

# "RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM" AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

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THEORIZING on the relation of the individual to the State is an old activity. Plato dwelt on this relation in his *Republic*. It was the theme of Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*. Herbert Spencer in his essays, under the collective title of *Social Statics* and *Man versus the State*, although read now only in high academic circles, immortalized himself with the thesis of a very rugged individualism, as did John Stuart Mill in his classic essay *On Liberty*. Karl Marx, at the opposite pole of political theory, lays claim to fame as the co-author of the *Communist Manifesto*, beginning with the challenging sentence: "A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism". These references are only casual. An exhaustive list of those who have thought on the subject would represent many shades of opinion, extending from anarchistic individualism to Marxian communism.

Shades of opinion provide a basis for the classification of individualists as well as of collectivists. It is not enough to refer to So-and-So as "an individualist." There is the individualism of a Godwin, of a Spencer, of a Hoover, of a Franklin Roosevelt. In making this classification it is realized that there are those in large numbers who would call Mr. Roosevelt a "state-ist" or a collectivist. Francis W. Coker in *Recent Political Thought* calls him an empirical collectivist. Herbert Spencer, were he alive, would certainly laugh at his individualism, as he would probably sneer at the modified individualism of Herbert Hoover. But individualism in the twentieth century is entitled to a new definition. "Modern individualists", says A. V. Dicey in *Law and Opinion in England*, "are themselves on some points socialists. The inner logic of events leads... to the extension and the development of legislation which bears the imprint of collectivism". Probably most of those who classify Mr. Roosevelt as an individualist are ready to admit, however, that any further movement of significance on his part to the Left would disqualify him from bearing a label associated with individualism.

The statements of those who lay claim to a belief in the philosophy of individualism indicate how far apart they really are. In 1888 Bishop Brook of Boston made this statement in a sermon:

"He is the benefactor of his race who makes it possible to have one law less. He is the enemy of his kind who would lay upon the shoulders of arbitrary government one burden which might be carried by the educated conscience and character of the community". In 1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt read this sentence to Congress: "My first request is that the Congress provide the machinery necessary for a great co-operative movement throughout all industry in order to obtain wide re-employment, to shorten the work week, to pay a decent wage for the shorter week and to prevent unfair competition and disastrous over-production". These two are antipodal in their attitude toward the necessity for legislation. A West Virginia judge was Spencerian in the ruthlessness of his individualistic philosophy in a *Standard Oil* case: "The lion has stretched out his paws and grabbed in prey more than others, but that is the natural right of the lion in the field of pursuit and capture. Pity that the lion exists, his competing animals say; but natural law accords the right... The dead are found strewn all along the highways of business and commerce. Has it not always been so? ... The dead and wounded have no right of action from this imperious law... Liberty must exist..." Compare this "economic cannibalism", to use a Tugwellian expression, with the individualism of Herbert Hoover: "What we need to-day is steady devotion to a better, brighter, broader individualism—an individualism that carries increasing responsibility and service to our fellows".

It is the purpose of this paper to clear away some of the confusion which in many places surrounds the nature of individualistic thought, and in doing so to present four very clearly defined shades of opinion. They have been designated as anarchistic individualism, eighteenth-century individualism, progressive individualism, and reconstructed individualism.

#### ANARCHISTIC INDIVIDUALISM

The extreme form of individualism appears under such designations as individualistic or philosophic anarchism, or again as anarchistic individualism. This theory must, at the outset, be distinguished from communistic anarchism, which would, as pointed out by Bertrand Russell in *Proposed Roads to Freedom*, after overthrowing the State by force, erect upon the wreckage a system of Communism differing little from Marxian socialism except that it would be realized without the instrumentality of the state. Anarchistic individualism would attack the problems of social science by applying with relentless logic the principle of unqualified individual sovereignty.



In literary form, it finds expression in the voice of Ibsen, who, despairing of democracy in which the masses move capriciously in any direction at the instigation of certain leadership, sees all hope in the unfolding of individual character: in Thoreau, who says in his *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, "I heartily accept the motto—'That government is best which governs least'... Carried out, it amounts to this, which also I believe,—'That government is best which governs not at all;' and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have;" in Tolstoy who writes in *Social Evils and their Remedy*, "Power is not, as was formerly thought, something divine and majestic, neither is it an indispensable condition of social life... Be the power in the hands of Louis XVI... or Napoleon... the President... or the first Minister,—wheresoever it be, there will exist the power of certain men over others, and there will not be freedom, but there will be the oppression of one portion of mankind by another. Therefore power must be abolished." These philosophies can all be embodied in the anarchistic motto: "Liberty, not the daughter, but the mother of order".

Anarchistic individualism envisages an order of society in which liberty and property can be protected and crime restrained by voluntary associations, for according to this view there can be no reconciliation of political power with social justice. That these associations will be active is part of the argument in Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread*. That the ideal may be considerably delayed in arriving can be inferred from William Baillie's statement in his book, *Josiah Warren*: "Modern Anarchism... is primarily a tendency—moral, social, and intellectual. As a tendency it questions the superiority of the State, the infallibility of laws, and the divine right of authority, spiritual and temporal". But with anarchism finally established, voluntary associations of all sizes and degrees would exist for all possible purposes, from production and consumption to education and protection. Harmony would result, it is thought, from an ever-changing adjustment of a multitude of forces, free from the interference of any State. These associations would render service at a price to those who might demand it; and the competitive principle would lead to the survival of those making the smallest charge or performing with the greatest efficiency. Always the heart of the system would be the complete freedom of each individual.

Two important contributors to the philosophy of anarchistic individualism before the name of Anarchy came into existence were Zeno and Godwin. They were, however, removed from each other

by more than two millennia. Born five years after the death of Plato, Zeno, known primarily to history as the founder of Stoic philosophy, conceived of a community without government, but in which there reigned the sovereign law of the individual. This conception was placed in opposition to the Utopia of his illustrious predecessor, whose *Republic* presents in an extreme form the idea of the subordination of the individual to the State. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, William Godwin, whose work on *Political Justice* has been ranked with Milton's *Areopagitica*, Locke's *Essay on Education* and Rousseau's *Emile*, beginning with an opposition to monarchy because it was unavoidably corrupt, finally arrived at the conclusion that "all government by its very nature counteracts the improvement of original mind". Justice, in Godwin's stateless system which is free from all laws and courts, would be found in the decisions of reasonable men specifically chosen to pronounce upon the merits of particular contests.

Two Americans have prominence as philosophical anarchists, Josiah Warren and Benjamin Tucker. Warren derived his individualistic views from the failure of Robert Owen's *New Harmony*, a failure which led him to the conclusion that there was need not for more socialism but for less. To provide for a practical application of his views, he founded a community called *Modern Times* on Long Island; but it soon shared the fate of *New Harmony*. Benjamin Tucker used journalism as the instrument for the diffusion of views which owed their origin to Proudhon. Many of the articles in his magazine, *Liberty*, he later collected in *Instead of a Peck*, so naming it, he says in the Preface, because he lacked time for the reorganization and restatement of his ideas.

#### EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY INDIVIDUALISM

"The end of all government is to make government superfluous". In that epigrammatic statement Francis C. Montague in *The Limits of Individual Liberty* presents the individualistic point of view which first appeared in the eighteenth century. It differs from anarchistic individualism in recognizing the necessity of the State, but it would restrain its activity to the barest minimum. This individualism is a doctrine which looks upon the individual as living, and therefore expansive; and upon the State as mechanical. It views the sphere of the State and the scope of the individual as mutually exclusive, so that as State action is increased the liberty of the individual is correspondingly decreased, an erroneous view, as a matter of fact, but one which has done much to popularize individualistic thought of the extreme type. The function of



the State is simply to protect the individual's life, liberty, and property from fraud and violence; it is not the State's function to take action for the public good or to enter into any activity which could be satisfactorily carried on by private enterprise. Little concession would be made for collective action. Mr. Montague says on this point: "The government of a poor people may, by taxation, raise capital for the purpose of carrying out indispensable undertakings of public utility which exceed the measure of private wealth. But when the State does assume such extraordinary functions, its conduct is matter for the severest and most unfriendly scrutiny. . . The State is always to be charged with the burden of justifying its own activity". Therefore, under a strictly eighteenth-century individualistic régime, transportation, communication, entertainment, recreation, insurance, and education would be under private management, except as particular exigencies might otherwise direct.

This individualism, as has been pointed out, was the product of the latter part of the eighteenth century, arising to counteract the evils of extreme governmental domination. In France it was one of the three leading tenets of the Physiocrats, so christened by Dupont de Nemours, who was himself one of the number. Because this group of French eighteenth-century writers believed in a natural order of society, to violate which led to numerous ills, their system got its name: it means the rule of nature. As rugged individualists they argued that economic activities should be as free as possible from State interference. This "natural order", the perfection of which could be traced to the laws of God, was put in contrast with the "positive order", the imperfections of which could be charged to man-made laws. This is the doctrine of *laissez-faire*, an expression popularized by Jean de Gournay, but which was used for the first time by Legendre, a French merchant, in 1680, in answer to a question by Colbert as to what should be done for industry. It is the doctrine that private self-interest rules society; that self-interest is the "born servant of the general interest".

Like the Physiocrats, Adam Smith took upon himself the task of attempting to find the natural laws of wealth; and with painstaking scholarship he produced in 1776 his famous *Wealth of Nations*. Denouncing the existing laws which interfered with the freedom of trade and the unrestricted employment of labour, he reiterated and reinforced the doctrine that the promotion of public interest was tied up with the self-seeking gain of each individual.

Claiming recognition as a defender of freedom, both as a writer and as the founder of the University of Berlin, the versatile Prussian, Wilhelm von Humboldt, writing in 1791, expressed views quite parallel with those appearing in France and England. "The grand point of view to be kept in view by the State," he says in his *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit eines Staats zu bestimmen*, "is the development of the powers of all its single citizens in their perfect individuality; it must, therefore, pursue no other object than that which they cannot procure for themselves, viz., security..."

Eighteenth, century individualism had two staunch English defenders in the nineteenth century—John Stuart Mill, expressing his ideas in his essay *On Liberty*, and Herbert Spencer, pronouncing his views in a series of essays under the title of *Social Statics* and *Man versus the State*.

Mill viewed with concern the progressive desire of society both by opinion and legislation to deprive the individual of his rights. He was alarmed at the invasion: "As the tendency of all the changes taking place in the world is to strengthen society, and diminish the power of the individual, this encroachment is not one of the evils which tend spontaneously to disappear, but on the contrary to grow more and more formidable". Then he proceeded to lay down his classic principle of State interference: "That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others".

The doctrine of *laissez-faire* found in Herbert Spencer a well-qualified defender—a skilful gladiator with a two-edged sword and a helmet of steel. Starting with the general principle "that government is begotten of aggression and by aggression", that "it exists because crime exists and must cease when crime ceases", that its sphere is "negatively regulative", so that it has completed its function when it has "administered justice and mounted guard over men's rights," he passes on to a conception of individual rights, which is that "every man has freedom to do all that he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man". In keeping with these principles he denominates the divine right of parliaments, the great political superstition of the present, just as the divine right of kings was the great political superstition of the past, and condemns without qualification such legislation as that which provides for education; for the licensing of



medical practitioners, it being the fundamental right of the individual to "buy medicine and advice from whomsoever he pleases;" for poor relief; for sanitary control beyond the enforcement of the principle that "he who contaminates the atmosphere breathed by his neighbour is infringing his neighbour's rights;" for State-managed post-offices and State-issued currency.

#### PROGRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM

Herbert Hoover, in his little book, *American Individualism*, gives expression to what he styles progressive individualism, which, with skilful elaboration, he differentiates from the eighteenth century kind. This individualism is in part the product of expediency, for "we have learned that it is the hindmost who throws the bricks at our social edifice". It is also a product of an experienced evaluation of the qualities of the foremost and the hindmost, for, again, "we have learned that the foremost are not always the best nor the hindmost the worst". It repudiates the eighteenth century principle of mere self-interest, for "No civilization could be built or can endure solely upon the groundwork of unrestrained and unintelligent self-interest. The problem of the world is to restrain the destructive instincts while strengthening and enlarging those of altruistic character and constructive impulse..." It does not regard private property as an object of unreasoned devotion, for "Our development of individualism shows an increasing tendency to regard right of property not as an object in itself, but in the light of a useful and necessary instrument in stimulation of initiative to the individual..." It permits governmental interference, entertaining legislation based upon social and economic justice, leaving far behind the concept of "legalistic justice based upon contracts, property, and political equity". Government must see that there is a fair division of that which is produced, because this is the only guarantee of the highest production. This division can be effected only by restraining "the strong and the dominant". Such are the significant tendencies of progressive individualism.

The ideal of progressive individualism is *equality of opportunity*. The American people have not been deceived by the "clap-trap" of the French Revolution, by pretending equality of ability, character, intelligence, or ambition. But this sole ideal of equality of opportunity cannot be attained by an unrestrained individualism. That would produce "a long category of inequalities, of tyrannies, dominations, and injustices". Our collective duty is this: "*that while we build our society upon the attainment of the individual, we shall safeguard to every individual an equality*

of opportunity to take that position in the community to which his intelligence, character, ability, and ambition entitle him; that we keep the social solution free from frozen strata of classes; that we shall stimulate effort of each individual to achievement; that through an enlarging sense of responsibility and understanding we shall assist him to this attainment; while he in turn must stand up to the emery wheel of competition".

Mr. Hoover's philosophy leaves no room for mistaking the rôle of the individual and the rôle of government. "It is the individual alone," he says, "who can function in the world of intellect and in the field of leadership... Human leadership cannot be replenished by selection like queen bees, by divine right or bureaucracies, but by the free rise of ability, character, and intelligence". How to curb the forces that prevent equality of opportunity in this field of leadership, and at the same time preserve human initiative and creative faculty, is the problem of government. The answer is plain. To provide equality of opportunity, "we must regulate that type of activity that would dominate". To protect initiative and creative faculty, "the government must keep out of production and distribution of commodities and services". These two doctrines, one contemplating positive regulation, the other non-interference, are the twin principles of a government based upon the philosophy of progressive individualism.

#### RECONSTRUCTED INDIVIDUALISM

The *New Deal* of Franklin Roosevelt, rejecting the philosophy of progressive individualism, found itself further to the Left, but still short of Socialism or Fascism. To Donald R. Richberg goes the credit for the designation, "Reconstructed Individualism". In a brief filed with the Senate Finance Committee, after stating that a planned control of the great essential industries was absolutely essential, he continued: "The state socialist would seek this planned control through direct governmental operation of industries;... the reactionary individualist would withdraw political prohibitions against monopoly and leave the primary planning and control to be carried on by the owners and privately selected managers of private property, subject only to some limited regulation by government". These he rejected. "There remains..." he continued, "the program of the *reconstructed individualist*. I seek to represent him, as a man still living in the tradition of American liberty... (who) knows that the production and distribution of the necessities and common comforts of life must be planned and



regulated so that a certain minimum standard of living can be obtained by all". (Italics supplied).

This new philosophy would, to use the words of Mr. Roosevelt, furnish a foundation for "a temple, which, when completed, will no longer be a temple of money changers or of beggars, but rather a temple dedicated to and maintained for a greater social justice. . . ." It would find expression in "one single mass action, to improve the case of the workers on a scale never attempted by any nation;" it would be a "common participation. . . , planned on the basis of a shared common life, the low as well as the high. . . ." It would be a régime, in the words of Frances Perkins, of "economic co-operative effort", of "economic balance", a "national movement toward a common end". Nor would material welfare be the sole concern of government: "Business men", says Mr. Roosevelt, "must be concerned less with dollars and cents and more with human lives".

In a sense, government must know more about industry than the industrialists. "This brings out a distinction", says Rexford G. Tugwell in his book, *The Industrial Discipline*, "it seems necessary to keep in mind: that there is a difference here between the individual sphere and the social sphere. Control bodies would not need to know more about a specific process than do those who are engaged in it; that would be manifestly impossible. They need only to know more about the industry in general and about the relationships among industries than any one business can. And since this is the field in which business has registered its greatest failure, we might reasonably expect to find it done better by some other agency. An industrial administration of some sort, being supreme in this field, might use its superior knowledge to devise a system of affairs in which each unit would be complementary to each other one, in which co-operation, rather than. . . conflict, should be the organizing principle". He concludes by saying that many contemporary thinkers are of the opinion that this is the only means to economic and social justice.

Therefore, reconstructed individualism has a death warrant for unrestrained individualism, and seeks the goal of economic and social justice through more elaborate governmental control than is contemplated by progressive individualism. The individual need not stand up to the emery wheel of *free* competition; he must stand up only to the emery wheel of *fair* competition. Government is looked upon as the agency for determining and enforcing ideals of fairness, and for co-ordination and economic planning. It has for its objective the welfare of all the people, with particular

solicitude for the security and purchasing power of the common man. The restoration of balance is its fetish. Whether lack of balance appears in large-scale unemployment, in agricultural or industrial or even regional disparity, in substantially inadequate credit facilities, in wasteful competitive transportation, in industrial evils, or in national ineffectiveness, the problem becomes one for the application of the best scientific technique, looking toward the earliest possible solution.

Reconstructed individualism incorporates the principle of free collectivism,—a principle which has been admirably described by Walter Lippmann in his short, but extremely illuminating book, *The Method of Freedom*. "Under free collectivism", he says, "the government in its economic activities is in effect a gigantic public corporation which stands ready to throw its weight into the scales wherever and whenever it is necessary to redress the balance of private transactions. The initiative, throughout the whole realm of production and consumption, excepting only public utilities and public works reserved as instruments of compensatory control, remains in individual hands. . . Economic progress is determined by technological advance, by private enterprise, and by what might be described as the perpetual plebiscite of the markets".

After pointing out that the purpose of intervention by the State is not to supplant the system of private enterprise, but to preserve it by correcting its errors, he continues: "The purpose of the intervention is not to impose an official pattern upon all enterprise, but to maintain a working, moving equilibrium in the complex of private transactions. In substance, the State undertakes to counteract the mass errors of the individualist crowd by doing the opposite of what the crowd is doing; it saves when the crowd is spending too much; it borrows when the crowd is saving too much; it economizes when the crowd is extravagant, and it spends when the crowd is afraid to spend; it contracts when the crowd is expansive; it becomes enterprising when the crowd is depressed; it buys in sellers' markets and sells in buyers' markets; it taxes when the crowd is borrowing and borrows when the crowd is hoarding; it becomes an employer when there is private unemployment, and it shuts down when there is work for all. Its ideal is to prevent excess; its general principle is not to impose a social order conceived by officials, but to maintain in a changing order, worked out by the initiative and energy of individuals, a golden mean".

After designating free collectivism as an "epoch-making invention," he continues: "For generations it has been supposed



that an exclusive choice had to be made between collectivism and the freedom of private initiative, that the management of affairs had either to be left to individuals or assumed by the State. Whatever way one looked at these alternatives, the prospect was unsatisfactory. To concentrate initiative in officials was a certain way to kill initiative. . . and to establish a State which in the ordinary course of events was bound to be despotic and insufficient. On the other hand, to let individualism run loose in a complex social order was to let it run wild and thus to produce disorder and injustice.

"This dilemma is being resolved, not by the arguments of collectivists and individualists, but by the gradual uncovering of a new social principle. It provides both for individual initiative and collective initiative. The one is not the substitute for the other. The two are complementary. It is the method of freedom. The authority of government is used to assist men in maintaining the security of an ordered life. The State, though it is powerful, is not the master of the people, but remains, as it must where they have liberty, their servant".

#### WHICH SHADE TO CHOOSE?

Anarchistic individualism as a critical theory has some justification. If, to use Baillie's phrasing in *Josiah Warren*, the State, "instead of being the guardian of the weak, the dispenser of justice, on close investigation turns out to be the convenient instrument of the strong, crafty and ambitious men to further their own interest", then it behooves that State to set its house in order. Political institutions must be at all times worthy of our allegiance.

But the case of anarchism in presenting a substitute for government is inherently weak. One wonders, after reading such works as Stuart Chase's *Men and Machines*, Louis D. Brandeis's *Other People's Money*, Chase and Schlink's *Your Money's Worth*, Henry Wallace's *America Must Choose*, and John T. Flynn's *Investment Trusts Gone Wrong*, just how the anarchists would conduct themselves in a modern wonderland of economic complexities and in a jungle of thinly veneered animal instincts. One must be inevitably led to the conclusion that in a civilized land there is no contradiction between authority and liberty, as the anarchists would have us believe. In the social organization of anarchism, individualists would "sit not merely on their own golden eggs, but on the eggs laid by other geese", to the end of anything worthy of the name of liberty. The force that the anarchists abhor would only take another form: it would be *ad hoc* instead of being perman-

ent. And finally, if the State were destroyed, it is reasonable to believe that evolutionary forces would immediately begin to operate to metamorphose the voluntary associations into new forms of State control. There is not enough perfection in human beings to support a community dedicated to the ideal of complete sovereign individuality. Kropotkin's prediction that the time will come when envy, malice, vengeance, and vanity will be the marks of infancy and stunted growth looks like a puerile prediction in the light of centuries of recorded history.

As for eighteenth-century individualism, it stands to-day discredited. It lost its meaning with the growth of great corporate enterprises and populous centres, and the intricate development of manufacturing, transportation, and communication based upon epoch-making technological discoveries. Individuals have in a sense been moulded into this pattern of modern society. Either they cannot escape, or, if they did, the pattern would be largely destroyed. Huxley put it this way: "The higher the state of civilization, the more completely do the actions of one member of the social body influence all the rest, and the less possible is it for any one man to do a wrong without interfering more or less with the freedom of his fellow-citizens".

Nevertheless, it is enlightening to review the reasoning that has been employed to sustain this type of individualism. The most significant arguments can be catalogued as ethical, biological, and economic. From the ethical standpoint, any variation from unrestrained individualism puts the character of the individual in jeopardy. Let the individual learn by experience, let him make his own blunders, let him beware. Only a few years ago this statement was made by Henry O. Havemeyer, President of the Sugar Trust, in the course of the hearings before the United States Industrial Commission: "You cannot wet-nurse people from the time they are born until the time they die. They have got to wade in and get stuck, and that is the way men are educated and cultivated. . . I say, hands off". Paternalism, say these individualists, is the sleeping powder for self-choice and self-will. The biological argument was popularized by Herbert Spencer. Unrestrained individualism is the manifest teaching of biological evolution. As human progress depends upon the survival of the fittest, only those who can stand the strain of free competition deserve to survive. In the *Sins of Legislators*, in *Man versus the State*, he points to the benign hand of Nature: "The poverty of the incapable, the distresses that come upon the imprudent, the starvation of the idle, and those shouldering aside of the weak by the strong, which



leave so many in shallows and in miseries, are decrees of a large, far-seeing benevolence". The economic argument is to the effect that the self-interest of the consumer will lead to the production of the most satisfying products, while the self-interest of the producer will lead to the production of these goods at the most advantageous price for both. Competition, free from State interference, will not only lead to the most economical production, it is argued, but it will provide for equitable prices and wages, and will protect borrowers from usurious rates of interest.

Reconstructed individualism has its critics. They point to incompetency of the State to do what it has undertaken, as did John Stuart Mill, in the last century. The State has too many duties to perform to do anything well; the rules it makes for the guidance of a multitude of bureaucrats are too numerous and too complex; State officers have a primary interest only in their own authority and their own tenure; human beings with their own ideas have natures that are too baffling for the paid servants of government. It is easy to talk about balancing things that are out of balance, and to provide rules of fair competition; it is difficult to get them done far from the centre of control, in the presence of hostile camps and of bewildering cross-purposes. These same critics point out the evils of bureaucratic control, with its hosts of government officials, hundreds of separate codes and code authorities, red tape, expense, officiousness, politics, and delay. They point out the fact that government by its very activity invites criticism. Undertaking many things, it is inevitable that it will fail, and fail miserably, in the execution of some of them. It then becomes the prey of mounting criticism, and finally ends by being discredited. Having announced that it is undertaking the attainment of a utopian ideal, it is criticized even by its own benefactors because it has neglected some highly desirable specific program.

#### CONCLUSION

Therefore, what shade of thought shall the individualist choose? For most people there are not four choices, but only two; because, as has been pointed out, anarchistic individualism exists only as a critical, academic theory, while eighteenth-century individualism has by the course of economic events been antiquated. The real choice lies between progressive individualism and reconstructed individualism. To the critics of the former, there are too many inequalities, too much unfair dealing, not enough social and economic justice. To the critics of the latter, the evils of over-government cancel the good in the declared ideals.

There appears to be a quantity of dynamite in reconstructed individualism which, with careful handling, may not explode, but which, nevertheless, remains a continuing menace. Reconstructed individualism is not such a long distance from either Socialism or Fascism. When the common man is made self-conscious in a new era of social and economic justice, when he is no longer a "forgotten man", he may, without any increase in his ambition, or development of his character, or improvement of his ability, find gratification only in the increasing paternalism of government. If the tasted benefits of that government, promised or unpromised, arrive too slowly, he asserts and enforces his right to strike, the general enforcement of this right being so damaging to society that government is led to its complete denial under a type of Fascist control. On the other hand, if the benefits of government come too fast, the assumption is that an unlimited resource has been tapped, leading inevitably to an encroachment upon private property, and possibly resulting in the establishment of Socialism.

After all, the art of governing men is an endless art, and experimentation with new ideas must be slow if a proper perspective is to be maintained by the governing or a proper balance by the governed. Governments adopting even the highest ideals of social and economic justice must act with restraint. A selfish government, inspired by fear, chopping off too many heads, or a benevolent government, inspired by favor, turning too many heads, cannot be said to be in a totally invulnerable position.

In approaching the problems of government as individualists, we must choose that shade of thought which will allow us to say: "This spirit of individualism... is the sword which Nature forges while despots sleep... This spirit opens the enslaving shell of custom... and allows the inner life to grow".