

CHAPTER I

THE GATHERING CRISIS

I CALL this discussion *The Case Against Social Catastrophe*. I do not call it the *Case Against Capitalism* nor the *Case Against Socialism*. This is because I am afraid that unless we take thought while there is yet time, a far worse thing than either socialism or capitalism may come to us—a social catastrophe which may mean wreckage of all that we have taken so long to build. What I mean is that there may be forces let loose upon us which will get beyond the control of those who set them in motion. Plans for social betterment which originate in the best motives may be hurried forward so fast, with so little mature consideration as to break the ranks of society.

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A grave danger, a great crisis is gathering in front of us. It is a sombre cloud on the horizon which rises so fast as to threaten to darken the whole sky. This is the dispute as to private enterprise and state control. Private enterprise is called by those who oppose it the profits system, and capitalism. State control means, in an ill-defined way, the taking over by the government of the industry of the nation. At present