

and politics. It is this: Is the State subordinate to the individual, or the individual to the State? The Socialist (in practice) asserts the latter proposition; the democrat asserts the former. Modern civilisation is based on the former principle; all (or nearly all) past civilisation was based on the latter. Feudalism, which at the ceremony of Investiture made the knight the king's man, and so on downwards throughout the social ranks, was the concrete expression of the latter principle. The American War of Independence is the embodiment of the former. The French Revolution, apart from its extravagant theories and fanatical saturnalia of blood, was a savage protest against State or Class privilege; it was the assertion of the individual's right "to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The phenomenon, in the case of Australian Socialism, lies in the fact that it is the first time in history that a new community, possessed of a whole continent, consisting of comparatively few individuals, and these all from one parent stock and working out their civilisation amidst comparatively unbounded natural resources, have, of their own deliberate volition, without the slightest trace of external or internal necessity, and in a period of universal progress and comparative prosperity, plunged deliberately and almost instantaneously into a course of action which is, in practice, the assertion of the principle that the individual exists mainly for the benefit of the State, and not the State for the benefit of the individual. No such phenomenon has ever before been displayed by any community similarly placed.

There have been times when communities have suffered from some extravagant obsessions, which have