

為什麼要社會主義？

文□愛因斯坦（Albert Einstein）／譯□杜繼平

愛因斯坦創立“相對論”，推倒了主導西方科學二百餘年的牛頓古典力學，人類的宇宙觀為之丕變，物理學自此開啟了新的紀元，舉世無不推崇他為二十世紀最偉大的科學家。但較不為人知的是愛因斯坦自青少年時開始，終其一生都是一個堅定的社會主義者。他除了孜孜於科學研究，對人類的命運也無時或忘。尤其自第一次世界大戰爆發後，他深為憂懼在科學昌明下，戰爭恐有毀滅人類文明之虞。1932年7月30日他致函著名的心理學家佛洛伊德商討消弭戰爭之道。信中痛責各國壟斷政治、經濟權力的一小撮統治階級利慾薰心，為了一己的私利與權位而不惜發動戰爭，以萬民為芻狗。二戰期間，他旅居美國，卻因他思想左傾並參與了左派的反戰和平集會，美國聯邦調查局自1940年始，便嚴密監視他的言行。到他逝世，FBI監視他的檔案材料累計達數千頁之多。1947年，當愛因斯坦知悉他遭到FBI監控後，深表失望地說：“我之所以選擇美國，是因為我聽說這個國家有充分的自由。我選擇美國作為自由的國度，實際上犯了一個錯誤。這個錯誤，我終生無法彌補。”

本文是愛因斯坦在1949年為美國著名的馬克思主義刊物《每月評論》（Monthly Review）的創刊而作。文中詳述了他主張社會主義的理由，後收入1950年出版的晚年文集：《Out of My Later Years》。1992年五月與1994年五月，《每月評論》又兩度重刊本文。在半個多世紀後，衡諸當世，再讀斯文，仍有足多發人深省之處，爰加逐譯，以饗讀者。——編者

以一個並非經濟與社會問題專家的人來表達對社會主義的看法，恰當嗎？我有許多的理由認為這並無不當。

我們先從科學知識的觀點來思考這個問題。天文學與經濟學的研究方法看來似乎沒有根本的差別：這兩個領域的科學家都試圖從特定類別的現象中發現普遍認可的規律，使這些現象的相互聯繫盡可能明白易解。但實際上，兩者的研究方法確實存在差異。被觀察的經濟現象經常受到許多很難分開評估的因素的影響，這就給發現經濟學的普遍規律造成困難。此外，眾所週知，自所謂文明時期開始，對人類的歷史經驗有重大影響與限制的，絕不僅僅只是經濟因素這一項。例如，歷史中的大國多半都由武力征伐而來。征服的民族在被征服的國家中，從法律上與經濟上都自居為特權階級。他們壟斷了土地所有權，從本民族中任命教士。這些教士掌控了教育，使社會的階級劃分歷久不變，並創造一套道德規範，使人民的社會行為不太自覺地循規蹈矩。

科學無法設定目標，最多能提供達成目標的手段

但歷史傳統是關乎所謂昨日之事；至今我們仍未克服凡勃倫【譯按：Thorstein Veblen（1857~1929），美國制度經濟學派創始人，著有《有閑階級論》等名著】所說的人類發展的“掠奪時期”。我們可觀察到的經濟事實屬於那個時期，而且就算我們能從那個時期的經濟事實得出一些規律，也無法應用到其他時期。由於社會主義的真正目的正是要克服並超越人類發展的掠奪時期，當前狀態的經濟科學對闡明未來的社會主義社會實在沒什麼幫助。

再者，社會主義是由一個社會——道德的目標所指引的。然而，科學無法設定目標，更無法把目標浸潤於人類心中。科學最多能提供達成某種目標的手段。但目標本身得由具有崇高的道德理想的人設想出來，如果這些目標沒有夭折，而是生機勃勃，充滿活力，被許多人奉行不輟，這些人在半知半覺中就會推動社會緩緩演進。

基於這些理由，我們必須警惕，在對待人的問題時，不要過於高估科學與科學方法；我們切莫以為，對於影響社會組織的問題，只有專家有權表達他們的看法。

近些時日來，斷言人類社會正遭逢一場危機而岌岌不保的說法甚囂塵上。這種情況特有的表現就是個人對所屬的群體，不論大小都漠不關心，甚至懷有敵意。這裡且記述一段個人經驗，以闡明所言之意。最近我和一位與人為善的才智之士論及恐怕有再爆發一場大戰之虞，就我看來，果然成真則人類得倖存者幾希，我提到只有建立一個超越國家的組織可保人類免遭此大禍。一聞此言，我的訪客隨即冷冷地對我說：“你為什麼這樣極力反對人類滅絕呢？”

我確信，僅在一個世紀前，不會有人這麼若無其事地說出這種話。這種話出自力圖達到內在平衡卻不可得，終乃或多或少灰心喪志的人。這表示這些日子裡許許多多的人正飽受孤獨與寂寥的痛苦煎熬。何以致此？可有出路？

提出這樣的問題容易，但要回答卻難有把握。我深知我們的情感與企求常是矛盾、含混不清的，無法言簡意賅地表述。

個人的生存依附於社會

人同時既是獨個的存在物，又是社會的存在物。作為獨個的存在物，他力圖保護自己和最親近的人的生存，設法滿足個人的慾望，發展天生的能力。作為社會的存在物，他力求獲得同胞的認可和喜愛，共享他們的歡樂，撫慰他們的哀愁，增進他們的福祉。只有人心中這各不相同而又往往衝突的企求才能說明人的特性，保己與愛群、私利與公義之心的結合方式決定了個人的內在平衡能達到何種程度，對社會的福祉又能有多大貢獻。這兩種驅動力的強弱對比極可能大體上是與生俱來的。但最終呈現的人格卻大部分是由他身心發展時所遭

逢的環境、成長於其間的社會結構、那個社會的傳統及其臧否行為的標準所塑造。“社會”這個抽象概念對個人來說，意味他與同代人及前世代所有人的直接、間接關係的總合。個人能夠自己思考、感覺、努力與工作，但他的身體、知識與情感無不深深依附於社會，因此要在社會框架之外，思考一個人或了解他，根本不可能。正是“社會”提供人食、衣、住家、勞動工具、語言、思考的形式與大部分的內容，是古今隱身於“社會”這個小字眼後的千百萬人的勞動與成就才使他得以存活。

因此，很明顯，個人依賴於社會是個無法泯除的自然之事——就像螞蟻和蜜蜂一樣。然而，螞蟻與蜜蜂的整個生命歷程鉅細靡遺都完全由遺傳的本能所確定，人類的社會型態與相互關係卻是多種多樣且易於變遷的。記憶，重組的能力，口頭交流的天賦使人能不受生物的必然性的支配而有所發展。這樣的發展顯現在傳統、制度與組織，在文學，在科學與工程的成就，在藝術作品上。這說明了人怎麼能通過自己的行為影響他的生活，也說明了有意識的思考與要求怎麼能在這個過程中發生作用。

人從出生就經由遺傳具有固定不變的生物結構，其中包括人類特有的自然衝動。此外，在他的一生中，他還通過交往與其他類型的影響，從社會中獲得一種文化結構。正是這個文化結構會隨著時光推移而變化，在很大程度上決定了個人與社會的關係。現代人類學通過調查研究，比較了所謂的原始文化，教導我們說，人類的社會行為依據盛行的文化形態與在社會中佔主導地位的組織類型，可以有極大的不同。那些為改善人的命運而奮鬥的人正是把希望建立在上述的基礎上：人類並不會因生物結構使然就註定要互相毀滅或無法擺脫自殘的殘酷命運。

罪惡之源在於資本主義經濟的無政府狀態

如果我們自問，為了使人的生活盡可能的滿足，社會結構與人的文化觀點該怎麼改變，我們必須時時意識到有些情況我們是無法更動的。如前所言，人的生物本性實際上是不會變化的。再者，過去幾個世紀的技術與人口發展已經造就了我們現在所處的情況。以人口之相對密集與維持人類生存所必需的產品而論，細密的分工和高度集中的生產機構是絕對必要的。那個回顧起來閑適宜人、個人或較小的群體可以完全自給自足的時代，已經一去永不復返了。若說人類目前已構成了一個生產與消費的全球共同體，並非太過甚其辭。

現在我可以簡單陳述，就我看來，造成我們時代的危機的根本原因何在。這涉及個人與社會的關係。個人已比以前更察覺到他依賴於社會。但他覺得他對社會的依賴並不是一項有益的資產，他與社會不是唇齒相依的關係，社會也不保護他的生存，這種依賴關係反而威脅他的自然權利，甚至危及他的生計。更有甚者，他本性中自私自利的慾望因所處的社會位置而越來越強烈，而本來就比較微弱的社會公益之心則越來越消沉。所有的人，不論他們身居何種社會

地位，都遭到社會公益之心日趨消沉的禍害。他們毫不自覺地陷於私欲橫流中無法自拔，惶惶不安，孤獨寂寞，享受不到純真、簡單、質樸的生活樂趣。人生短促又多險，只有獻身於社會，方可尋得生命的意義。

依我之見，真正的罪惡之源就在於今天資本主義社會的經濟無政府狀態。我們看到一群龐大的生產者，相互之間不停地力圖剝奪他們集體勞動的成果——不是憑藉暴力，而是一起格遵法律制定的規則。就此而論，認識到這點很重要，就是生產資料（即生產消費產品及追加的資本品所需要的生產能力）在法律上可能是（大部分而言其實也是）個人的私有財產。

為了簡單起見，以下的討論我會稱凡不擁有生產資料的人為“工人”，雖然這樣並不完全符合這個詞的一般用法。擁有生產資料的人有能力購買工人的勞動力。工人使用生產資料生產出新商品，歸為資本家的財產。這個過程的緊要之處是，工人生產出的商品與付給他的工資之間的關係，兩者都依據真正的價值來衡量。只要勞動契約是勞雇雙方“自由”訂立的，工人所得到的報酬就不是由他生產的商品的實際價值來決定，而是既取決於工人維生的最低需要，也取決於資本家對勞動力的需求與競求工作的工人數量之間的關係。即使在理論上說，工人的報酬也不由他的產品的價值來決定，瞭解這一點很重要。

私人資本支配下的民主有名無實

私人資本傾向於集中在少數人的手裡，部分由於資本家之間的競爭，部分由於技術發展與分工日趨細密促使較小的生產單位消失，形成較大規模的廠商。結果是私人資本的寡頭政治，其權力之大連民主社會也制衡不了。這絕非虛言，立法機構的成員是由政黨挑選出來，政黨的經費則大部分由私人資本家資助，要不然就深受資本家的影響，資本家實際上從中隔開了選民與國會議員。結果，人民的代表事實上並不能充分保護勞苦無告的下層人民的利益。更有甚者，在現存條件下，私人資本家必然直接或間接控制報紙、廣播、教育等資訊的主要來源。這樣一來，個別的公民就極難做出客觀結論並明智地運用他的政治權利，實際上在大多數情況下是非常不可能的。

在私人資本為基礎的經濟常以兩大準則為特徵：第一，生產資料（資本）是私有的，依資本家的意志支配；第二，勞動契約依勞資雙方的自由意願訂立。當然，就此而論，沒有純粹的資本主義社會，特別直得一提的是，工人經過長期而艱苦的政治鬥爭，已經獲得了成果，使某些行業的工人的“自由勞動契約”有了些許的改善。但總體而言，目前的經濟型態與“純粹”的資本主義並無多大的差異。

生產是為利潤而開工，而不是為生產有用的產品來滿足人的需求。沒有條款規定所有有能力且有意願工作的人都能就業，一支“失業大軍”幾乎總是存在。勞工老是惴惴不安地害怕失業。由於失業與低薪的工人沒有足夠的購買能

力提供有利可圖的市場，消費品的生產也就受到限制，結果就滋生深重的貧困。利潤的動機及與之俱生的資本家之間的競爭造成資本的積累與運用波動不定，導致越來越嚴重的經濟衰退。沒有限制的競爭令工人失業，浪費了大量勞動力棄置不用，也造成我前已提及的對個人的社會意識的斷傷。

社會主義是唯一的出路

我認為資本主義的罪大惡極之處就在於對個人的這種戕害。我們整個的教育制度都深受這種罪惡之害，學生都被灌進了過份強調競爭的想法，訓練他們崇拜名位利祿以為未來生涯之資。

我深信要清除這些深重的罪惡只有一條路，就是建立社會主義經濟制度，同時建立一套導向社會目標的教育體系。在這樣的經濟制度中，生產資料歸社會本身所有，並制定計畫來使用社會化的生產資料。調整生產以適應社會需要的計劃經濟會把工作分配給所有有能力勞動的人，也會確保每個男人、女人、小孩的生計，對個人的教育，除增進他天生的能力外，還要培養他對同胞的責任感，使他不再陷於我們當前社會崇尚權力與功成名就的習氣。

然而，必須記住計畫經濟並不就是社會主義。計畫經濟也可能同時發生個人完全的奴化。要實現社會主義必須解決一些極為困難的社會、政治問題：鑑於政治與經濟權力集中的範圍極為廣泛，怎樣才能避免官僚體系專權跋扈？怎樣才可以保障個人的權利從而確保反制官僚權力的民主力量？

在我們向社會主義過渡的時代，釐清社會主義的目標與問題具有最重要的意義。由於在當前的環境下，自由而沒有阻礙地討論這些問題被懸為厲禁，我認為這本雜誌的創刊對公眾是個重要的貢獻。

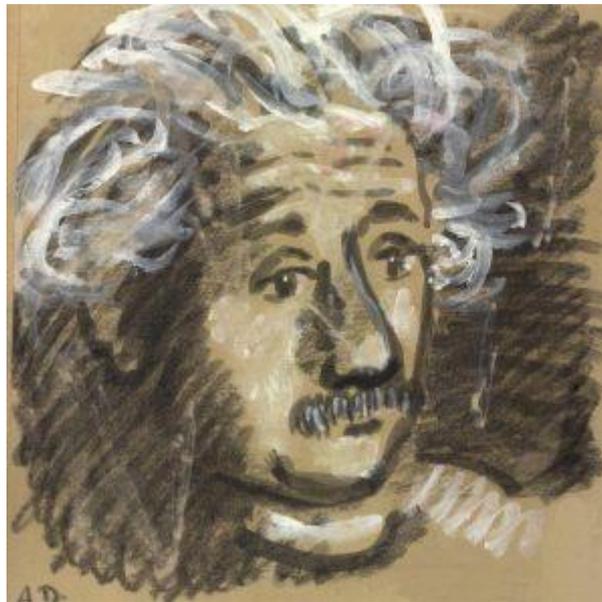
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Why Socialism?

by Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein is the world-famous physicist. This article was originally published in the first issue of Monthly Review (May 1949). It was subsequently published in May 1998 to commemorate the first issue of MR's fiftieth year.

—THE EDITORS



Is it advisable for one who is not an expert on economic and social issues to express views on the subject of socialism? I believe for a number of reasons that it is.

Let us first consider the question from the point of view of scientific knowledge. It might appear that there are no essential methodological differences between astronomy and economics: scientists in both fields attempt to discover laws of general acceptability for a circumscribed group of phenomena in order to make the interconnection of these phenomena as clearly understandable as possible. But in reality such methodological differences do exist. The discovery of general laws in the field of economics is made difficult by the circumstance that observed economic phenomena are often affected by many factors which are very hard to evaluate separately. In addition, the experience which has

accumulated since the beginning of the so-called civilized period of human history has—as is well known—been largely influenced and limited by causes which are by no means exclusively economic in nature. For example, most of the major states of history owed their existence to conquest. The conquering peoples established themselves, legally and economically, as the privileged class of the conquered country. They seized for themselves a monopoly of the land ownership and appointed a priesthood from among their own ranks. The priests, in control of education, made the class division of society into a permanent institution and created a system of values by which the people were thenceforth, to a large extent unconsciously, guided in their social behavior.

But historic tradition is, so to speak, of yesterday; nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein Veblen called “the predatory phase” of human development. The observable economic facts belong to that phase and even such laws as we can derive from them are not applicable to other phases. Since the real purpose of socialism is precisely to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development, economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future.

Second, socialism is directed towards a social-ethical end. Science, however, cannot create ends and, even less, instill them in human beings; science, at most, can supply the means by which to attain certain ends. But the ends themselves are conceived by personalities with lofty ethical ideals and—if these ends are not stillborn, but vital and vigorous—are adopted and carried forward by those many human beings who, half unconsciously, determine the slow evolution of society.

For these reasons, we should be on our guard not to overestimate science and scientific methods when it is a question of human problems; and we should not assume that experts are the only ones who have a right to express themselves on questions affecting the organization of society.

Innumerable voices have been asserting for some time now that human society is passing through a crisis, that its stability has been gravely shattered. It is characteristic of such a situation that individuals feel indifferent or even hostile toward the group, small or large, to which they belong. In order to illustrate my meaning, let me record here a personal

experience. I recently discussed with an intelligent and well-disposed man the threat of another war, which in my opinion would seriously endanger the existence of mankind, and I remarked that only a supra-national organization would offer protection from that danger. Thereupon my visitor, very calmly and coolly, said to me: "Why are you so deeply opposed to the disappearance of the human race?"

I am sure that as little as a century ago no one would have so lightly made a statement of this kind. It is the statement of a man who has striven in vain to attain an equilibrium within himself and has more or less lost hope of succeeding. It is the expression of a painful solitude and isolation from which so many people are suffering in these days. What is the cause? Is there a way out?

It is easy to raise such questions, but difficult to answer them with any degree of assurance. I must try, however, as best I can, although I am very conscious of the fact that our feelings and strivings are often contradictory and obscure and that they cannot be expressed in easy and simple formulas.

Man is, at one and the same time, a solitary being and a social being. As a solitary being, he attempts to protect his own existence and that of those who are closest to him, to satisfy his personal desires, and to develop his innate abilities. As a social being, he seeks to gain the recognition and affection of his fellow human beings, to share in their pleasures, to comfort them in their sorrows, and to improve their conditions of life. Only the existence of these varied, frequently conflicting, strivings accounts for the special character of a man, and their specific combination determines the extent to which an individual can achieve an inner equilibrium and can contribute to the well-being of society. It is quite possible that the relative strength of these two drives is, in the main, fixed by inheritance. But the personality that finally emerges is largely formed by the environment in which a man happens to find himself during his development, by the structure of the society in which he grows up, by the tradition of that society, and by its appraisal of particular types of behavior. The abstract concept "society" means to the individual human being the sum total of his direct and indirect relations to his contemporaries and to all the people of earlier generations. The individual is able to think, feel, strive, and work by himself; but he depends so much

upon society—in his physical, intellectual, and emotional existence—that it is impossible to think of him, or to understand him, outside the framework of society. It is “society” which provides man with food, clothing, a home, the tools of work, language, the forms of thought, and most of the content of thought; his life is made possible through the labor and the accomplishments of the many millions past and present who are all hidden behind the small word “society.”

It is evident, therefore, that the dependence of the individual upon society is a fact of nature which cannot be abolished—just as in the case of ants and bees. However, while the whole life process of ants and bees is fixed down to the smallest detail by rigid, hereditary instincts, the social pattern and interrelationships of human beings are very variable and susceptible to change. Memory, the capacity to make new combinations, the gift of oral communication have made possible developments among human being which are not dictated by biological necessities. Such developments manifest themselves in traditions, institutions, and organizations; in literature; in scientific and engineering accomplishments; in works of art. This explains how it happens that, in a certain sense, man can influence his life through his own conduct, and that in this process conscious thinking and wanting can play a part.

Man acquires at birth, through heredity, a biological constitution which we must consider fixed and unalterable, including the natural urges which are characteristic of the human species. In addition, during his lifetime, he acquires a cultural constitution which he adopts from society through communication and through many other types of influences. It is this cultural constitution which, with the passage of time, is subject to change and which determines to a very large extent the relationship between the individual and society. Modern anthropology has taught us, through comparative investigation of so-called primitive cultures, that the social behavior of human beings may differ greatly, depending upon prevailing cultural patterns and the types of organization which predominate in society. It is on this that those who are striving to improve the lot of man may ground their hopes: human beings are not condemned, because of their biological constitution, to annihilate each other or to be at the mercy of a cruel, self-inflicted fate.

If we ask ourselves how the structure of society and the cultural attitude of man should be changed in order to make human life as satisfying as possible, we should constantly be conscious of the fact that there are certain conditions which we are unable to modify. As mentioned before, the biological nature of man is, for all practical purposes, not subject to change. Furthermore, technological and demographic developments of the last few centuries have created conditions which are here to stay. In relatively densely settled populations with the goods which are indispensable to their continued existence, an extreme division of labor and a highly-centralized productive apparatus are absolutely necessary. The time—which, looking back, seems so idyllic—is gone forever when individuals or relatively small groups could be completely self-sufficient. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that mankind constitutes even now a planetary community of production and consumption.

I have now reached the point where I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to society. The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence upon society. But he does not experience this dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, or even to his economic existence. Moreover, his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. All human beings, whatever their position in society, are suffering from this process of deterioration. Unknowingly prisoners of their own egotism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naive, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.

The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists today is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil. We see before us a huge community of producers the members of which are unceasingly striving to deprive each other of the fruits of their collective labor—not by force, but on the whole in faithful compliance with legally established rules. In this respect, it is important to realize that the means of production—that is to say, the entire productive capacity that is needed for producing consumer goods as well as additional capital goods—may legally be, and for the most part are, the private property of individuals.

For the sake of simplicity, in the discussion that follows I shall call “workers” all those who do not share in the ownership of the means of production—although this does not quite correspond to the customary use of the term. The owner of the means of production is in a position to purchase the labor power of the worker. By using the means of production, the worker produces new goods which become the property of the capitalist. The essential point about this process is the relation between what the worker produces and what he is paid, both measured in terms of real value. Insofar as the labor contract is “free,” what the worker receives is determined not by the real value of the goods he produces, but by his minimum needs and by the capitalists’ requirements for labor power in relation to the number of workers competing for jobs. It is important to understand that even in theory the payment of the worker is not determined by the value of his product.

Private capital tends to become concentrated in few hands, partly because of competition among the capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labor encourage the formation of larger units of production at the expense of smaller ones. The result of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital the enormous power of which cannot be effectively checked even by a democratically organized political society. This is true since the members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely financed or otherwise influenced by private capitalists who, for all practical purposes, separate the electorate from the legislature. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interests of the underprivileged sections of the population. Moreover, under existing conditions, private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases quite impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights.

The situation prevailing in an economy based on the private ownership of capital is thus characterized by two main principles: first, means of production (capital) are privately owned and the owners dispose of them as they see fit; second, the labor contract is free. Of course, there is no such thing as a *pure* capitalist society in this sense. In particular, it

should be noted that the workers, through long and bitter political struggles, have succeeded in securing a somewhat improved form of the "free labor contract" for certain categories of workers. But taken as a whole, the present day economy does not differ much from "pure" capitalism.

Production is carried on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those able and willing to work will always be in a position to find employment; an "army of unemployed" almost always exists. The worker is constantly in fear of losing his job. Since unemployed and poorly paid workers do not provide a profitable market, the production of consumers' goods is restricted, and great hardship is the consequence. Technological progress frequently results in more unemployment rather than in an easing of the burden of work for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the accumulation and utilization of capital which leads to increasingly severe depressions. Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labor, and to that crippling of the social consciousness of individuals which I mentioned before.

This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation for his future career.

I am convinced there is only *one* way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals. In such an economy, the means of production are owned by society itself and are utilized in a planned fashion. A planned economy, which adjusts production to the needs of the community, would distribute the work to be done among all those able to work and would guarantee a livelihood to every man, woman, and child. The education of the individual, in addition to promoting his own innate abilities, would attempt to develop in him a sense of responsibility for his fellow men in place of the glorification of power and success in our present society.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that a planned economy is not yet socialism. A planned economy as such may be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the individual. The achievement of socialism

requires the solution of some extremely difficult socio-political problems: how is it possible, in view of the far-reaching centralization of political and economic power, to prevent bureaucracy from becoming all-powerful and overweening? How can the rights of the individual be protected and therewith a democratic counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured?

Clarity about the aims and problems of socialism is of greatest significance in our age of transition. Since, under present circumstances, free and unhindered discussion of these problems has come under a powerful taboo, I consider the foundation of this magazine to be an important public service.

<https://monthlyreview.org/2009/05/01/why-socialism/>