions. The more meaningfully individuals in a group or society can engage in a debate about how their systems of collective choice work, and the more responsive these systems are to their members' concerns, the more effectively they will function.

The moral critique of capitalism reconstructed in this book enabled people to envisage a renegotiation of the terms of the systems of collective choice under which they lived. The moral economists made the remote and unyielding feel mutable and contingent, demonstrating that seemingly natural ways of thinking about human beings and their interactions in commercial society had once been novel and had always been contested. They opened up deeper questions of liberty and solidarity which discussions denominated in terms of material welfare exclusively could not fathom. The utilitarian orthodoxy they challenged has been modified in important ways now—in part by virtue of their labors. And the strong prescriptive conceptions of the human which

they used to make that challenge powerful have lost their force. But there are other ways of dignifying what is distinctively human, and there is still a need—in some ways there has never been a greater need—for that redemption. The moral economists' critique of capitalism moved toward a reconstitution of political economy from within. In postwar social choice theory we can see more clearly how this might work.

Politics pervades commercial societies, frustrating the technocratic visionaries of the twenty-first century just as it confounded the goat-and-greyhound utilitarians of the nineteenth century. The question is, what kind of politics? In an age of extremes the moral economists discovered in their midst the elements of humane, solidaristic, low-key, and non-authoritarian politics of reform, and then—using the "records of the past" to illuminate the contemporary "life of society"—they set about elucidating these elements, building on what was already there, giving their readers the means to participate in that process.[68] The elementary solidarities the moral economists built on have probably dissolved now, but such elements are always regenerating and dissolving again in commercial societies—that, at any rate, is the implication of the moral economists' histories and the social choice theorists' analyses. The question is not whether we have within our grasp the elements of a nondictatorial politics of reform. The question is what we can make of them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book can scarcely begin to repay the debts I have accumulated in the writing of it. Carolyn Evans, the late Peter Steele S. J., and Peter Krogh widened my horizons and helped me find the wherewithal to go exploring. Maya Jasanoff, John Murray, Colin Fenwick, Jim Secord, Howard Brick, Miles Taylor, Sam Moyn, and Duncan Kelly gave me bearings at important junctures. Freddy Foks, Alexandre Campsie, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, Stuart Middleton, Rosie Germain, David Shiels, Josh Gibson, Tom Arnold-Forster, Merve Fejzula, Laura Carter, Tom Stammers, Coel Kirkby, and Michael Englard shared ideas and interpretations with enthusiasm and generosity. Alexander Hutton has been a vital source of advice and criticism throughout. Gareth Stedman Jones, Chris Clark, the late Chris Bayly, John Thompson, Hans Van de Ven, Matthew Champion, and David Neaum helped me to sharpen my arguments. Martin Otero Knott lent me his erudition for a day or two, weeding a great deal of confusion out of the manuscript, lightening my step with friendship and humor. Participants in the Political Thought and Intellectual History Seminar at Oxford University, the Directors' Seminar at the Institute for Historical Research in London, the Modern Cultural History Seminar, the Political Thought and Intellectual History Seminar, and the Wolfson College Humanities Society Seminar—all in Cambridge—provided me with convivial forums in which to test some of these ideas. Guy Ortolano and Ben Jackson provided terrifically exacting and insightful reports for Princeton University Press, as did Joel Isaac and Chris Hilliard a couple of iterations earlier as examiners of my doctoral thesis. Stefan Collini's critical input and advice at two crucial moments compounded the benefits his scholarship has done me. The late Michael O'Brien gave me to believe that I had it in me to write intellectual history. Peter Mandler has overseen my endeavors with extraordinary patience and perspicacity: no apprentice could hope for more in a master. Archivists at the Karl Polanyi Centre for Political Economy in Montreal, the Special Collections Center at the University of Chicago, the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University, the New York Public Library, the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University, the Ar-

chives and Special Collections at the London School of Economics, Chatham House, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and the University Library in Cambridge facilitated my inquiries with dexterity. I'm grateful to Ben Tate at Princeton University Press for his assured handling of the project, and to Karen Verde, Sheila Bodell, and especially to Debbie Tegarden for the care they have taken in this book's production. Errors and infelicities remain, no doubt, and they are mine alone to answer for.

The Cambridge Commonwealth Trust and the Institute for Historical Research in London funded the research upon which this book is based. The Master and Fellows of Peterhouse, Cambridge and the Faculty of History in the University of Cambridge made various provisions for archival trips. The Master and Fellows of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, elected me to the fellowship and lectureship which have enabled me to write this book. I'm grateful to trustees in each institution for their support. Friends beyond the discipline and outside academia have also been good enough to give me the benefit of the doubt. My "elevator pitch" has never been pithy, and this made me all the more grateful for company in which it didn't need to be. Conversations of a certain cadence in Melbourne pubs and around Cambridge dinner tables and over counter-top coffee in King's Cross have helped me to bring this book to term. Thanks for bearing with me. Thanks especially to Simon Harari for helping me see ways wanting wear and turning up at my side from time to time with a story to square the shoulders. Thanks too to Ariela Dubler and Jesse Furman, whose warmth and hospitality knew no bounds: they may be pleased to learn that it was on the bookshelf in their living room in September 2008 that I first laid eyes on *The Making of the English Working Class*.

Some of the ways in which my family have helped me they know—reading drafts, receiving impressions, relieving me of household duties, humoring bouts of remoteness and preoccupation. Most of the ways in which they have helped me they cannot know, any more than I can. There can be no reckoning of their contribution, but I can point to the aspects of it of which I'm especially mindful. Monika and Werner Schweizer together with Barbara, Regula, and Michèle received barbarian Rogans into their lives with great heart and imagination, and between them took up much of the slack when working on this kept me away from their grandsons and nephews. Brigitte Rogan can probably now measure the distance between Melbourne and Cambridge better than anyone, but she's been anything but remote from this enterprise, and following her progress as a teacher and leader from afar has helped me to remember where a book like this sits in the broader scheme of things. Susan and Peter Rogan have been among many other things my first and best teachers, and it was gratifying to realize—with new clarity, talking politics round the dinner table in Cambridge during the eventful summer of 2016—how far the line of

thought developed in these pages reproduces in combination their own distinct ways of thinking about the world. Nick and Raphael rightly find "work" mysterious and impertinent, but I hope that one day they might esteem this particular piece of work at least worthwhile. Their mother—my best reader—has hardly read a page of this, working motherhood being what it is, but she has helped me to write every word.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2014); Anthony Atkinson, *Inequality: What Is to Be Done?* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015).

2. For the German usage, see Ingomar Bog, "Kapitalismus," in Willi Albers et al., eds., *Handwörterbuch der Wirtschaftswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer, 1988), 418–432. For the English, R. M. Hartwell and Stanley L. Engerman, "Capitalism," in Joel Mokyr, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History*, Vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 319–325.

3. For minority voices persevering with "moral" or "spiritual" critiques, including contributions from "Blue Labour" figures and *Red Tory* author Philip Blond, see Rowan Williams and Larry Elliot, eds., *Crisis and Recovery: Ethics, Economics and Justice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Another way to put my point would be to say that these three books belong on Susan Pedersen's "special shelf reserved for writings that genuinely lead their readers to see fundamental social and economic structures in a new light": Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 202.

4. J. A. Hobson on under-consumption, and later J. M. Keynes on aggregate demand and unemployment, are among Piketty's precursors: J. A. Hobson, *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism* (London: Walter Scott, 1894); J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1902); J. M. Keynes, *A General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (London: Macmillan, 1936).

5. R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: John Murray, 1926); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963). Page references for these books are given throughout here to more widely available later editions: R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980). For *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* and *The Great Transformation* there is no material difference between the text of earlier and later editions. Thompson did elaborate on parts of his argument in *The Making of the English Working Class* for the 1968 edition, reproduced with a new preface in 1980. For that reason, when citing Thompson's book I have also given page references for the relevant passages in the original Gollancz edition, in parentheses after the page references to the 1980 edition. Where there is any discrepancy between the relevant passages of the 1963 and 1980 editions I have made a brief note of that.

6. For reluctance to take "capitalism" seriously before Tawney, see the preface to the 1937

edition of *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, reprinted in paperback the following year: Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, vii–xiii. For a sense of and explanation for current aversion to the concept in some quarters, see Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 6.

7. See, e.g., Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009); Atkinson, *Inequality*, 4–5.

8. Donald Winch, "Mr. Gradgrind and Jerusalem," in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young, eds., *Economy, Polity and Society: British Intellectual History, 1750–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 243–266, 258–259. Elie Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, trans. Mary Morris (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928). On Dicey, see Stefan Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology: L. T. Hobhouse and Political Argument in England, 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For a sense of Halévy's importance in fashioning mid-twentieth century conceptions of the utilitarianism of the mid-Victorians, see further Julia Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics: The Social and Political Thought of Ernest Barker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 126–127; Eric Rosen, "Eric Stokes, British Utilitarianism and India," in Martin Moir, Douglas Peers, and Lynn Zastoupil, eds., *J. S. Mill's Encounter with India* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 18–33.

9. J. S. Mill, "On the Definition of Political Economy; and on the Method of Investigation Proper to It" (1836), in *Collected Works* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 4:321–323, cited in Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Smith, Condorcet and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 50.

10. On the contemporary currency and meaning of that terminology, see Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, 13–50. On the limitations of this terminology as reproduced by historians, see John Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 153.

11. J. M. Winter, ed., *R. H. Tawney's Commonplace Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 65.

12. Ibid.

13. For a nuanced recent treatment of this process of secularization in twentieth-century Britain, see S.J.D. Green, *The Passing of Protestant England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For a critical overview of the historiography of secularization in modern Britain, see Jeremy Morris, "The Strange Death of Christian Britain: Another Look at the Secularisation Debate," *Historical Journal* 46 (2003): 963–976.

14. For a bracing new account of the onset of this anti-humanist skepticism, centered around a recovery of the neo-Hegelian thought of Alexandre Kojève, see Stefanos Geroulanos, *An Atheism That Is Not Humanist Emerges in French Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

15. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grover Press, 1965), 252.

16. E. P. Thompson, "An Open Letter to Leszek Kolakowski," in Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London: Merlin, 1978), 93–192, 141; Judith Shklar, "What Is the Use of Utopia?," in Stanley Hoffman, ed., *Political Thought and Political Thinkers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 175–190, 190.

17. See, e.g., David Marquand, *Mammon's Kingdom: An Essay on Britain Now* (London: Penguin, 2015).

18. For an interim appraisal of the diversity of the term's uses in history, economics, and an-

thropology, see E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy Reviewed," in E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: Penguin, 1991), 259–351. For an application of the concept in twentieth-century British history, see Jim Tomlinson, "Re-inventing the 'moral economy' in postwar Britain," *Historical Research* 84 (2011): 356–373. For a sense of the wider valences of the concept, see Lorraine Daston, "The Moral Economy of Science," *Osiris* 10 (1995): 2–24. For a sense of how the concept has slipped loose of its original context, see Norbert Götz, "'Moral Economy': Its Conceptual History and Analytical Prospects," *Journal of Global Ethics* 11 (2015): 147–162.

19. Maurice Glasman's writings—drawing primarily on Polanyi—are the nearest contemporary equivalent of the moral economists' critique. For Glasman's early soundings, see Maurice Glasman, *Unnecessary Suffering: Managing Market Utopia* (London and New York: Verso Books, 1996). For more recent iterations, see Maurice Glasman, "Labour as a Radical Tradition," in Maurice Glasman et al., eds., *The Labour Tradition and the Politics of Paradox* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2011), 14–34. For an appraisal, see David Runciman, "Socialism in One County," *London Review of Books* 33(15) (2011): 11–13.

20. Marquand, *Mammon's Kingdom*; Williams and Elliot, *Crisis and Recovery*; Glasman, *Unnecessary Suffering*.

21. Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments*, ch. 2. See also Donald Winch, *Adam Smith's Politics: An Essay in Historiographical Revision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

22. Ibid., 65–66, citing Beatrice Webb, "Diary," July 30, 1886, Passfield Manuscripts, London School of Economics, and James Bonar, "The Revolutionary Element in Adam Smith," *National Liberal Club Transactions* 99 (1924): 6–7.

23. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 119.

24. Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 132.

25. For adverse commentary on Thompson's critique of political economy, see Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice in *The Wealth of Nations*," in Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 389–446, 405–406; Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5–6; Winch, "Mr Gradgrind and Jerusalem," 262, 266; Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty? A Historical Debate* (London: Profile Books, 2004), 229–230.

26. Amartya Sen, *On Economic Inequality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

27. Kenneth Arrow, *Individual Values and Social Choice*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

28. Kenneth Arrow, "A Difficulty in the Concept of Social Welfare," *Journal of Political Economy* 58 (1949): 328–346, 343–344.

29. Arrow, *Social Choice*, 1 n.1.

30. Amartya Sen, "The Possibility of Social Choice," *American Economic Review* 89 (1999): 349–378, 350–351.

Chapter 1. R. H. Tawney

1. Though not there alone. For a sense of the wider reach of Tawney's contemporary readership, see, e.g., Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*

(London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), 23–24. Tawney's following in the United States goes back to the earliest appearance in print of his 1922 Scott Holland Lectures, published in the Chicago-based *Journal of Political Economy*: R. H. Tawney, "Religious Thought on Social and Economic Questions in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of Political Economy* 31 (1923): 461–493, 637–674, 804–825. Evidence of print runs and other indices of influence are presented in James Kirby, "R. H. Tawney and Christian Social Teaching: *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* Reconsidered," *English Historical Review* 131 (2016): 793–822.

2. Stefan Collini, *Common Writing: Essays on Literary Culture and Public Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 195.

3. Lawrence Goldman provides a thorough review of the controversy over the breakaway Social Democratic Party's 1982 decision to call its policy forum The Tawney Society: Lawrence Goldman, *The Life of R. H. Tawney: Socialism and History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 305–309.

4. Collini, *Common Writing*, 191.

5. Stefan Collini, "Moral Mind: R. H. Tawney," in Collini, *English Pasts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 177–195, 190 (though lately Collini's stance has softened: Collini, *Common Writing*, 190–199); Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Socialism of R. H. Tawney," *New York Review of Books*, July 30, 1964; Jim Tomlinson, "The Limits of Tawney's Ethical Socialism: A Historical Perspective on the Labour Party and the Market," *Contemporary British History* 16(4) (2002): 1–16; Susan Pedersen, "Only Men in Mind," *London Review of Books* 36(16) (2014): 29–30.

6. The best work has been done in the past five years: Goldman, *Life of Tawney*; Kirby, "Tawney and Christian Social Teaching." Jay Winter's contribution was ahead of its time: Jay Winter, "R. H. Tawney's Early Political Thought," *Past and Present* 47 (1970): 71–96. A pivotal broader treatment encompassing Tawney was Stefan Collini, "Where Did It All Go Wrong? Cultural Critics and 'Modernity' in Interwar Britain," in E.H.H. Green and Duncan Tanner, *The Strange Survival of Liberal England: Political Leaders, Moral Values and the Reception of Economic Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 247–274. Works engaged with directly in what follows include: Ben Jackson, *Equality and the British Left: A Study of Progressive Political Thought, 1900–64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Marc Stears, *Progressives, Pluralists and the Problems of the State: Ideologies of Reform in the United States and Britain 1909–1926* (Oxford and Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). Other relevant works include Ross Terrill, *R. H. Tawney and His Times: Socialism as Fellowship* (London: Deutsch, 1974); S.J.D. Green, "The Tawney-Strauss Connection: On Historicism and Values in the History of Political Ideas," *Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 255–277; Gary Armstrong and Tim Gray, *The Authentic Tawney: A New Interpretation of the Political Thought of R. H. Tawney* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2011).

7. Collini, *Common Writing*, 191.

8. Ibid.

9. MacIntyre, "Socialism of R. H. Tawney"; Collini, "Moral Mind"; Pedersen, "Only Men in Mind."

10. Jackson, *Equality*, ch. 5; Stears, *Progressives*, chs. 3 and 5; Goldman, *Tawney*, 5.

11. Collini, "Cultural Critics."

12. R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society* (London: Bell, 1921); R. H. Tawney, *Equality* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931). There is also of course Tawney's role in the "storm over the gentry":

for an account of the arguments with Hugh Trevor-Roper, see J. H. Hexter, "The Storm Over the Gentry: The Tawney-Trevor-Roper Controversy," *Encounter* 10(5) (1958): 22–34. Still less prominent is Tawney's *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912).

13. For evidence of this tendency to focus on the minor works see Jackson, *Equality*, and Stears, *Progressives*, both listing *The Acquisitive Society* and *Equality* together with *Secondary Education for All* but not *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* in their bibliographies. See also Goldman, *Tawney*, 5. This tendency to focus on *Equality* and *Acquisitive Society* is remarked upon and reproved in convincing terms by Kirby, "Tawney and Christian Social Teaching," 794. The major exception to the trend is Collini, "Cultural Critics."

14. The characterization of Tawney's work as perpetuating an older individualism originates in Anderson, "Cultural Components" and more specifically in Stedman-Jones, "Pathology of English History." It was reiterated more recently and from a distinct critical standpoint by Marc Stears: "Guild Socialism and Ideological Diversity on the British Left, 1914–1926," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 3 (1998): 289–306, 298.

15. Tawney, "The Study of Economic History," *Economica* 39 (1933): 1–21, 9.

16. For a survey of discussion of the role of religion in Tawney's thinking, see Kirby, "Tawney and Christian Social Teaching."

17. Goldman, *Tawney*, 22.

18. Ibid., 30.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., 63.

21. As Jay Winter has recognized: Winter, "Tawney's Early Political Thought," 71–76.

22. Ibid., 30.

23. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 13.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Goldman, *Tawney*, 21.

27. Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

28. On Tawney's differences with the Fabians, see Winter, "Early Political Thought."

29. Goldman, *Tawney*, 28.

30. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 62–65.

31. Ibid., 72.

32. Ibid., 32.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., 62.

35. Ibid., 56.

36. Ibid., 9.

37. The best overall account of the onset of this crisis is Keith Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society: The Experience of the British System since 1911* (London: Deutsch, 1979), ch. 1. Part of the inspiration to Middlemas's account is George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Constable, 1936). More comes from Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

38. For accounts of WSPU militancy, see Andrew Rosen, *Rise Up, Women! The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union, 1903—1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), and Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). For a sense of the rivalry between militant and constitutionalist factions within the suffrage movement, see Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone*, ch. 7.

39. On the Ulster crisis, see D. G. Boyce, "The Ulster Crisis: Prelude to 1916?" in Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh, *1916; The Long Revolution* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2007), 45–60. On the Conservatives' role, see Robert Saunders, "Tory Rebels and Tory Democracy: The Ulster Crisis, 1900–1914," in Bradley Hart and Richard Carr, *The Foundations of the British Conservative Party* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 65–83. On Ulster and Unionism in British public opinion, see Patricia Jalland, *The Liberals and Ireland: The Ulster Question in British Politics to 1914* (Sussex: Hassocks, 1980); Daniel M. Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009); and G. K. Peatling, *British Opinion and Irish Self-Government, 1865–1925* (Dublin and Portland: Irish Academic Press, 2001). For a recent review of the literature, see Eugenio Biagini, "The Third Home Rule Bill in British History," in G. Doherty, ed., *The Home Rule Crisis 1912–14* (Cork: Mercer Press, 2014), 412–442.

40. On the industrial situation, see Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, ch. 2.

41. Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

42. R. H. Tawney, "Poverty as an Industrial Problem," *Memoranda on the Problems of Poverty*, 2 (1913): 12, quoted in Winter, "Tawney's Early Political Thought," 80.

43. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 25.

44. Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T. H. Green and His Age* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1964), chs. 1–3.

45. Bernard Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (London: Macmillan, 1899).

46. For a sense of the complexities of this dispensation, see Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785–1965* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

47. James Cronin, *The Politics of State Expansion: War, State and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1991); Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, ch. 7.

48. For an account of the Scottish Church case, see K. R. Ross, *Church and Creed in Scotland: The Free Church Case 1900–1904 and Its Origins* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1988); David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 134–138. For a contemporary perspective, see J. N. Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State* (London: Longmans Green, 1913).

49. For an account of the Taff Vale case, see John Saville, "Trade Unions and Free Labour: The Background to the Taff Vale Decision," in A. Briggs and J. Saville, eds., *Essays in Labour History in Memory of G. D. H. Cole* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 317–350; Runciman, *Pluralism*, 141–143.

50. Graham Wallas, *The Great Society* (London: Macmillan, 1914), 10; Dangerfield, *Liberal England*, 123. Tawney's 1914 likening of unrest among workers in this period to "the struggles of a man who feels that he hears a message of tremendous significance, but who cannot find words

in which to express it," "gesticulating," "struggling with himself," being "borne by the spirit" anticipates Dangerfield's characterization: see Winter, "Tawney's Early Political Thought," 82 n44.

51. Dangerfield, *Liberal England*, 122–123.

52. Wallas, *Great Society*, 10–11; Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 25.

53. Wallas, *Great Society*, 11.

54. Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*.

55. A. V. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation Between Law & Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1908). For a sense of the problems with Dicey's surmise in its own terms, see Harris, *Private Lives*, 11. For a critique of its terms, see Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, 13–50; Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals*, 153.

56. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, chs. 3–5.

57. L. T. Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1918).

58. Ibid., 6.

59. F. W. Maitland, *State, Trust and Corporation*, ed. Magnus Ryan and David Runciman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

60. F. W. Maitland, "Moral Personality and Legal Personality," in Maitland, *State, Trust and Corporation*, 62–74, 66.

61. F. W. Maitland, "The Corporation Sole," in Maitland, *State, Trust and Corporation*, 9–32.

62. See Runciman, *Pluralism*, 89–91.

63. Ibid., 37.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., ch. 3.

66. Otto von Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, ed. F. W. Maitland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900).

67. Runciman, *Pluralism*, 76–79.

68. Ibid., 81.

69. Otto von Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society*, trans. Ernest Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934)1: ix–xci.

70. Ibid.

71. See Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics*, 134–135.

72. The seminal text was Arthur Penty, *The Restoration of the Gild System* (London: S. Sonenschein & Co., 1906). For a contemporary history, see G.D.H. Cole, "The National Guilds Movement in Great Britain," *Monthly Labour Review* 9 (1919): 24–32.

73. On medievalism and modernity, see, e.g., Michael Saler, *The Avant-garde in Interwar England: Medieval Modernism and the London Underground* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

74. Cole, "National Guilds."

75. See further Martin Wallace, *The New Age Under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967).

76. Cole, "National Guilds," 24.

77. Most such initiatives—the young Harold Macmillan's proposals for an industrial parliament was another—proved abortive. Keith Middlemas is surely right to say that the only

consequential form of "corporatism" realized in Great Britain was the informal process of rapprochement and centralization involving trade unions, employer groups, and government after 1916: Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, chs. 1, 2.

78. G.D.H. Cole, "Guild Socialism," *New Britain*, July 4, 1934, 184: "As far as Great Britain is concerned, the Guild Socialist movement as a movement has passed into history." For a broader continental perspective on the fate of guild socialism and kindred movements amidst fascism, see Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 52–55.

79. Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). The most convincing historiographical framework within which these "corporatist" developments have been encompassed is Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, itself inspired by Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe.* An influential derivative of these approaches is Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1990).

80. Cole, "Guild Socialism."

81. Margaret Cole, *Life of G. D. H. Cole* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 71, cited in Runciman, *Pluralism*, 165; G.D.H. Cole, *Social Theory* (London: Methuen, 1920), xx.

82. Cole, *Social Theory*, 6.

83. Ibid.

84. G.D.H. Cole, *The World of Labour: A Discussion of the Present and Future of Trade Unionism* (London: G. Bell, 1913), 9; cited in Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain: Romantic Protest 1945–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 25.

85. Cole, *Social Theory*, 169.

86. Ibid., 6–7.

87. Ibid., 11.

88. For an analysis of this trend, see Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley Press, 2002). The preeminent account of the ways in which internationalism became a means of enacting purposes previously pursued through national or imperial institutions is now Susan Pederson, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

89. Runciman, *Pluralism*, 176.

90. Cole, *Social Theory*, 18.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., 19.

93. Ibid., 18.

94. Ibid., 9.

95. Peter Laslett, "Introduction," in Peter Laslett, ed., *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956).

96. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 132.

97. Runciman, *Pluralists*, 196.

98. This terminology is taken from Runciman, *Pluralists*, chs. 2 and 3.

99. In fact "muddling through" only came to be associated with Englishness in the 1890s: Peter Mandler, *The English National Character* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), ch. 4.

100. On tradition, see Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics*, ch. 7; Julia Stapleton, *Sir Arthur Bryant and National History in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005); Philip Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin: Conservative Leadership, National Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Mandler, *English National Character*; John Baxendale, *J. B. Priestley's England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). On domesticity and privacy, see Raphael Samuel, "Introduction: Exciting to be English," in R. Samuel, ed., *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* (London: Routledge, 1989), I, xvii–lxvii; Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 2003).

101. Goldman, *Tawney*, 84.

102. Ibid., 86.

103. Thomas Jones, *Whitehall Diary: Volume 1 1916–1925*, ed. Keith Middlemas (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 2–4.

104. See, e.g., Jones, *Whitehall Diary*, 157, finding Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Robert Hoare in receipt of a copy of Tawney's *Acquisitive Society*.

105. Goldman, *Tawney*, 114.

106. Ibid.

107. Cole, "The National Guilds Movement," 27.

108. Goldman, *Tawney*.

109. Runciman, *Pluralism*, 207.

110. R. H. Tawney, "We Mean Freedom" (1946), in R. H. Tawney, *The Attack and Other Papers* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953), 82–100.

111. R. H. Tawney, "Social Democracy in Britain" (1949), in R. H. Tawney, *The Radical Tradition*, ed. Rita Hinden (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 164.

112. Ibid.

113. Stears, "Guild Socialism," 292.

114. Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, 23.

115. Stears, "Guild Socialism," 298; Stears, *Progressives*, ch. 3; Perry Anderson, "Components of the National Culture," *New Left Review* 50 (July–August 1968): 1–51; Gareth Stedman Jones, "The Pathology of English History," *New Left Review* 46 (1967): 29–43.

116. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 25–26.

117. Ibid., 25.

118. For Tawney's readings of Figgis, see Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 19.

119. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 20, quoting John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* bk ii ch. ix § 124.

120. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 15.

121. Goldman, *Tawney*, 21.

122. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 65.

123. Charles Gore, ed., *Lux Mundi: a Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation* (London: John Murray, 1889). For a sense of the significance of the CSU in the context of the Victorian Christian Socialist movement out of which it emerged, see E. R. Norman, *The Victorian Christian Socialists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), ch. 9. For alternative perspectives on Christian Socialism, see Gregory Claeys, *Citizens and Saints: Politics and Anti-politics in Early British Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); John Saville,

"The Christian Socialists of 1848," in John Saville, ed., *Democracy and the Labour Movement: Essays in Honour of Dona Torr* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1954), 135–159.

124. On the latter, see Norman, *Victorian Christian Socialists*, 14–34.

125. Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, Community and the Church of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 38.

126. H. Scott Holland, *Our Neighbours: A Handbook for the C.S.U.* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1911), 145; cited in Grimley, *Citizenship*, 38.

127. Goldman, *Tawney*, 110.

128. Charles Gore, *Christianity Applied to the Life of Men and Nations* (London: John Murray, 1940).

129. Ibid., 31.

130. Ibid., 27.

131. Ibid., 25–26.

132. On this "moment" see Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity, 1920–1990* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 86–99, 302–308; E. R. Norman, *Church and Society in England, 1770–1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), ch. 6; Green, *Protestant England*, 158ff.

133. R. H. Tawney, "A Note on Christianity and the Social Order," in Tawney, *The Attack*, 167–192, 176. Tawney noted in a short preface to the essay in this volume that his "debt to the thought of two great men, the late Bishop Gore and Archbishop Temple," was "both obvious and beyond acknowledgement."

134. Tawney, "Christianity and the Social Order," 182–183.

135. R. H. Tawney, "An Experiment in Democratic Education" (1914), reprinted in Tawney, *Radical Tradition*, 70–81; Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Socialism of R. H. Tawney," *New York Review of Books*, July 30, 1964.

136. Collini, "Moral Mind," 190.

137. Ibid., 190.

138. Ibid., 192.

139. MacIntyre, "Socialism of R. H. Tawney."

140. In this connection see Kirby, "Tawney and Christian Social Teaching."

141. For a sense of the strengthened emphasis and conviction of Tawney's arguments later in the interwar period, see the preface to the 1937 edition of *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, reprinted in paperback the following year: Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, vii–xiii.

142. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 67.

143. The claim that no other work of history was more widely read between the wars is Goldman's, but he provides no evidence to support that claim: Goldman, *Tawney*, 1. Kirby measures readership most resourcefully: Kirby, "Tawney and Christian Social Teaching."

144. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 65.

145. Cited in Peter Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 189.

146. R. H. Tawney, *J. L. Hammond, 1872–1949* (London: Oxford University Press, for the British Academy, 1961).

147. Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 196.

148. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 20, quoting Locke, *Two Treatises*.

149. Ibid., 173–174.

150. Ibid., 174.

151. Ibid., 105–106.

152. Ibid., 106.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid., 187.

155. Ibid., 188.

156. Ibid., 19–20.

157. John Strachey, *What Are We to Do?* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), 119, n1, cited in Jackson, *Equality*, 112.

158. Harold Laski, "Review of *The Acquisitive Society*," *Left News*, September 1937, 514–515, 514, cited in Jackson, *Equality*, 96.

159. Many of Tawney's relatively like-minded contemporaries went looking for more impetuous programs for reform than he was offering after Labour's decimation in the 1931 election. Clement Attlee's case is illustrative: see John Bew, *Citizen Clem: A Biography of Attlee* (London: Riverrun, 2016), 170–175.

160. Tawney, "Study of Economic History," 9.

161. See, e.g., Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 152, 188, 230; R. H. Tawney, *Social History and Literature* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 20.

162. Tawney, *Agrarian Problem*, 347.

163. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 25.

164. Ibid., 188.

165. Tawney, *Social History and Literature*, 20.

166. Ibid.

167. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 25.

Chapter 2. Karl Polanyi

1. R. H. Tawney, "Christianity and the Social Revolution," *New Statesman and Nation*, November 9, 1935, 682–684, reprinted in Tawney, *The Attack*, 157–166.

2. On Marxism in Britain in the 1920s, see Stuart MacIntyre, *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain 1917–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). For a sense of Marxism in Britain in the 1930s, see Gary Werskey, *The Visible College* (London: Allen Lane, 1978). An illuminating perspective is also available in Tim Shenk, *Maurice Dobb: Political Economist* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), ch. 4.

3. Tawney, "Christianity and the Social Revolution," 161.

4. Ibid.

5. Charles Raven put the point more vividly in his introduction to the 1935 volume:

> The cast-iron closed system which rightly or wrongly we have associated with Marxism has been rendered elastic and transformable . . . what matters is that the original theory which logically left no room for personality or spiritual theory has been drastically reshaped; that materialist concepts, in the strict sense of the words, are now anathema.

Charles Raven, "Introduction," in J. Lewis et al., eds., *Christianity and Social Revolution* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935), 15–30, 24.

6. Pius XII, *Quadragesimo Anno* [Encyclical Letter on Reconstruction of the Social Order],

accessed April 13, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html.

7. For such conceptions of communism, and the concomitant notion of Christian perspective as distinctively "moral," see, e.g., Percy Dearmer, ed., *Christianity and the Crisis* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933), 111: "The first moral objection to Communism, apart from all questions of its unworkability is its dependence upon force, not only in its inception, but for its maintenance," quoted in Norman, *Church and Society in England*, 352.

8. Tawney, "Christianity and Social Revolution," 163.

9. Ibid., 161.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.; Karl Polanyi, "The Essence of Fascism," in Lewis, ed., *Christianity and Social Revolution*, 359–394, 365.

13. Karl Polanyi to Irene Grant et al., "Xmas 1933," Michael Polanyi Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library (MPP), 17/4.

14. For a recent account of the intellectual counter-insurgency which anticipated the civil war and the emergence of the Austrofascist *Standestaat* in 1934, see Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918–1938* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014).

15. Charles P. Kindleberger, "*The Great Transformation* by Karl Polanyi," *Daedelus* 103 (1974): 45–52.

16. The expatriate Scottish sociologist Robert MacIver was Polanyi's major supporter in the United States, writing the foreword to *The Great Transformation* and then securing Polanyi a temporary job teaching history in the economics department at Columbia University in 1947: on the latter development, see Gareth Dale, *Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 202–203.

17. Anderson, "Components of the National Culture."

18. Karl Polanyi, "Adult Education and the Working Class Outlook," *Tutors' Bulletin for Adult Education* (November 1946): 8–11, 10.

19. The proposition that historians of Tawney's generation perpetuated the "leathery" individualism of the nineteenth century came from Gareth Stedman Jones, in an article referred to with approval in Perry Anderson's 1968 essay: "The Pathology of English History," *New Left Review* 46 (November–December 1967): 29–43.

20. Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus: Die Frühschriften*, ed. J. P. Mayer and S. Landshut (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1932).

21. F. A. Hayek, "History and Politics," in F. A. Hayek and T. S. Ashton, eds., *Capitalism and the Historians* (London: Routledge, 1954), 3–30, 4.

22. See, for instance, Fred Block and Margaret Somers, "The Return of Karl Polanyi," *Dissent* (2014), accessed November 9, 2016: https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-return-of-karl-Polanyi. The collection of a series of Block and Somers's writings on Polanyi together with new material in a recent volume is further evidence of Polanyi's growing contemporary notoriety: Fred Block and Margaret Somers, *The Power of Market Fundamentalism: Karl Polanyi's Critique* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). Another indicator is the new prominence in English debate of Wolfgang Streeck, who draws extensively on Polanyi's writings: see, e.g.,

Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End? Essays on a Failing System* (London: Verso Books, 2016).

23. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 131.

24. The word utilitarianism is not indexed in *The Great Transformation*, though Polanyi uses the word to describe the tendencies in political economy he deprecates repeatedly; the more typical term for him is "economic liberal." See, e.g., Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 146. That utilitarianism was indeed the focal point of Polanyi's critique as it had been for Tawney before and would be for Thompson after is confirmed in an exchange between Polanyi and one of his students (captured by his biographer) in the mid-1950s: "In one missive, not atypical, Polanyi hurls a volley of highfalutin and, to a substantivist, utterly merciless insults at his former student: 'Your defense of redistribution . . . is not only *catallactic*, but the Benthamite variant of it: *utilitarian*.' This letter, the stung acolyte replied, made him feel 'like a heretic in receipt of a Papal Bull telling him why he's been excommunicated from the communion of the True Church' ": Dale, *Karl Polanyi*, 219.

25. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, March 4, 1961, Karl Polanyi Papers, Concordia University, Montreal (KPP), 57/08.

26. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, January 21, 1957, KPP, 57/08.

27. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, March 4, 1961, 57/8; Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, October 26, 1943, MPP, 17/10.

28. The best account in English of this milieu is Lee Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought: Hungarian Intellectuals in Germany and Austria, 1919–1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Gareth Dale's recent intellectual biography of Karl Polanyi is another rich resource in relation both to Polanyi personally and to circles in which he moved in Budapest: Dale, *Karl Polanyi*, ch. 1. Intellectual biographies of Michael Polanyi and of Karl Mannheim hold further interest: Mary Jo Nye, *Michael Polanyi and His Generation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), ch. 1; David Loader, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim: Culture, Politics and Planning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

29. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 9.

30. Ibid., 10.

31. For a miniature profile of Jaszi, see Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 213–217.

32. Ibid., 19.

33. On Polanyi's relationship with Jaszi, see Dale, *Karl Polanyi*, 74–75; Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 174–175; Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 217–226.

34. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 17.

35. Ibid., 37.

36. Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 149–51.

37. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 215; Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 149–151.

38. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 221.

39. Polanyi's father was affected by this, and it seems to have been hereditary: Dale, *Polanyi*, 16, 110. For an illuminating discussion of Anglophilia in Europe, see Ian Buruma, *Voltaire's Coconuts or Anglomania in Europe* (London: Phoenix Books, 2000).

40. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 19.

41. Transcript of Interview of Irene Grant by Kari Polanyi Levitt, KPP, 30/3, 11.

42. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 219.

43. Karl Polanyi, "Hamlet" *Yale Review* (Spring 1954): 336–350, 337; Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 219.

44. Kenneth McRobbie, "Under the Sign of the Pendulum: Childhood Experience as Determining Revolutionary Consciousness. Ilona Duczinska Polanyi," *Canadian Journal of History* 41 (2006): 263–298, 268.

45. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 19.

46. So, at any rate, she would later recall. The most comprehensive English-language reconstruction of the activities of the émigré intellectuals—Lee Congdon's *Exile and Social Thought*—draws extensively on memoirs published in the 1970s. Their veracity is open to question. But more contemporary sources lend plausibility to Duczynska's later claim. A student of Polanyi's who came to know the pair in the late 1930s recalled Polanyi speaking darkly in connection with Duczynska of how "in his country when the peasants wanted to change the government they 'straightened the scythe'": Stephen Mummery to Irene Grant, June 13, 1964, KPP, 56/16.

47. Karl Polanyi, "Sozialistische Rechnungslegung," *Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 49 (1922): 377–420.

48. Ludwig Mises, "Neue Beiträge zum Problem der sozialistischen Wirtschaftsrechtnung," *Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 51 (1924): 448–500; F. A. Hayek, ed., *Collectivist Economic Planning* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1935), cited in Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 223, 229.

49. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 220.

50. Ibid., 228.

51. Peter F. Drucker, *Adventures of a Bystander* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 126, cited in Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 227. On Polanyi's relationship with Drucker, a pioneering management theorist unknown now outside business schools but revered within them, see Daniel Immerwahr, "Polanyi in the United States: Peter Drucker, Karl Polanyi, and the Mid-century Critique of Economic Society," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70 (2009): 445–466.

52. Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 146.

53. Donald and Irene Grant, "Letter to the Editor," *New Statesman*, July 11, 1934.

54. Karl Polanyi, "Austrian Developments," June 18, 1933, Royal Institute for International Affairs (RIIA) Transcripts, 8/280; Karl Polanyi, "The Struggle in Austria," February 19, 1934, RIIA Transcripts, 8/315.

55. Karl Polanyi to Irene Grant, undated, MPP, 17/4.

56. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 217.

57. In this connection see Ilona Duczynska, *Workers in Arms: The Austrian Schutzbund and the Civil War of 1934* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

58. Karl Polanyi, "Conflicting Philosophies in Europe," undated, KPP, 16/10. See also passages from a 1936 essay quoted by Gareth Dale, finding Polanyi extolling "Anglo-Saxon" traditions of religious tolerance, political democracy, and liberal humanitarianism as "infinitely treasured" assets in the "common fund of Universal peace and progress": Dale, *Polanyi*, 110.

59. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, April 11, 1933, MPP, 17/4.

60. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, January 21, 1957, KPP, 57/8. For further elucidation of the brothers' estrangement, see Dale, *Polanyi*, 139–143.

61. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, January 21, 1957.

62. Michael Polanyi wrote a damning review of the Webb's study of the Soviet Union (Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* [London: Longmans, Green,

1935]), but he was reluctant to make it public, apprehensive about the limits of the latitude afforded foreigners to intervene in domestic debate: see, e.g., John Jewkes to Michael Polanyi, February 11, 1936, MPP, 3/6; Michael Polanyi to Sidney Webb, February 25, 1937, MPP, 3/8.

63. Karl Polanyi to Irene Grant, October 13, 1933, MPP, 17/4.

64. See Philip M. Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell: A Political Biography* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 61.

65. Karl Polanyi to Irene Grant et al., "Xmas 1933," MPP, 17/4.

66. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, April 11, 1933, MPP, 17/4.

67. William T. Scott and Martin Moleski, *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154.

68. Karl Polanyi to Irene Grant et al., "Xmas 1933," MPP, 17/4.

69. See, e.g., Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, November 17, 1934, MPP, 17/5: "Now what on earth are you doing?" Karl wrote to his brother, after Michael stayed away from an audience Karl had arranged with him for some of his friends. "I had prepared to ask Canon Tissington Tatlow [head of the Student Christian Movement] to meet you. It is almost absurd that I must now change these arrangements."

70. John Macmurray to Joseph Needham, January 23, 1934, Joseph Needham Papers, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge (JNP), F.177. In the event much of the editorial work was done while Polanyi was in the United States on his lecture tour. His editorial contribution seems to have been limited to listing continental "writings which ought to receive mention somewhere in our collective book," including many still "unknown to the B[ritish] M[useum]," notably Paul Tillich and Henri de Man. When the volume appeared, both Polanyi and the man he had replaced were listed as co-editors, and John Lewis took primary responsibility for the editing in a preface: Karl Polanyi, "Memorandum for writers for Christianity and the Social Revolution in the West," JNP, F. 177; Karl Polanyi, "Third memorandum for writers in Christianity and Social Revolution," JNP, F.177.

71. Karl Polanyi to "Gordon," May 7, 1943, KPP, 47/3. The book sold some 12,000 copies, many of them in a paperback edition issued by the Left Book Club: Victor Gollancz Ltd Papers, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, MSS.318/2/1/10.

72. For a sense of developing conceptions of fascism in interwar Britain, see Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933–9* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), ch. 1; Martin Pugh, *"Hurrah for the Blackshirts!" Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005); Nigel Copsey and Andrzej Llechnowicz, *Varieties of Anti-Fascism in Interwar Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), especially the contributions of Julia Stapleton and Philip Williamson.

73. Tawney, "Christianity and Social Revolution," 161.

74. For a separate illustration of much the same process of reckoning with the phenomenon of fascism in Germany, revolving around the recognition of National Socialism in Germany as a threat to personality, see Michael Bentley, *The Life and Thought of Herbert Butterfield: History, Science, God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), ch. 5.

75. Bruce Caldwell, *Hayek's Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F. A. Hayek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 138–139. Spann himself was eventually persecuted by the Nazis, after the *Anschluss* which annexed Austria to Germany in 1938, for repudiating anti-Semitism.

76. Polanyi, "Essence of Fascism," 368.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., 364.

79. Ibid., 368.

80. Ibid., 370.

81. Ibid., 368.

82. Ibid., 369.

83. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 105–106.

84. Ibid.

85. Polanyi, "Essence of Fascism," 370.

86. Karl Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays*, ed. George Dalton (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 65.

87. Tawney, "Christianity and Social Revolution," 161.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid., 163.

90. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 223.

91. On this new ecumenicism in interwar Britain, see Adrian Hastings, *History of English Christianity, 1920–1990* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 86–99, 302–308; Norman, *Church and Society in England*, ch. 6; Green, *Passing of Protestant England*, 158ff.

92. One index to this development was the redemption of the Puritans: see Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics*, 126–127, quoting H.A.L. Fisher, "The Whig Historians," *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1928), 317, noting that where Macaulay had set the Puritans outside the history of progress, his successors between the wars embraced them. If Barker's career provides one illustration of the significance of this development, Clement Attlee's career and the short-lived vogue of Oliver Cromwell it encompassed provides another instructive contrast: Bew, *Citizen Clem*, chs. 8, 9.

93. On the abrupt abandonment of the Irish question, see Mo Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

94. Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, ch. 1.

95. Polanyi's daughter Kari was baptized soon after birth in 1923, and the baptism certificate lists her father as an adherent of the "Reformed religion": Dale, *Karl Polanyi*, 293.

96. Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 148–149, citing Endre J. Nagy, "After Brotherhood's Golden Age: Karl and Michael Polanyi," in K. McRobbie, ed., *Humanity, Society and Commitment: On Karl Polanyi* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1994), 81–112. See further Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 223; Dale, *Karl Polanyi*, ch. 2. Victor Gollancz, publisher of the 1935 volume *Christianity and Social Revolution* which had given Polanyi his start, took a comparable position. Born to orthodox parents, regarding himself as a "Jew at heart," "he was nevertheless a follower of Christ, believing in 'the World's desperate need of Christianity' ": David Ormrod, "The Christian Left and the Beginnings of Christian-Marxist Dialogue, 1935–1945," in Jim Obelkevich, Lyndal Roper, and Raphael Samuel, eds., *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy* (London: Routledge, 1987), 435–449, 442, citing Victor Gollancz, *More for Timothy* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1953), 433.

97. Polanyi, "Christianity and Social Revolution," 369.

98. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 223.

99. Gore, *Christianity Applied*, 25–26.

100. See Hastings, *History of English Christianity*, 86–91; Roger Lloyd, *The Church of England, 1900–1965* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 171–177, 196–200, 296–299.

101. For similar contemporary arguments, see Norman, *Church and Society*, ch. 8.

102. The only historical treatment of the group's formation and activities is Ormrod, "The Christian Left and the Beginnings of Christian-Marxist Dialogue."

103. Helen Cam et al., "The Christian Task," *News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left*, July 1, 1936, 2–3, 2.

104. Ibid., 2.

105. Gore, *Christianity Applied*, 25–26.

106. "Towards a Christian Left," *News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left*, July 1, 1936, 1.

107. Transcript of Interview of Irene Grant by Kari Polanyi Levitt, KPP, 30/3.

108. For evidence that Polanyi considered members of "the Aux" more broadly important to his prospects, see Karl Polanyi to Irene Grant, October 13, 1933, MPP, 17/4, contemplating the prospect that Zoe Fairfield, general secretary to the Aux, "may have made appointments for me" which the cancellation of his trip would "void."

109. Michael Polanyi to Karl Mannheim, April 14, 1944, MPP, 4/11; Michael Polanyi to J. H. Oldham, May 31, 1948, MPP, 15/4; Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 10, 274–275.

110. John Macmurray, "The Early Development of Marx's Thought," in Lewis, ed., *Christianity and Social Revolution*, 209–236.

111. Polanyi, "Conflicting Philosophies in Europe," 5.

112. Untitled paginated notebook, KPP, 7/3, 30–61.

113. Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus: Die Frühschriften*, ed. J. P. Mayer and S. Landshut (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1932).

114. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 188.

115. Untitled fragment, "The Xtian Left takes its start from the religious situation of man . . . ," KPP, 21/21.

116. Karl Polanyi, "Christian Left Group: Bulletin 2—Notes of a Week's Study on the Early Writings of Karl Marx," January 1, 1938, KPP, 20/12, 13.

117. "Outline Notes for Speakers Explaining the Christian Left Position to Auxiliary Groups," KPP, 21/21. All bulletins were unsigned, though Irene Grant later confirmed that Polanyi had a significant hand in all, and wrote the second bulletin on the early Marx himself: Fred Block, "Karl Polanyi and The Writing of *The Great Transformation*," *Theory and Society* 32 (2003): 275–306, n 12.

118. Polanyi, "Bulletin 2," 10.

119. Ibid., 10, 13.

120. Ibid., 6.

121. Polanyi, "Essence of Fascism," 375.

122. Polanyi, "Bulletin 2," 18. Polanyi does not give a precise reference here but appears to be referring to Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1834/4) which was included in the Landshut and Meyer edition of Marx's early writings with which Polanyi and Macmurray were working.

123. Polanyi, "Bulletin 2," 19, citing Georg Lukacs, *Geschichte und Klasenbewusstsein* (Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1922), with the rider that "as far as we know the author would repudiate part at least" of the position Polanyi had developed. Cf. Georg Lukacs, "What is Orthodox Marxism?,"

in Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), 1–26, 2.

124. The concept of the "countermovement" or "double movement" is deployed throughout *The Great Transformation*: see, for illustrative examples, 79–80, 136–137.

125. Mill, "Definition of Political Economy."

126. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 87.

127. The literature on Speenhamland and the disruption in that literature which Polanyi's interpretation represented is surveyed in some detail in what follows. The most comprehensive treatment of the workings of the Speenhamland system remains Mark Blaug, "The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New," *Journal of Economic History* 23 (1963): 151–184. Blaug is more concerned with the *effect* of the system than on the *motives* behind its implementation. For an account of Polanyi's role in the development of the literature on Speenhamland, see Fred Block and Margaret Somers, "In the Shadow of Speenhamland: Social Policy and the Old Poor Law," *Politics and Society* 31 (2003): 283–323. Block and Somers also address invocations of Polanyi's treatment by politicians and polemicists in debates over welfare policy in the postwar United States: Block and Somers, "Shadow of Speenhamland," 283–285. For a sense of how central the solution to problems of scarcity and the laboring poor became in American debates in the 1970s and 1980s, see Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty* (discussion of Speenhamland at 154–155). Contention over the significance of Speenhamland in the history of social policy continued into the late 1980s: see Peter Mandler, "The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus," *Past and Present* 117 (1987): 131–157.

128. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 87.

129. Cole to Polanyi, November 5, 1943, KPP, 19–6. Cole's criticism of Polanyi's rendering of Speenhamland anticipates the means by which economic historians now distance themselves from Polanyi's idea: see, e.g., Gareth Austin, *Land, Labour and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807–1956* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 7, for whom Polanyi's insistence on a bright-line distinction between pre-capitalist and capitalist economies is untenable.

130. Cole to Polanyi, November 5, 1943.

131. Cole thought that Speenhamland was "essentially a wartime measure": Cole to Polanyi, November 5, 1943, KPP, 19/6.

132. G.D.H. Cole to Karl Polanyi, February 11, 1946, KPP, 48/1.

133. Tawney's reader report no longer survives. For a discussion of its contents, see Karl Polanyi to John A. Kouwenhoven, September 12, 1942; John A. Kouwenhoven to Karl Polanyi, September 11, 1942, KPP, 47/12.

134. Karl Polanyi to R. H. Tawney, September 12, 1942, KPP, 47/12; Karl Polanyi to R. H. Tawney, undated, KPP, 54/5.

135. Tawney, *Agrarian Problem*, 316; Polanyi to Tawney, September 12, 1942, KPP, 47/12. Polanyi had sought and obtained permission to send the Poor Law chapters to Tawney, but elected not to do so: Polanyi to Tawney, September 12, 1942; Tawney to Polanyi, September 16, 1942, KPP, 47/12; Polanyi to Tawney, May 22, 1944, KPP, 54/6.

136. Karl Polanyi to John A. Kouwenhoven, September 12, 1942; John A. Kouwenhoven to Karl Polanyi, September 11, 1942 KPP, 47/12.

137. K. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 282; J. L. & B. Hammond, *The Village Labourer* (London: Longmans, Green & Co: 1911), 137–149. See also Sidney Webb, *English Local Government: English Poor Law History; Part I* (London, 1927), 176–182: "In an entirely unpoliced countryside," Webb wrote, "amid hayricks and corn-barns to which the incendiary torch could easily be set, the labourers could not safely be left to starve." Polanyi also referred to Arnold Toynbee's attribution of the implementation of the Speenhamland system to "Tory Socialism," but Toynbee's interpretation was much nearer the Hammonds' and Webb's than to Polanyi's own: Toynbee wrote of landowners' "panic of the French Revolution" and of their "bribing the people into passiveness": Arnold Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 103–104.

138. Michael Polanyi to Karl Polanyi, October 19, 1943; Michael Polanyi to Karl Polanyi, December 17, 1943; KPP, 57/5.

139. Michael Polanyi to Karl Polanyi, October 18, 1943, KPP, 57/5.

140. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, October 19, 1943.

141. Ibid.

142. J. H. Hexter, "Review," *American Historical Review* 50 (1945): 501–504, 502. In some quarters *The Great Transformation* and in particular Polanyi's readings of Speenhamland were received more favorably. While acknowledging that many of his readers would find the move "surprising," the sociologist T. H. Marshall adopted Polanyi's line on Speenhamland; within the new chronological framework, Marshall was able to set up his own influential permutation on Polanyi's idea of the "countermovement," according to which the genesis of "social rights" effectively counterbalanced market capitalism through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: T. H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class" (1949), in T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 83. Another influential contemporary who seems to have read and reckoned with Polanyi's argument (though, like Thompson later, without citing Polanyi) was the Marxist economic historian Maurice Dobb: see Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), 169.

143. On trends in British historiography during this period, see Michael Bentley, *Modernising England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 5. See also Tawney, "The Study of Economic History."

144. Lawrence Stone, "Lawrence Stone—as seen by himself," in A. L. Beier, David Cannadine, and James M. Rosenheim, eds., *The First Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 575–595, 579.

145. Keith Thomas, "History and Anthropology," *Past and Present* 24 (1960): 3–24, 3.

146. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 156–157; emphasis in original.

147. Undated letter P. I. Painter to Karl Polanyi, KPP, 54–6.

148. Karl Polanyi to A. D. Lindsay, July 15, 1944, KPP, 47/13.

149. R. H. Tawney to Karl Polanyi, August 19, 1944, KPP, 47/13.

150. John Macmurray, "The Religious Task of the Christian Left," *News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left*, March 20, 1937, 3–4.

151. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 273.

152. See, e.g., "Resolutions submitted by the Auxiliary Christian Left to the Annual General

Meeting at Cambridge, Easter, 1937," *News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left*, March 20, 1937, 5–8, 6.

153. "Notes on a Talk with Dr. Tawney," February 12, 1936, KPP, 21–21.

154. During his visit to China in 1931, Tawney had come across Feng Yu-Hsian, the "Christian General," "who baptised his converts, mostly men from his own army, with a hosepipe"; John Saville would later recall this figure as a prominent feature in Tawney's table talk during the 1930s: Goldman, *Tawney*, 155, citing John Saville, *Memoirs from the Left* (London: Merlin Press, 2003), 4.

155. "Notes on a Talk with Dr. Tawney," February 12, 1936, KPP, 21–21.

156. R. H. Tawney to Evan Durbin, May 24, 1938, Evan Durbin Papers, London School of Economics, London (EDP), 7/4.

157. Tawney to Durbin, May 24, 1938.

158. Kenneth Muir, "The Heart of the Christian Left Message," undated, KPP, 21/21, p. 11; Karl Polanyi to Irene Grant et al., "Xmas 1933," MPP, 17/4.

159. Anderson, "Components of the National Culture"; Stedman Jones, "The Pathology of English History," 29–43.

160. Polanyi, "Adult Education and the Working Class Outlook," 10.

161. For alternative perspectives on this chronological shift in focus from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century at this juncture, see Miles Taylor, "The Beginnings of Modern British Social History?," *History Workshop Journal* 43 (1997): 155–176; David Cannadine, "The Present and the Past in the English Industrial Revolution 1880–1980," *Past and Present* 103 (1984): 131–172.

162. For a sense of the perplexity with which anti-capitalist historians had come to regard the long intermission between the rise of capitalism and the first stirrings of popular revolt in Britain, see Eric Hobsbawm, "The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century," *Past and Present* 5 (1954): 33–53; Eric Hobsbawm, "The Crisis of the 17th Century—II," *Past and Present* 6 (1954): 44–65. This perplexity is examined further in chapter 4. For a sense of how the resolution of this perplexity proved enabling for Hobsbawm, see Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolution: Europe 1789—1848* (London: Abacus, 1977): the survival of feudalism into the early nineteenth century was crucial to Hobsbawm's argument about the decisive importance of the Industrial Revolution; Polanyi's interpretation of Speenhamland is a recurrent point of reference in Hobsbawm's discussion (see, e.g., Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolution*, p. 65)—a striking detail in a book that covers so much so briefly.

163. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 287.

164. Ibid., 116–140.

165. Ibid., 131.

166. Ibid., 116.

167. Ibid., 46.

168. Ibid., 121.

169. Ibid., 116.

170. Ibid., 117.

171. Ibid., 116–21; Joseph Townsend, *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws: By a Well-Wisher to Mankind* (London: printed for C. Dilly, 1786). For *precis* and recent discussions of Townsend's

Dissertation, see Jonathan Sheehan and Dror Wahrman, *Invisible Hands: Self-Organisation and the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 225–232; Phillip H. Lepenies, "Of Goats and Dogs: Joseph Townsend and the Idealisation of Markets—a Decisive Episode in the History of Economics," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 38 (2014): 447–457.

172. T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992 [1803; 2nd ed.]), 284. Malthus's first edition of the *Essay* made no reference to Townsend. Karl Marx believed that Malthus "copie[d] whole pages" from Townsend without attribution: see *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin: Dietz, 1990) 9: 560. On this question of Malthus plagiarizing Townsend, see Lepenies, "Of Goats and Dogs." For late-twentieth-century recapitulation of Townsend's/Malthus's "naturalism" in arguments against welfare provision in the United States, see Block and Somers, "In the Shadow of Speenhamland"; Himmelfarb, *Idea of Poverty*.

173. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 119.

174. Ibid., 120.

175. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, October 23, 1943, KPP, 57/5, Michael Polanyi to Karl Polanyi, October 19, 1943, KPP, 57/5.

176. Ibid. For Tawney's furtive but consequential engagement with anthropology, see Tawney, "The Study of Economic History"; Thomas, "History and Anthropology."

177. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, October 23, 1943.

178. Ibid.

Chapter 3. Capitalism in Transition?

1. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, vii.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., viii.

4. Ibid., vii.

5. On the development of historiography in Britain during this period, see Tawney, "The Study of Economic History"; R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946); R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1939); Bentley, *England's Past*.

6. On this point see Collingwood, *Idea of History*, 126–133.

7. Stefan Collini, "Believing in History: Herbert Butterfield, Christian and Whig," in Stefan Collini, *Common Readings: Critics, Historians, Publics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 138–155.

8. Later critics of English culture during this period certainly thought as much: see Stedman Jones, "The Pathology of English History"; Anderson, "Components of the National Culture." Anderson's critique of English culture is discussed further in the chapter 4.

9. See, e.g., Karl Polanyi, "Adult Education and the Working Class Outlook."

10. Dobb, *Studies*, 2.

11. G. R. Elton to the Editor, *Times Literary Supplement* 76 (February 11, 1977), 156, cited in Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of Industrial Spirit* (Harmondsworth: Penguin,

1985), 194. F. A. Hayek's 1954 remarks, quoted in the introduction, lend further support to that conclusion: F. A. Hayek, "History and Politics," in F. A. Hayek and T. S. Ashton, eds., *Capitalism and the Historians* (London: Routledge, 1954), 3–30, 4.

12. J. A. Hobson, "The Economics for a People's Front," *Labour Monthly* (January 1937): 514, cited in Jackson, *Equality and the British Left*, 95.

13. Howard Brick, *Transcending Capitalism: Visions of a New Society in Modern American Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

14. R. H. Tawney, "A History of Capitalism," *Economic History Review* 2 (1950): 307–316, 316.

15. Tawney, "History of Capitalism"; Karl Polanyi, "Marxist Economic Thought," *Journal of Economic History* 8 (1948): 206–208. For more on the ostensible affinities between Marx and Marshall in this respect, see Shenk, *Dobb*, 30.

16. Evan Durbin, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1940), 136; Anthony Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964).

17. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 266–277.

18. On connections between Tawney's social thought and Eliot's, discussed further later in this chapter, see Collini, "Cultural Critics."

19. Jackson, *Equality*, 126–131; Goldman, *Tawney*, 5; Tomlinson, "Limits of Tawney's Ethical Socialism."

20. Samuel Moyn, "Personalism, Community, and the Origins of Human Rights," in Stanley-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85–106; Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (London and Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011); Jan-Werner Müller, "Towards a History of Christian Democracy," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 18 (2013): 243–255; Müller, *Contesting Democracy*.

21. Moyn, *Christian Human Rights*.

22. Moyn, *Last Utopia*.

23. For a recent restatement of this new concern about claims for the "exclusive relevance" of human rights frameworks, see Samuel Moyn, "Trump and the Limits of Human Rights," https://www.opendemocracy.net/openglobalrights/samuel-moyn/trump-and-limits-of-human-rights, accessed December 5, 2016. The suggestion in this line of thinking is not that we dispense with the terminology of human rights entirely, but rather that we recognize its limitations: for a rationale for that approach, see Bernard Williams, "Human Rights and Relativism," in Bernard Williams, *In the Beginning Was the Deed*, ed. Geoffrey Hawthorn (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 62–74.

24. Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values.*

25. Ormrod, "Christian Left."

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid. Other such movements included the War on Want (1952) and the Movement for Colonial Freedom (1954). Many of the protagonists of these movements took inspiration to some degree from the success of Frank Buchman's "Moral Re-armament" initiatives in the 1930s: for a contemporary account of Buchman's initiatives, see R.H.S. Crossman and Geoffrey Allen, eds., *Oxford and the Groups: The Influence of the Groups* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1934), and for a sense of the enduring influence of Buchman's example see Christopher P. Driver, *The Disarmers: A Study in Protest* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964). The most distinguished

and enduring organization to emerge from this ferment was probably Amnesty International: see Tom Buchanan, " 'The Truth Will Set You Free': The Making of Amnesty International," *Journal of Contemporary History* 37 (2002): 575–597. For an entry point into the growing literature on social movements and their role in reconstituting contemporary British politics, see Matthew Hilton et al., *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Reshaped Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

28. Lawrence Black, "Social Democracy as a Way of Life: Fellowship and the Socialist Union, 1951–1959," *Twentieth-Century British History* 10 (1999): 499–539, 507. The Socialist Union styled itself more deliberately as a successor to the critical tradition Tawney framed in the 1920s: "material welfare," their manifestoes urged readers, was "only a condition for the enrichment of the human personality; it was not the decisive cause." But where the stimulus to Tawney's critique had been the threat of social disintegration in the moment of the "death of Liberal England," members of the Socialist Union were worried by the enervating effect of relative prosperity. Programs framed solely "in material terms" would have a "limited appeal," they feared: "the goal of material equality" was "no longer sufficient to inspire a generation which has all the jobs it wants and more money in its pockets": Black, "Social Democracy as a Way of Life," 505.

29. Black, "Social Democracy as a Way of Life," 500–513.

30. Stephen Brooke, "Evan Durbin: Reassessing a Labour 'Revisionist'," *Twentieth-Century British History* 7 (1996): 27–52, 31; citing Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 279.

31. Goldman, *Tawney*, 159–60; Brooke, "Evan Durbin," 42. The influence would eventually become mutual: later editions of Tawney's 1931 book *Equality* made reference to Durbin's writings: R. H. Tawney, *Equality* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952; 4th edition), 135–136, citing Evan Durbin, "The Social Significance of the Theory of Value," *Economic Journal* 45 (1935): 700–710; Tawney, "History of Capitalism," 310.

32. Durbin, *Politics of Democratic Socialism*, 79.

33. Brooke, "Evan Durbin," 39, quoting Evan Durbin, "Why I'm Not a Marxist," *Daily Herald*, February 16, 1937.

34. E.H.H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chs. 1, 2.

35. Durbin, *Democratic Socialism*, 203 (emphasis in original). For an earlier reading at odds with Durbin's, see J. A. Hobson, *Traffic in Treason: A Study of Political Parties* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1914), 58–59, cited in Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 145. For a survey of the historiography of the Ulster crisis, see Boyce, "Ulster Crisis."

36. Durbin, *Democratic Socialism*, 258.

37. On the influence of psychology among socialists in Britain during this period, see Jeremy Nuttall, *Psychological Socialism: The Labour Party and Qualities of Mind and Character, 1931 to the Present* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2006).

38. Durbin, *Democratic Socialism*, 71. See also Evan Durbin and Jon Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1938).

39. Durbin was influenced by the writings of his friend Reginald Bassett, a Ruskin College–educated tutor in adult education, who would later be appointed to a chair in political science at the London School of Economics. The fourth part of *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, Durbin admitted, could "be considered as little more than my interpretation of the

central argument of [Bassett's] *Essentials of Parliamentary Democracy* [1935]": Durbin, *Democratic Socialism*, 235 n1. Karl Polanyi was also in correspondence with Bassett while writing *The Great Transformation*: see Karl Polanyi to Reginald Bassett, July 6, 1938, KPP, 47/8. We saw in chapter 2 that Durbin was among those Polanyi sought out in advance of his emigration to England. The connection was probably made through Hugh Gaitskell, whom Polanyi befriended in 1933/4 when the latter went to Vienna to teach on a Rockefeller fellowship: Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell*, 61.

40. Durbin, *Democratic Socialism*, 186.

41. Ibid., 63.

42. Ibid., 66.

43. Ibid., 77.

44. Ibid., 241.

45. Ibid., 139.

46. Ibid., 87.

47. Ibid., 136.

48. Durbin's information on changes in corporate finance came from Adolph Berle and Gardiner Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (New York: Macmillan, 1932).

49. Ibid., 145.

50. R. H. Tawney to Evan Durbin, May 24, 1938, EDP, 7/4.

51. Tawney, *Equality* (1952), 135–136; Tawney, "A History of Capitalism," 310.

52. For a sense of the shape this unfinished work would have taken, see Elizabeth Durbin, *New Jerusalems: The Labour Party and the Economics of Democratic Socialism* (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1985).

53. The authoritative treatment of this development is Jackson, *Equality*, chs. 3 and 4. My argument departs from Jackson in finding the claim Durbin and his successors made to the inheritance of Tawney's "ethical socialism" defeated by their fidelity to the utilitarian principles Tawney rejected.

54. A. C. Pigou, *Wealth and Welfare* (London: Macmillan, 1912); A. C. Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare* (London: Macmillan, 1920); Hugh Dalton, "The Measurement of the Inequality of Incomes," *Economic Journal* 30 (1920): 348–361.

55. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 72.

56. The literature on the history of economic thought is vast, and the interwar period has generated especially keen interest. For bearings, see Roger Backhouse and Keith Tribe, "Economic Thought and Ideology, 1870–2010," in R. Floud, J. Humphries, and P. Johnson, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Britain: Volume II, 1870–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Shenk, *Dobb*, ch. 2; Steven G. Medema, *The Hesitant Hand: Taming Self-Interest in the History of Economic Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), chs. 2 and 3; Roger Backhouse and Tamotsu Nishizawa, "Towards a Reinterpretation of the History of Welfare Economics," in R. Backhouse and T. Nishizawa, eds., *No Wealth But Life: Welfare Economics and the Welfare State in Britain, 1880–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–22.

57. Pigou, *Wealth and Welfare*; Pigou, *Economics of Welfare*; Medema, *Hesitant Hand*, ch. 3.

58. John Maynard Keynes, "The End of Laissez Faire" (1926), in J. M. Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion* (London: Macmillan, 1931), 186–212; Shenk, *Dobb*, 29–30.

59. The description of his work as "revolutionary" was Keynes's own, addressing its effect within the discipline. On the import of *The General Interest of Employment Interest and Money*,

see Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes, 1883–1946: Economist, Philosopher, Statesman* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 455–554. For a sense of its wider import, see Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, chs. 7 and 8. For a lucid recent reappraisal, see Roger Backhouse and Bradley Bateman, *Capitalist Revolutionary: John Maynard Keynes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

60. Jackson sees this epistemological trend as part of the reason why Durbin and his successors adopted what they saw as an economic "proxy" for Tawney's critique: Jackson, *Equality*, 127–128. On that trend more broadly, a good starting point is George Reisch, *How the Cold War Transformed Philosophy of Science: To the Icy Slopes of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), chs. 1, 2. In its specific British connections, this trend awaits its historian: the key work was perhaps A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936). For indications that Ayer's work popularized ideas by then well-established, see Peter Laslett, "Introduction," in Laslett, ed., *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, vii–xv.

61. Nor was this coincidental. Pigou himself, and after him Robbins even more emphatically, sought self-consciously to limit the purview of economics to keep within the new limits laid out in post-Kantian epistemology, a trait which J. A. Hobson recognized in both: J. A. Hobson, *Wealth and Life* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 128; cited in R. Backhouse and T. Nishizawa, "Welfare Economics—Old and New," in Backhouse and Nishizawa, eds., *No Wealth But Life*, 223–236; 230.

62. Jackson, *Equality*, 129.

63. Durbin, *Democratic Socialism*, 329

64. Jackson, *Equality*, 127–131.

65. Jackson, *Equality*, 128.

66. Tomlinson, "Tawney's Ethical Socialism."

67. Sen, *On Economic Inequality*, 15–16. For expansion on Sen's critique of utilitarianism, see Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, "Introduction" in Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1–21.

68. Lionel Robbins, *On the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (London: Macmillan, 1932); Lionel Robbins, "Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility: A Comment," *Economic Journal* 48 (1938): 635–641. For a sense of Robbins's importance in the advent of neoliberalism, see Daniel Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Great Depression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), ch. 1.

69. Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, 130, citing E. Durbin, *New Jerusalems*, 146.

70. John Maynard Keynes, "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren" (1930), in Keynes, *Persuasion*, 358–374.

71. Keynes, "Economic Possibilities."

72. Brooke, "Durbin," 30. Crosland's title—"The Transition from Capitalism"—played upon the heading Durbin had given to the second part of *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, "Capitalism in Transition."

73. Crosland, *Future of Socialism*, 2.

74. "Managerialism" was a term popularized by the American ex-Trotskyist James Burnham's 1941 book *The Managerial Revolution* (London: Putnam, 1942), a derivation from arguments within New York Trotskyist circles in the late 1930s.

75. "Managerialism" was one way of describing this development. Another was "bureaucratic collectivism." For a sense of how those debates engendered Burnham's concept, see Dwight Macdonald, "The Burnhamian Revolution," *Partisan Review* 9 (1942): 76–84; C. Wright

Mills and Hans Gerth, "A Marx for Managers," *International Journal of Ethics* 52 (February 1941): 200–215; Dwight Macdonald, *The Root Is Man* (New York: Autonomedia, 1995), 70–80. See further Bruno Rizzi, *La Bureaucratisation du Monde* (Paris: Bruno Rizzi, 1939); Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1942); Berle and Means, *Modern Corporation*; Judith N. Shklar, "Nineteen-Eighty Four: Should Political Theory Care?," in Judith N. Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), ch. 18.

76. On connections between Burnham and Orwell, see George Steinhoff, *George Orwell and the Origins of 1984* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 43–54; Michael Maddison, "*1984*: A Burnhamite Fantasy?" *Political Quarterly* 32 (1961): 71–79. I am grateful to Freddy Foks for these references.

77. Black, "Social Democracy as a Way of Life," 507; Ormrod, "The Christian Left."

78. R.H.S. Crossman, "Towards a Philosophy of Socialism," in R.H.S. Crossman, eds., *New Fabian Essays* (London: Turnstile Press, 1952), 1–32.

79. "Statism" and "post-capitalism" were successively Anthony Crosland's simplifications of Evan Durbin's more complex term "state-organised private property monopoly capitalism" (discussed below), terms set explicitly at variance with Burnham's "managerial revolution": Anthony Crosland, "The Transition from Capitalism," in Crossman, *New Fabian Essays*, 33–68, 30, 48; Crosland, *Future of Socialism*, 23–42.

80. Crosland, "Transition from Capitalism," 40.

81. Ibid., 52.

82. Ibid., 62.

83. Durbin, *Democratic Socialism*, 144.

84. Ibid., 145. New regard for the affections which things like school meal provision created has recently begun to color the historiography of the welfare state in Britain more vividly: see Matthew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the Postwar British Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 80, quoting Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives* (London: Virago, 1986).

85. Crosland, "Transition from Capitalism," 62.

86. Ibid., 62–63.

87. The leading history of sociology in Britain is Mike Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Longer lineages are traced in Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, and Philip Abrams, *The Origins of British Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

88. Though this conclusion owed more to psychological research than to sociology: see Adrian Wooldridge, *Measuring the Mind: Education and Psychology in England, c. 1860—1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a further sense of how the two emerging disciplines interacted and intersected, the career of Michael Young is pertinent: see Lise Butler, "Michael Young, the Institute of Community Studies, and the Politics of Kinship," *Twentieth-century British History* 26(2) (2015): 203–224.

89. Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870–2023: An Essay on Education and Equality* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1958).

90. Anthony Crosland, "Comprehensive Education," in Anthony Crosland, *Socialism Now and Other Essays* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), 204.

91. Crosland, *Future of Socialism*, 69–76.

92. Jackson, *Equality*, 187.

93. Richard Wollheim, *Socialism and Culture* (London: Fabian Society, 1961), 11–12, cited in Jackson, *Equality*, 192.

94. In this connection E. P. Thompson's impressions of the "Aldermaston generation"—young people whose first political experiences were the nuclear disarmament marches of the late 1950s—are illuminating. See E. P. Thompson, "Outside the Whale," in E. P. Thompson, ed., *Out of Apathy* (London: Stevens, 1960), 140–194, 182–194; E. P. Thompson, "Commitment in Politics," *Universities and Left Review* 6 (1959): 50–55.

95. Crosland, *Future of Socialism*, 357.

96. Ibid., 168.

97. "Equality," *Observer*, July 15, 1956, 6, cited in Jackson, *Equality*, 202.

98. An exchange between T. S. Eliot and the visiting American critic Dwight Macdonald reinforces this sense that the concept of human personality was becoming debased: borrowing in part from the emergent continental ideology of personalism, Macdonald had written in a 1946 essay ("The Root Is Man") that the "touchstone" of socialism should be the extent to which it enabled the "development of personality." "That," an otherwise admiring Eliot wrote to Macdonald, in receipt of a 1956 reprint of the essay, "seems to me an out of date language to which I can attach no very definite meaning . . . It is a very popular phrase, but it seems to me to shelter a vacuum": T. S. Eliot to Dwight Macdonald, October 30, 1956, Dwight Macdonald Papers, Yale University, New Haven. See also T. S. Eliot, *Notes Toward a Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948), 97–98.

99. Goldman, *Tawney*, 284.

100. On a similar phenomenon in American social science, see Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

101. Keynes, "End of Laissez Faire."

102. For an overview of these developments in British perspective, see Martin Daunton, "Britain and Globalisation since 1850: II. The Rise of Insular Capitalism," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 17 (2017): 1–33. For a global perspective, see Barry Eichengreen, *Golden Fetters: The Gold Standard and the Great Depression, 1919–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

103. Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, 153.

104. Ibid., 193. See also Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, ch. 6.

105. Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, 206.

106. Ibid., 208.

107. Ibid., 302.

108. Ibid., 303.

109. Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 316.

110. Grimley, *Citizenship*, 16.

111. Ibid., 176.

112. *Men Without Work: A Report Made to the Pilgrim Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 286–287.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid., 396.

115. *Men Without Work*, 272–297.

116. Grimley, *Citizenship*, 182, citing John Dancy, *Walter Oakeshott: A Diversity of Gifts* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 1995), 84.

117. W. A. Visser 't Hoorft and J. H. Oldham, *The Church and Its Function in Society* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937), 198, cited in Keith Clements, ed., *The Moot Papers* (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 8.

118. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 266.

119. Reisch, *Cold War*, chs. 1, 2.

120. Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap, and Hans Hahn, "The Scientific Conception of the World: The Vienna Circle," in M. Neurath and R. S. Cohen, eds., *Empiricism and Sociology* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1973), 299–319.

121. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 270–271.

122. Ibid., 270, 299. On Mannheim's interpretation of Heidegger, see Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Sociology," in Jerome Kohn, ed., *Hannah Arendt: Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1994), 28–43. On Heidegger and anti-humanism in French thought, see Geroulanos, *Atheism*, ch. 1.

123. Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, 273; Karl Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," in Karl Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology and Psychology*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (London: Routledge, 1997), 87–164, 125.

124. Karl Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time* (London: Trench, Kegan & Paul, 1943), 104.

125. Ibid.

126. Green, *Passing of Protestant England*, 223.

127. Ibid.

128. Ibid., 212, citing Kenneth O. Morgan, *The People's Peace: British History, 1945–1989* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 19.

129. Noel Annan, *Our Age: Portrait of a Generation* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1990), 362, cited in Green, *Passing of Protestant England*, 211.

130. Jose Harris, "Political Ideas and the Debate on State Welfare, 1940–45," in H. L. Smith, ed., *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 233–263, 239–240.

131. R. A. Butler, *The Art of the Possible* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), 136–137, cited in Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, 11.

132. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, 11; Harriet Jones, " 'New Conservatism'? The Industrial Charter, Modernity and the Reconstruction of British Conservatism After the War," in Frank Mort, Chris Waters, and Becky Conekin, eds., *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945–1964* (London & New York: Rivers Oram Press, 1999), 171–188.

133. Green, *Passing of Protestant England*, 238.

134. Ibid., 239.

135. Harris, "Debate on State Welfare"; Green, *Passing of Protestant England*, 222–227.

136. Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1940). For a contemporary appraisal from perhaps Mannheim's most enthusiastic supporter, see Fred Clarke, "Review of *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* by Karl Mannheim," *Economica* 27 (1940): 329–332.

137. Margaret Godley to R. A. Butler, May 29, 1940, Conservative Research Department Papers, Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, CRD 058; "Points arising from an interview," May 28, 1940, Conservative Party Archive, CRD 058; cited in Harris, "Debate on State Welfare," 240.

138. Karl Mannheim, "Planning for Freedom: Some Remarks on the Necessity for Creating a Body which could Co-ordinate Theory and Practice in our Future Policy," undated, Conservative Party Archive, CRD 058, cited in Harris, "Debate on State Welfare," 241 n26.

139. Harris, "Debate on State Welfare," 241.

140. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, 163.

141. Ibid., 129, 163.

142. Harris, "Debate on State Welfare," 241.

143. See, e.g., Mannheim, *Man and Society*, 264–265.

144. Karl Mannheim, "Planned Society and the Problem of Human Personality," in Mannheim, *Essays in Sociology*, 255–310.

145. Mannheim, "Problem of Human Personality," 278.

146. Ibid.

147. The most relevant development in the United States in this connection was the currency of the rubric of "culture and personality," c. 1925–c. 1955: see Brick, *Transcending Capitalism*, 88–98; Peter Mandler, *Return from the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won the Second World War and Lost the Cold War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013). For a distinct approach investigating the valences of the term personality in American culture, see Warren Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth-century Culture," in Warren Susman, *Culture and History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 271–286. The encounter between the pragmatism of John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce and the developments in post-Kantian epistemology in Europe are also relevant. C. Wright Mills makes an illuminating case study in this connection. For starting points, see Daniel Geary, *Radical Ambition: C. Wright Mills, the Left and American Social Thought* (Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley Press, 2009). Mannheim was also and probably indeed more so influenced by turn-of-the-century German sociology: see, for a sense of how cognate issues figured in those discussions, Georg Simmel, "he Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), in Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 324–339.

148. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, 100.

149. Norman, *Church and Society in England*, ch. 8.

150. Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*.

151. This was the gravamen of Perry Anderson's 1968 philippic, "Components of the National Culture." For a recent reappraisal, see Collini, *Absent Minds*, 175–183. For a recent history of the development of sociology in Britain, see Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain*.

152. Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," 87.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid.,.

155. Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," 90.

156. Georg Simmel, in "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), anticipated that the "internal and external history" of his time would be "written in the conflict and shifting interpreta-

tions" of the rival "ways of understanding the individual's position in the totality": Simmel, "Metropolis," 339.

157. Mannheim argued that it could be: G.W.F. Hegel was the progeny of one of the streams of conservative thought Mannheim traced back to the reception of Edmund Burke; Mannheim regarded Marx's departures from Hegel as the generation of a form of "super-rationality" which could outpoint capitalism: Mannheim, "Conservative Thought."

158. On Maine, see John Burrow, *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), ch. 5. See also Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

159. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*: *An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Edward Shils (London: Trench, Trubner & Co., 1936), 300–301, quoted in Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 282. Mannheim's discriminations between more and less "comprehensive" and "fruitful" perspectives on totality are discussed further below.

160. On medievalism and modernity, see Saler, *Avant-garde in Interwar England.* On domesticity, privacy, tradition, and populism as moderating or conservative factors in interwar British politics, see Samuel, "Exciting to be English"; Light, *Forever England*; Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin*; Baxendale, *J. B. Priestley's England*.

161. Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," 125.

162. Karl Mannheim to Michael Polanyi, January 1, 1945, MPP, 4/10.

163. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, 261.

164. Ibid.

165. Collini, *Absent Minds*, 317.

166. On Hayek, Mont Pelerin, and "second-hand dealers" in ideas, see Ben Jackson, "The Think-tank Archipelago: Thatcherism and Neo-liberalism," in Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders, eds., *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 43–61, 43–44.

167. Harris, "Debate on State Welfare."

168. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, 152.

169. Ibid.

170. Ibid., 102.

171. Ibid., 104–105.

172. Harris, "The Debate on State Welfare," 244.

173. Ibid., 243.

174. Ibid., 247.

175. Ibid., 245.

176. F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1944), 16, 51, 54.

177. Ibid., 246, citing P.H.J.H. Gosden, *Education in the Second World War: A Study of Policy and Administration* (London: Methuen, 1976).

178. Peter Mandler, "Education the Nation I: Schools," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 24 (2014): 5–28, 11–12.

179. Green, *Passing of Protestant England*, 224.

180. Ibid., 238.

181. Ibid.

182. Goldman, *Tawney*, 205.

183. R. H. Tawney, *Secondary Education for All: A Policy for Labour* (London: Labour Party, 1922).

184. Goldman, *Tawney*, 270.

185. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, 129, 163.

186. On the Butler Act's capaciousness and delegation to LEAs, see Mandler, "Educating the Nation."

187. Mannheim to M. Polanyi, January 1, 1945.

188. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, 110–111.

189. Stefan Collini, "The European Modernist as Anglican Moralist: The Later Social Criticism of T. S. Eliot," in Mark Micale and Robert Dietle, eds., *Enlightenment, Passion, Modernity: Historical Essays on European Thought and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 207–229; Collini, "Cultural Critics and 'Modernity.'"

190. Collini, "Cultural Critics and 'Modernity'"

191. T. S. Eliot, "On the Place and Function of the Clerisy," November 10, 1944, MPP, 15/6. See also Collini, *Absent Minds*, 318–319.

192. Collini, *Absent Minds*, 318.

193. Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 281.

194. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 300–301, quoted in Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, 282.

195. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, 114.

196. Ibid.

197. Michael Polanyi to J. H. Oldham, October 16, 1944, MPP, 15/3.

198. T. S. Eliot, "Comments by T. S. Eliot on Michael Polanyi's Notes on the Clerisy," November 22, 1944, MPP, 15/6.

199. Ibid.

200. Ibid.

201. Collini, *Absent Minds*, 320, quoting T. S. Eliot, "Notes Towards a Definition of Culture I," *New English Weekly*, January 21, 1943, 117.

202. Eliot, *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*, 33.

203. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, 110.

204. Ibid.

205. Ibid., 110–111.

206. Michael Polanyi was invited to join the Moot at Mannheim's suggestion in 1944: Michael Polanyi to Karl Mannheim, May 27, 1944, MPP, 4/10. For a sense of Polanyi's developing concept of tacit knowledge, see Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty* (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1951); Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, chs. 7 and 8. Michael Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge was pivotal, in turn, in Thomas Kuhn's conceptualization of the "paradigm," even if Kuhn was slow to acknowledge this: Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962; 2nd ed., 1969), 171.

207. Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics" (1947), in Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (London: Methuen, 1962), 4–32, 8 n1, citing Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society*.

208. Winter, *Tawney's Commonplace Book*, 14.

Chapter 4. E. P. Thompson

1. George R. Boyer, "Living Standards, 1860–1939" in R. Floud and P. Johnson, eds., *Cambridge Economic History of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) vol. 1, 280–313, 284–290; Charles Feinstein, "Changes in Nominal Wages, the Cost of Living and Real Wages in the United Kingdom over the Two Centuries, 1780–1990," in P. Scholliers and V. Zamagni, eds., *Labour's Reward: Real Wages and Economic Change in 19th- and 20th-century Europe* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995), 3–37.

2. N.F.R. Crafts, "Economic Growth during the Long Twentieth Century," in R. C. Floud, K. J. Humphries, and P. A. Johnson, *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain* II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 26–59.

3. Mary Mahony, "Employment, Education and Human Capital," in Floud and Johnson, *Economic History of Britain*, 112–133, 116; S. Pollard, *The Development of the British Economy, 1914–1990* (London: Arnold, 1992), 229.

4. Charles Feinstein, "The Equalizing of Wealth in Britain since the Second World War," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 12 (1996): 96–105; Paul Johnson, "The Welfare State, Income, and Living Standards," in Floud and Johnson, *Economic History of Britain*, 213–237.

5. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1958). For surveys of constructions of "affluence" on the left, see Lawrence Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951–1964: Old Labour, New Britain?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Stuart Middleton, "'Affluence' and the Left in Britain, c. 1958–1974," *English Historical Review* 129 (2014): 107–138.

6. Keynes, "Economic Possibilities." The pithier formulation is Berthold Brecht's: *The Threepenny Opera*, trans. Ralph Manheim and John Willett (London: Eyre Methuen, 1979).

7. William Temple wrote to Tawney after *The Acquisitive Society* was published in 1921 querying whether acquisitiveness could be quite so irredeemable a quality as Tawney suggested: Goldman, *Tawney*, 121–122.

8. Peter Conradi, *A Very English Hero: The Making of Frank Thompson* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 74.

9. Ibid., 33.

10. Ibid., 9. All the more poignant in this light to read their dying father's remark that his own reflections on Frank's life were "best expressed in the words the fellow-soldier who in sympathy and thought was nearest to himself, his younger brother," before quoting two long passages from E. P. Thompson's letters from Italy (where he served as a tank commander) to close the family's memoir of Frank: E. P. Thompson et al., *There Is a Spirit in Europe: A Memoir of Frank Thompson* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1947), 190–191.

11. Conradi, *English Hero*, 74.

12. Ibid., 70–71.

13. Ibid., 75, 108: "[E. P.] is almost a Puritan in many ways." their father wrote to Frank Thompson in 1943. "He never touches alcohol except an occasional cider, detesting beer and keeping off spirits. His constant cigarettes are rather a sign of nervousness seeking release."

14. Ibid., 160.

15. Ibid., 122.

16. Ibid., 225. A longer passage of the February 1942 letter from which this is taken, included

in the memoir Edward and his mother published for Frank in 1947, is worth quoting in full: "[T]he 'New Thinking' which I was trying to digest at Oxford has been vomited, and none has entered the bloodstream. My bloodstream is still all Winchester and Horace and Browning and a tinge of Lytton Strachey. As I have not the originality to remedy it alone, I must carry on till the war ends with this—with this and my eyes and a mind that is more inclined to love than to analyse": E. P. Thompson, *Spirit in Europe*, 15.

17. Conradi, *English Hero*, 54.

18. Ibid., 11.

19. Ibid., 6.

20. Noreen Branson, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1941–1951* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1997), 1, 97.

21. Conradi, *English Hero*, 74.

22. Ibid., 225.

23. Ibid.

24. The most thorough account of the purchase and particulars of Marxism in Britain in the interwar period remains MacIntyre, *A Proletarian Science*. The outstanding account of the development and variety of Marxist thought writ large across the twentieth century is Leslek Kolakowski, *Main Currents in Marxism: Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution* II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). For a sense of how Stalinist-Leninist dogma was interpreted by British socialists during the 1930s, see John Strachey, *The Coming Struggle for Power* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1932). For a sense of the limits to the interpretative latitude afforded CPGB members, see Shenk, *Maurice Dobb*, ch. 4. For an argumentative account of the development of Marxism in Britain through the 1950s and 1960s, see Perry Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London: Verso Editions, 1980).

25. E. P. Thompson, "Christopher Caudwell," in E. P. Thompson, *Making History: Writings on History and Culture* (New York: New Press, 1994), 78–140, 133.

26. Boris Hessen, "The Social and Economic Roots of Newton's *Principia*," in N. Bukharin, ed., *Science at the Crossroads: Papers Presented to the International Congress on the History of Science* (London: Frank Cass, 1931). For a sympathetic account of the "social relations of science" movement which Hessen's paper touched off, see Werskey, *Visible College*.

27. P.M.S. Blackett, "The Craft of Experimental Physics," in Harold Wright, ed., *University Studies, Cambridge, 1933* (London: I. Nicholson & Watson, 1933), 67–96; Joseph Needham, *Background to Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938).

28. J. D. Bernal, *The Social Function of Science* (London: Routledge, 1939).

29. Not everyone re-imagined the enterprise of science in this way. One influential hold-out was Herbert Butterfield: see Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science, 1300–1800* (London: G. Bell, 1949); Bentley, *Butterfield*, ch. 7. A fierce polemical counterblast to the "social relations of science" movement spearheaded by Michael Polanyi was being prepared through the late 1930s: see Nye, *Michael Polanyi*, chs. 5 and 6.

30. Anderson, "Components of the National Culture."

31. For a sympathetic account of W. H. Auden's anti-fascist enthusiasms, see Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: Bodley Head, 1976). For a celebration of Auden's undertakings, see Lucy McDiarmid, *Saving Civilisation: Yeats, Eliot and Auden Between the Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

Thompson himself was more critical of Auden: see E. P. Thompson, "Outside the Whale," in E. P. Thompson, ed., *Out of Apathy* (London: Stevens, 1960), 140–194.

32. Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, *Journey to the Frontier: Julian Bell & John Cornford: Their Lives in the 1930s* (London: Constable, 1966).

33. For an exhaustive study of the relevant *milieux*, see Alexander Hutton, "'Culture and Society' and Conceptions of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, 1930–1965," PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2014, ch. 5.

34. Conradi, *English Hero*, 2.

35. A. L. Morton, *A People's History of England* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938).

36. Jack Lindsay and Edgell Rickword, eds., *A Handbook of Freedom: A Record of English Democracy through Twelve Centuries* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1939).

37. Thompson, "Caudwell," 103; Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality* (London: Macmillan, 1937); Christopher Caudwell, *Studies in a Dying Culture* (London: John Lane, 1938).

38. Rodney Hilton, "Dobb as Historian," *Labour Monthly*, January 1947, 29, cited in Shenk, *Dobb*, 112. For an example of the retrospective attack on interwar British Marxism, see Maurice Cornforth, "Caudwell and Marxism," *Modern Quarterly* 6 (1950–51): 16–33.

39. Shenk *Dobb*, 1.

40. Ibid., ch. 4.

41. McIntyre, *A Proletarian Science*, 234, cited in Shenk, *Dobb*, 64.

42. Shenk, *Dobb*, ch. 2.

43. Maurice Dobb, *Capitalist Enterprise and Social Progress* (London: Routledge, 1925), v, cited in Shenk, *Dobb*, 38.

44. Maurice Dobb, *On Marxism Today* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932). For a discussion of the response to this pamphlet, see Shenk, *Dobb*, ch. 4.

45. Shenk, *Dobb*, 112.

46. The journal *Modern Quarterly*—re-launched in 1946—became a forum within which historians and literary critics and scientists could converge to condemn idealist tendencies. But the "Bernalists" would soon abandon the CPGB in dismay over the progress of the Lysenko controversy in the Soviet Union: see John Callaghan, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict: The History of the Communist Party of Great Britain 1951–1968* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2003), 94.

47. Shenk, *Dobb*, 113.

48. Ibid.

49. The so-called Caudwell controversy was a prominent instance: see Thompson, "Caudwell," 89.

50. Marx's annotations of Maine are recalled in E. P. Thompson, "The Poverty of Theory," in E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London: Merlin, 1978), 193–389, 364. It is worth noting that these annotations admit of different interpretations. Thompson took them as evidence of Marx's determination to "shove" anthropological phenomena "back into an economic frame of reference": Thompson, "Poverty of Theory," 364. Gareth Stedman Jones has recently implicated the same annotations in a return late in Marx's life to the humanist outlook characteristic of his early years in and through attention to primitive communal forms pre-dating the advent of feudalism: see Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 584–585. How we read Marx's annotations of Maine of course has no bearing on the characterization of British Marxism in the mid-1940s offered here.

51. Ibid.

52. On the Caudwell controversy, see Thompson, "Caudwell," 79–80.

53. E. P. Thompson, "William Morris and the Moral Issues of Today," *Arena* 2 (1949): 25–30.

54. Ibid.

55. "The British Road to Socialism," Programme Adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, January 1951. https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/britain/brs/1951/51.htm#5. Accessed April 15, 2016.

56. Rodney Hilton, "The Historians' Group and British Tradition," June 1951, Communist Party Archive, cited in Hutton, "Culture and Society," 200.

57. A. L. Morton, "Socialist Humanism," *Communist Review* (1953): 298–300, 299.

58. Ibid., 298.

59. For an illustration of Hobsbawm's continuing prioritization of economic factors, see E. J. Hobsbawm, "The British Standard of Living, 1790–1850," *Economic History Review* 100 (1957): 119–134.

60. Shenk, *Dobb*, ch. 6.

61. Christopher Hill, "The Norman Yoke," in John Saville, ed., *Democracy and the Labour Movement: Essays in Honour of Dona Torr* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1954), 11–66.

62. Hill, "Norman Yoke," 66

63. Ibid., 65.

64. Bill Schwarz, "Historians and the People: The Communist Party Historians Group," in Richard Johnson, ed., *Making Histories: Studies in History-writing and Politics* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 49–89, 77.

65. E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Merlin 1979; revised edition), 696.

66. Conradi, *English Hero*, 9.

67. Stefan Collini, "Enduring Passion: E. P. Thompson's Reputation," in Collini, *Common Readings*, 175–186, 177.

68. On the CPGB Writers' Group, see Callaghan, *Cold War*, 94–96.

69. Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, trans. Rose Strunsky (London: Allen Lane, 1925); Georg Lukacs, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962).

70. Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station: A Study in the Writing and Acting of History* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1941).

71. Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*; Caudwell, *Studies in a Dying Culture*. On Caudwell's influence over Thompson, see Thompson, "Caudwell."

72. Christopher Hilliard, *English as a Vocation: The 'Scrutiny' Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

73. Ibid., 3.

74. Ibid., 254–255. Though see also Guy Ortolano, *The Two Cultures Controversy: Science, Literature and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch. 2, arguing that Leavis's "antagonism towards contemporary society" and "commitment to the individual" anchor between them a distinctive ideology of "radical liberalism."

75. Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of 'Scrutiny'* (London: NLB, 1979), 95.

76. Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with 'New Left Review'* (London: NLB, 1979), 65, cited in Winch, "Mr. Gradgrind and Jerusalem," 249.

77. Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957). On Hoggart's role in the genesis cultural studies in Britain, see Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 116–124.

78. On Hall and Leavis, see Alexander Hutton, "Literature, Criticism, and Politics in the Early New Left, 1956–62," *Twentieth-Century British History* 27 (2015): 51–75, 63–68.

79. On "left Leavisism," see Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, ch. 5.

80. Collini, "Cultural Critics and 'Modernity'"; Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, ch. 2.

81. Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, 55–56.

82. Ibid., 56–71.

83. F. R. Leavis, *Education and the University: A Sketch for an 'English School'* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943); L. C. Knights, "Bacon and the Seventeenth-Century Dissociation of Sensibility," *Scrutiny* 11 (1943): 268–285. Hilliard notes that Leavis and his contemporaries looked increasingly to developments in the contemporary United States to illustrate their concerns about "mass civilisation," and points to their reliance on the work of Helen and Robert Lynd in approaching American culture. It is worth noting that the Lynds wrote about American culture in part in the terms set by Tawney's critique of capitalism: Robert and Helen Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1929), 87.

84. Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, ch. 5.

85. Ibid., 143.

86. Ibid., 145.

87. Ibid., 146.

88. Ibid. Peter Mandler, "Good Reading for the Million: The 'Paperback Revolution' and the Diffusion of Academic Knowledge in Mid-20th Century Britain and America," paper delivered to the Modern Cultural History Seminar, University of Cambridge, May 20, 2015.

89. Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, 146.

90. Ibid., 142.

91. F. R. Leavis, "Under Which King, Bezonian?" (1932), in F. R. Leavis, ed., *A Selection from Scrutiny* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), I: 166–174. See also Williams, *Politics and Letters*, 66–67. Later Leavis became more unambiguously critical of Marxism: in the early 1930s he had presented the *Scrutiny* movement as an alternative to Marxian answers to problems of "dissociation"; later, he would insist that *Scrutiny* had offered the superior alternative: see Ortolano, *The 'Two Cultures' Controversy*, 82–85.

92. F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1933).

93. Stuart Middleton, "The Concept of 'Experience' and the Making of the English Working Class, 1924–1963," 13 *Modern Intellectual History* (2016): 179–208.

94. As the subtitle of Leavis and Thompson's 1933 book *Culture and Environment* indicated.

95. Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, ch. 5.

96. E. P. Thompson, "George Sturt," in Thompson, *Making History*, 254–260, 254.

97. Leavis and Thompson, *Culture and Environment*, quoted in Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, 56.

98. Thompson, "Morris and the Moral Issues," 25.

99. Winch, "Mr. Gradgrind and Jerusalem," 251.

100. E.P. Thompson, 'Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica," *Our Time*, 8 (1949): 156–157.

101. Thompson, *William Morris*, ch. 1. This critique would be developed through the late 1950s. Its most eloquent statement was Thompson, "Outside the Whale."

102. Thompson, "Morris."

103. Hilliard, *English as a Vocation*, ch. 5. For an alternative account of the afterlives of Leavisism, finding continuity in "left Leavisism" through until the late 1960s, see Ortolano, *The 'Two Cultures' Controversy*, 242–249.

104. See, e.g., Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 31 n2 (34 n1).

105. See Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, ch. 3.

106. For a detailed history of the dissemination of the text of Kruschev's speech in Britain, see John Saville, "The Twentieth Congress and the British Communist Party," *Socialist Register* (1976): 1–23.

107. See Saville, *Memoirs*, 104–105.

108. Conradi, *English Hero*, 2.

109. E. P. Thompson, "Through the Smoke of Budapest" (1956), in Winslow, ed., *Thompson*, 37–47, 46.

110. Ibid., 46.

111. Thompson, "Smoke of Budapest"; Thompson, "Socialist Humanism."

112. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 81.

113. Ibid.

114. Thompson, "Outside the Whale," 185, 152. Emphasis added.

115. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 64.

116. Ibid., 66.

117. Michael Merrill, "An Interview with E. P. Thompson," *Radical History Review* 12 (1976): 4–25, 24.

118. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 66.

119. Ibid.

120. Ibid., 65.

121. Ibid., 64–65.

122. Ibid., 65.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid.

125. Thompson, "Smoke of Budapest," 42.

126. Ibid.

127. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 76.

128. The best overview of the Suez crisis remains Keith Kyle, *Suez* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1991).

129. Cited in A. N. Wilson, *Our Times* (London: Hutchison, 2008), 65–66.

130. E. P. Thompson, "Where Are We Now?" (1962), in Winslow, *Thompson*, 215–246. For perspectives on the provenance, import, and application of this liberal humanitarian sentiment

in Britain, which remains relatively under-researched, see Pederson, *Guardians*, ch. 3; Peatling, *British Opinion and Irish Self-Government*, 91–98; Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, ch. 3, 7; Bew, *Citizen Clem*, 95–158; Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918–45* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2011); Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain*; Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1968).

131. Driver, *Disarmers*, 101.

132. Jodi Burkett, "Direct Action and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 1958–62," in Nick Crowson, Matthew Hilton, and James McKay, eds., *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 21–37.

133. Veldman, *Fantasy*; Driver, *Disarmers*.

134. Thompson, "Commitment in Politics," 54.

135. E. P. Thompson, "Outside the Whale," 189, 190.

136. Thompson, "Poverty of Theory," 265.

137. Thompson, "Outside the Whale," 188–189.

138. E. P. Thompson, "The Long Revolution–I," *New Left Review* 9 (1960): 24–33, 27: "Looking back, I can see the point at which I simply disengaged from the contest; and I can recall friends who were actually broken (as many of their analogues in the Labour movement were broken) by the experience of this period. There were so many ways to retire—into mere apathy, into erudite specialisms, into the defensive rhetoric of Communist dogma, into Parliament or antique shops or academic careerism."

139. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 67.

140. Ibid., 69.

141. Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism*, 53.

142. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 69.

143. Hill, "Norman Yoke," 65.

144. Lin Chun, *The British New Left* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 34.

145. E. P. Thompson, "Agency and Choice–I," *New Reasoner* 6 (1958): 89–106.

146. Crosland, *Future of Socialism*, 353.

147. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 86.

148. Thompson, "Revolution," 157.

149. The nature of the transition between feudalism and capitalism was the subject of a keen and protracted transatlantic debate during this period, pitting Maurice Dobb and members of the CPHG against the American Marxist Paul Sweezy: see Paul Sweezy and Maurice Dobb, "The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism," *Science & Society* 14 (1950): 134–167; Shenk, *Dobb*, 146–151.

150. Thompson, "Revolution," 156.

151. Ibid., 155.

152. Ibid., 147.

153. Thompson, "Outside the Whale," 188.

154. Thompson, "Revolution," 157.

155. Jackson, *Equality*, 170.

156. Tawney, "A History of Capitalism," 316.

157. E. P. Thompson, "The Long Revolution–II," *New Left Review* 10 (1961): 34–39, 38.

158. Also see Thompson, "Poverty of Theory," 9–10.

159. Thompson, "Long Revolution–II," 39.

160. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958); Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960).

161. Williams, *Culture and Society*, 235–236.

162. Williams, *Long Revolution*, 122; Thompson, "Long Revolution–II," 39.

163. Thompson, "Long Revolution–I," 30.

164. Williams, *Long Revolution*, 115.

165. Ibid.

166. Thompson, "Long Revolution–I," 30.

167. E. P. Thompson, "Remembering C. Wright Mills," in E. P Thompson, *The Heavy Dancers* (London: Merlin Press, 1985), 261–274.

168. C. Wright Mills, "Letter to the New Left," *New Left Review* 1(5) (September–October 1960): 18–23; E. P. Thompson to C. Wright Mills, April 21, 1959, C. Wright Mills Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas–Austin, Box 4B380. For a sense of Mills's indebtedness to Mannheim, see C. Wright Mills, "Methodological Consequences of the Sociology of Knowledge," *American Journal of Sociology* 46 (1940): 316–330.

169. Karl Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, January 5, 1958, KPP, 57–58.

170. The schoolmaster, R. J. Harris of The King's School, Canterbury, had first approached the late Asa Briggs—Thompson's contemporary—but Briggs had referred Harris to Saville: Saville, *Memoirs*, 119–120.

171. Thompson, *Working Class*, 13 (14).

172. For some sense of the range and depth of influence of *The Making of the English Working Class*, consider the following list of books written under Thompson's avowed influence: John Womack, Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1969); Richard Sandbrook and Robin Cohen, eds., *The Development of an African Working Class: Studies in Class Formation and Action* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1976); James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Joan W. Scott, *The Glassworkers of Carmaux: French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Rajnarayan Chandravarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and Working Classes in Bombay, 1900–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Emilia Viotta da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). For an estimation of its impact on social thought in the United States more broadly, see Daniel Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011), 94. For a sense of how pivotal Thompson's work proved in postwar reconceptualizations of the practice of history, see Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), and William Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005): Hunt refers to Thompson more than to any other individual historian; Sewell refers to Thompson with comparable frequency.

173. See, e.g., E. P. Thompson, "Homage to Tom Maguire," in Thompson, *Making History*, 23–65.

174. Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1986). "Her collaboration is to be found," Thompson wrote of his wife's involvement in *The Making of the English Working Class*, "not in this or that particular, but in the way the whole problem is seen." The term "moral economy" was Dorothy's find: E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy Reviewed," in E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: Penguin, 1991), 259–351, 337 n2.

175. Henry Collins, "The London Corresponding Society," in Saville, *Democracy and the Labour Movement*, 103–134, 109.

176. Thompson, *Working Class*, 23 (20–21).

177. Ibid.

178. Ibid.

179. Ibid., 13 (13).

180. Quoted in Cal Winslow, "E. P. Thompson and the Making of the English Left," in Winslow, ed., *E. P. Thompson*, 9–35, 20.

181. *A History of Nidderdale*, Pateley Bridge Local History Tutorial Class, Bernard Jennings, ed. (Huddersfield: Advertiser Press, 1967), cited in Hutton, "Culture and Society," 111.

182. Sheila Rowbotham, *Dreams and Dilemmas: Collected Writings* (London: Virago, 1983), 342, cited in Winslow, *Thompson*, 17.

183. For an overview of the debate, see E. J. Hobsbawm, "The Standard of Living During the Industrial Revolution: A Discussion," *Economic History Review* 16 (1963): 119–134.

184. E. J. Hobsbawm, "The British Standard of Living, 1790–1850," *Economic History Review* 100 (1957): 119–134.

185. On Engels's importance in this connection, see Gareth Stedman Jones, "Engels and the Invention of the Catastrophist Conception of the Industrial Revolution," in Douglas Moddach, ed., *The New Hegelians, Politics and Philosophy in the Hegelian School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 200–219.

186. Thompson, *Working Class*, 227 (208).

187. Ibid., 222 (203).

188. Ibid.

189. Ibid.

190. Ibid.

191. Ibid., 222–223 (203–204).

192. Ibid.

193. Ibid., 267 (241).

194. Ibid., 316 (286).

195. Ibid., 222 (203).

196. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*, 196.

197. Thompson, *Working Class*, 239. This passage comes from the expanded discussion of the "standards of living" controversy which Thompson included in the 1968 edition, and does not appear in the 1963 edition.

198. This notion of history "from below" which Thompson developed to explain his approach post-dates *The Making of the English Working Class*: E. P. Thompson, "History from

Below," *Times Literary Supplement* (April 7, 1966), 279–280; E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origins of the Black Act* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), 16.

199. Ibid., 239.

200. Ibid., 261 (236). In his discussion of artisan tradesmen, Thompson relied on George Sturt's 1923 book *The Wheelwright's Shop*, a work which the *Scrutiny* movement had used as evidence that Eliot's "dissociation" was a process that happened not suddenly and precipitately in the seventeenth century but in fits and starts across time, leaving pockets of customary practice undisturbed still generations after capitalist rationalization began: George Sturt, *The Wheelwright's Shop* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), for which Thompson wrote a foreword. For an example of the uses to which *Scrutiny* put Sturt, see Leavis and Thompson, *Culture and Environment*, 83–98.

201. Thompson, *Working Class*, 273 (247).

202. Ibid., 274 (247–248).

203. Ibid., 326 (295).

204. Ibid.

205. Ibid., 31 n2 (34 n1). Thompson's continuing interest in Sturt further indicates the residual influence of his earlier engagements with Leavis: above n203. See more broadly Ortolano, *Two Cultures*, 154–160.

206. Eric Hobsbawm, "The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century," *Past and Present* 5 (1954): 33–53; Eric Hobsbawm, "The Crisis of the 17th Century–II," *Past and Present* 6 (1954): 44–65. Compare Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolutions: Europe, 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1962), where this chronological perplexity has been resolved—in no small part by reliance on Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*. On this chronological instability, see also Taylor, "Beginnings of Modern British Social History?."

207. Robin Blackburn, "Edward Thompson and the New Left," *New Left Review* 201 (1993): 3–9, 7; Immerwahr, "Polanyi in the United States," 446; Theda Skocpol, *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Mandler, "New Poor Law," 157; Collini, "Enduring Passion," 181.

208. Thompson, *Working Class*, 73 (67–68).

209. Ibid.

210. Polanyi's reinterpretation of the genesis of the Speenhamland system as the late issue of a "moral economy" that survived into the early nineteenth century has since been reiterated uncontentiously: Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1968), 105 (citing Polanyi); Lynn H. Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 74–75 (citing Thompson). Though it should be said that debate about the Speenhamland system and the Old Poor Law has focused more on the economic *effects* of the system than on it social significance, and few historians since Polanyi had interrogated the motives of the Speenhamland magistrates after the fashion of Polanyi and Thompson: Blaug, "The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New"; Deirdre McCloskey, "New Perspectives on the Old Poor Law," *Explorations in Economic History* 10 (1973): 419–436. The social bases of and actuating motives for reform in the 1830s have been more keenly contested: Mandler, "Making of the New Poor Law," and ensuing debate: Anthony Brundage and David Eastwood, "The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus," *Past and Present* 127 (1990): 183–194. The historiographical literature on Speenhamland and the Old Poor Law

stands in stark contrast with the wider polemical use that has been made of the system in debate about postwar welfare policy, where Polanyi's account of the humanitarian motives of the JPs has combined with the orthodox historiographical position concerning the economic effects of the system to justify an attack on the "perverse" propensity of benefits to demoralize those whose plight they were intended to relieve: Block and Somers, "In the Shadow of Speenhamland"; Albert O. Hirschmann, *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), ch. 2.

211. Hobsbawm, "General Crisis"; Hobsbawm, "The Crisis of the 17th Century." This protracted intermission between the "rise of capitalism" and the Industrial Revolution was one of the bases upon which Peter Laslett justified his focus on the effect of industrialization on families, and his proposition that it was here in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, not earlier in the seventeenth century that the social patterns of modernity were set: Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Methuen, 1973; 2nd ed.), ch. 1.

212. On concentration on anomalies as the precursor to intellectual revolution, see Kuhn, *Structure*, 52–53.

213. Thompson, *Working Class*, 66–67 (72).

214. Ibid.

215. Ibid., 67–68 (73).

216. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 116.

217. Hont and Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice in *The Wealth of Nations*," 405–406. Hont and Ignatieff's critique of Thompson is discussed further below.

218. E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" (1971), in E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: Penguin, 1993), 185–258, 253. Thompson makes further reference to Tawney's *Religion in the Rise of Capitalism* earlier in the same article: see 201 n4. For a further sense of Thompson's indebtedness to Tawney, see E. P. Thompson, "Custom, Law and Common Right," in Thompson, *Customs in Common*, 97–184, 128–129.

219. The best account of the New Left in Britain is Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism*. See also Chun, *British New Left*; Gareth Stedman Jones, "Anglo-Marxism, Neo-Marxism and the Discursive Approach to History," in A. Ludtke, ed., *Was bleibt von marxistischen Persepktiven in der Geschichtsforschung* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1997), 148–209.

220. Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism*, 109–116; E. P. Thompson, "Where Are We Now?," in Winslow, ed., *Thompson*, 215–246.

221. For a sense of what separated Anderson and his allies from the "first" New Left, see Gareth Stedman Jones, "History and Theory: An English Story," *Historein* 3 (2001): 103–124. For historiographical analyses of the differences, see Michael Kenny, *The First New Left: British Intellectuals After Stalin* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995); Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism*, ch. 2; Chun, *The British New Left*.

222. Thompson, "Where Are We Now?"; Perry Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London: Verso Editions, 1980).

223. Louis Althusser, *Lire le Capital* (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1967). For a retrospective appraisal of the failure of Althusser's attempt, see Stedman Jones, "Anglo-Marxism."

224. Thompson, "Peculiarities," 342.

225. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 85.

226. The most influential iteration of this line of attack on Thompson was Tony Judt, "Goodbye to All That?," *New York Review of Books*, September 21, 2006.

227. Anderson, *Arguments*.

228. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 252, quoted in Thompson, "Where Are We Now?," 242.

229. Thompson, "Where Are We Now?," 214.

230. Ibid., 238.

231. Ibid., 227.

232. Thompson, "Letter to Kolakowski," 175.

233. Anderson, "Components of the National Culture."

234. Thompson, "The Peculiarities of the English," in Thompson, *Poverty of Theory*, 35–91, 59.

235. On this point see also Stedman Jones, "History and Theory."

236. Thompson, "Where Are We Now?," 238.

237. Ibid.

238. Thompson, "Letter to Kolakowski."

239. Ibid., 174.

240. E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy Reviewed," in Thompson, *Customs in Common*, 259–351, 350.

241. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters*, 16.

242. For an example of the disappointment with which many expectant readers received *Whigs and* Hunters, see Morton Horwitz, "The Rule of Law: An Unqualified Human Good?," *Yale Law Journal* 86 (1977): 561–566.

243. See, e.g., Collini, "Enduring Passion," 180–184.

244. Leszek Kolakowski, "My Correct Views on Everything," *Socialist Register* 11 (1974): 1–20.

245. Thompson, "Letter to Kolakowski."

246. Leszek Kolakowski, "Historical Understanding and the Intelligibility of History," *Triquarterly* 22 (1971): 103–117.

247. Quoted in Thompson, "Letter to Kolakowski," 137.

248. Ibid., 141.

249. Stedman Jones, "Anglo-Marxism," 165.

250. Geroulanos, *Atheism*.

251. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2002), 422.

252. Thompson, "Poverty of Theory," 254–255.

253. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in Isaiah Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 191–242.

254. Judith Shklar, "Use of Utopia?," 188.

255. Ibid. For a sense of how Shklar's minimalism developed, compare Judith Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

256. Gareth Stedman Jones has recently demonstrated that Marx himself later in life reverted to a version of his earlier humanism, repudiating the identities between human nature and animal nature to which he had been drawn in the middle of his life: see Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 568–586. Thompson's difficulties may further attest to Engels's effacement of this later turn in Marx's thinking.

257. Winch, "Mr Gradgrind and Jerusalem," 251–254.

258. For Thompson's reliance on Halévy, see Thompson, *Working Class*, 38 (35).

259. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 22–27 (20–25).

260. Ibid., 845–857 (769–779).

261. Ibid., 820–838 (746–762).

262. Ibid., 837 (762).

263. Ibid.

264. Ibid.

265. Ibid. Thompson uses comparable formulations to describe the solidarities discovered among his eighteenth-century protagonists in his late review of the critical literature on his concept of the "moral economy": Thompson, "Moral Economy Reviewed," 350–351.

266. Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 69.

267. Thompson, "Letter to Leszek Kolakowski," 141.

268. Thompson, "Poverty of Theory," 256.

269. Thompson, "Moral Economy Reviewed," 260–305, especially 301–303. The scholarship with which Thompson engaged in this connection is voluminous. Notable interlocutors include Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Many Faces of Moral Economy," *Past and Present* 58 (1973): 161–168; Joyce Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); P. S. Atiyah, *The Rise and Fall of Freedom of Contract* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

270. Thompson, "Moral Economy Reviewed," 344.

271. Ibid.

272. Ibid., 337–338.

273. For Thompson's arguments with Smith, see Thompson, "Moral Economy Reviewed," 260–305, especially 267–285.

274. Thompson, "Moral Economy Reviewed," 302.

275. Hont and Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice," 405–406. For Thompson's own response to this charge, see Thompson, "The Moral Economy Reviewed," 274–275.

Conclusion

1. Hobson, "Economics for a People's Front."

2. Tawney, "History of Capitalism," 316.

3. Ibid. On the commitment to "socialising demand" as the center of gravity in debate about "planning" in the 1930s, see Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*.

4. Crosland, "Transition," 62–63. On sociology's "moment" in postwar Britain, see Savage, *Identities and Social Change*. For a critical contemporary perspective, see Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1958).

5. This was the moment when the British discourse on "decline" took its familiar shape. For bearings in the large literature on this topic, see J. Tomlinson, "Inventing 'Decline' ": The Falling Behind of the British Economy in the Post-war Years," *Economic History Review* 49 (1996): 731–757; Ortolano, *Two Cultures*, ch. 5. For an influential critical perspective on "declinism," see David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: Militarism, Modernity and the Machines* (London:

Penguin Books, 2013); David Edgerton, "The Decline of Declinism," *Business History Review* 71 (1997): 201–207. For starting points in the literature on British economic performance during the twentieth century, see C. K. Harley, "The Legacy of the Early Start," in Floud, Humphries, and Johnson, eds., *Cambridge Economic History*, II: 1–25; M. J. Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1851–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11–24. On the salience of heightened expectations, particularly among the generation that came of age in the late 1950s, see Barry Supple, "Fear of Failing: Economic History and the Decline of Britain," *Economic History Review* 47 (1994): 441–458; Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, ch. 7. An association between modernity and heightened expectations for the future has been drawn by Reinhart Koselleck: Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time,* trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), ch. 1. The most acute analyst of the significance of these heightened expectations in postwar Britain probably remains Enoch Powell; the best available account of his thought is Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

6. On the crises of the 1970s, currently subject of an ongoing historiographical revision, see Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Pat Thane, eds., *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Jackson and Saunders, eds., *Making Thatcher's Britain*; Ortolano, *Two Cultures Controversy*, ch. 7. For an earlier account—limited for lack of evidence, but more sensitive to the possible gravity of this crisis because more aware of the fragility and importance of the jeopardized settlement—see Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, chs. 14 and 15.

7. In addition to the sources cited above, Richard Vinen's *Thatcher's Britain* is illuminating on these dynamics; see in particular Vinen's distinction between a "postwar consensus" which Thatcher could support and a "progressive consensus" which she abhorred: Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980s* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 7.

8. On the salience of "anti-waste" sentiment, see Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England* 1918–1951 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 50–59; Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Labour, 1920–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), ch. 2; Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, ch. 7; Jim Tomlinson, "Thatcherism, Monetarism and the Politics of Inflation," in Jackson and Saunders, eds., *Making Thatcher's Britain*, 62–77.

9. The historiographical literature on Enoch Powell and (more so) Margaret Thatcher was thin until recently but is now maturing fast. For provocative entry points on Powell and Thatcher respectively, see Schofield, *Enoch Powell*; and Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, "Neoliberalism and Morality in the Making of Thatcherite Social Policy," *Historical Journal* (2012): 497–520.

10. And again attention to this question crossed conventional political lines. Consider, for instance, remarks which Keith Joseph made when angling for the leadership of the Conservative party in 1974 to the effect that the "economics first approach" he deemed characteristic of postwar politics had "aggravated unhappiness and social conflict": quoted in Matthew Grimley, "Thatcherism, Morality and Religion," in Jackson and Saunders, eds., *Making Thatcher's Britain*, 78–94, 82.

11. Amartya Sen, "The Possibility of Social Choice," *American Economic Review* 89 (1999): 349–378, 364.

12. E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1973).

13. See Harris, *Beveridge*, 434.

14. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, 49.

15. Ibid., 8, 201.

16. Veldman, *Fantasy*, 286.

17. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, 201.

18. Ibid., ch. 6.

19. Ibid., 73, 86.

20. Ibid., 23, ch. 16.

21. Ibid., 184.

22. Ibid., 37, ch. 4.

23. Ibid., 86.

24. Ibid., 209.

25. See, e.g., Abram Bergson, "A Reformulation of Certain Aspects of Welfare Economics," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 52(2) (1938): 310–334; Paul Samuelson, *Foundations of Economic Analysis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947).

26. For relevant starting points in the expansive literature on the Cold War human sciences, see Sonja Amadae, *Rationalising Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003); David Ciepley, *Liberalism in the Shadow of Totalitarianism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Joel Isaac, *Working Knowledge: Making the Human Sciences from Parsons to Kuhn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

27. Kenneth Arrow, "A Difficulty in the Concept of Social Welfare," *Journal of Political Economy* 58 (1950): 328–346, 331.

28. Arjo Klamar, "A Conversation with Amartya Sen," 3 *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (1989): 135–150, 139.

29. It is significant that Arrow and Tawney shared a forum in the Chicago-based *Journal of Political Economy*, where the first chapter of *Individual Values and Social Choice* appeared in 1950 and which had published Tawney's 1922 Scott Holland Memorial lectures (the lectures which became *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*) verbatim: Tawney, "Religious Thought"; Arrow, "A Difficulty." That this journal published both authors was indicative both of the affinity between their respective preoccupations and of changes in the discipline of economics across the intervening period.

30. See, e.g., Bergson, "A Reformulation."

31. Ibid.; Arrow, "A Difficulty."

32. Arrow, "A Difficulty."

33. Bergson, "A Reformulation"; Samuelson, *Foundations*; Abram Bergson, "Socialist Economics," in H. S. Ellis, ed., *A Survey of Contemporary Economics* (Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1948) I: 412–448.

34. Nicholas Kaldor, "Welfare Propositions in Economics and Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility," *Economic Journal* 49 (1939): 549–552.

35. Kenneth Arrow, "Kenneth Arrow on Social Choice Theory," in Kenneth Arrow, Amartya Sen, and Kotaro Suzumura, eds., *Handbook of Social Choice and Welfare* (Amsterdam: Elsevier,

2011) 2: 3–27, 25. See also Amartya Sen, "The Possibility of Social Choice," *American Economic Review* 89 (1999): 349–378, 350–351, suggesting that "social choice theory as a systematic discipline first came into its own around the time of the French Revolution . . . pioneered by French mathematicians in the late eighteenth century, such as J. C. Borda and Marquis de Condorcet," before being "revived in the twentieth century by Arrow." For more recent and illuminating exposition of the connections between Condorcet's milieu and Arrow's, see Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments*, ch. 5.

36. Arrow, "A Difficulty,'" 329.

37. Ibid., 330.

38. Arrow's conditions were (i) that the same procedure should work for all possible orderings of preferences; (ii) that Pareto optimality be realized in its weak form, i.e., that if everyone prefers *x* to *y*, *x* must prevail; (iii) that between two alternatives extraneous or irrelevant preferences should not matter (so that in a ballot between candidate A and candidate B, how voters rank Abraham Lincoln vis-à-vis Vladimir Lenin makes no difference); and (iv) that no one individual enjoys dictatorial powers, so that her own preference for *x* over *y* dictates that society must prefer *x* to *y* irrespective of everyone else's preference: Arrow, *Individual Values and Social Choice*, ch. 1.

39. Arrow, "A Difficulty," 331.

40. Ibid., 336.

41. Ibid., 343–344.

42. Ibid., 343.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 328; Arrow, *Individual Values and Social Choice*, 1.

45. Arrow, *Individual Values and Social Choice*, 1 n1, citing Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.*

46. For impressions of this interpretation of Arrow's work, see Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*, 86, citing (among others) William H. Riker, *Liberalism against Populism: A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1982); James M. Buchanan, "Politics Without Romance: A Sketch of Positive Public Choice Theory and Its Normative Implications" (1979), reprinted in Philip Pettit, ed., *Contemporary Political Theory* (New York: Macmillan, 1991).

47. For an introduction to Sen's applications of social choice theory, see Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (London: Penguin, 2009), ch. 4.

48. Amartya Sen, "Biographical," in Tore Frängsmyr, *The Nobel Prizes 1998* (Stockholm: Nobel Foundation, 1999).

49. Amartya Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare* (San Francisco: Holden-Day, 1970), 199.

50. Klamar, "A Conversation with Amartya Sen."

51. Sen, "Possibility of Social Choice."

52. Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, 199.

53. Ibid., 5.

54. For references to this seminar and for Sen's critique of John Rawls, see Sen, *Idea of Justice*.

55. Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, 6.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 188.

58. Ibid., 6.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., 6 n5, citing Eric Hobsbawm, "Where Are British Historians Going?," *Marxist Quarterly* 2 (1) (1955): 14–26.

61. Amartya Sen, "Inequality, Unemployment and Contemporary Europe," *International Labour Review* 136 (1997): 155–171, 161–162.

62. Amartya Sen, "Tagore and His India," in Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian* (London: Penguin, 2006) ch. 5; E. P. Thompson, "Introduction" in Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

63. Sen, *On Economic Inequality*, 81–82, citing Bernard Williams, "The Idea of Equality," in Williams, *In the Beginning was the Deed*, 97–114, 99. See further Williams and Sen, "Introduction" in Williams and Sen, *Utilitarianism and Beyond*.

64. Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, 200.

65. Ibid., 192.

66. Sen, "Possibility of Social Choice," 353.

67. Sen borrows the concept of "bounded rationality" from the economist Herbert Simon to elucidate the significance of social choice theory: see Sen, *Idea of Justice*, 108.

68. Tawney, "Study of Economic History," 9.