

The Social Future

Social Future: Lecture V: The Cooperation of the Spiritual, Political and Economic Departments of Life

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V

THE COOPERATION OF THE SPIRITUAL, POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC DEPARTMENTS OF LIFE FOR THE BUILDING
UP OF A UNIFIED THREEFOLD SOCIAL ORGANISM

IN the second of this series of lectures I have sketched for you the method of constructing the spiritual, the political, and the economic life. I have then endeavored in the succeeding lectures to describe in detail these three members of the body social and disentangle what has heretofore been considered a strict unity. (a) All that related to law, politics, and affairs of state should be administered in a democratic parliament. (b) Everything relating to the spiritual and intellectual department of life should be detached from the political or equity state, and the spiritual organization should be independently administered in freedom. (c) The economic organization, separated from the political and legal body, should form its own administration, instead of its own conditions and necessities, founded upon expert knowledge and technical capacity and skill.

Now the objection is always raised that such an arrangement of the social organism denies the necessity of building up social life as a unity. For every single institution, every separate work which can be achieved by the individual within the social organism, should endeavor to attain to such a unity; and this unity would be broken up, it is said, if any attempt were made to split the social organism into three parts.

This objection is quite reasonable and comprehensible, judged by the habits of thought of the present day. But, as we all see today it can by no means be justified. Yet it is comprehensible, because in the first place we need only glance at economic life itself in order to see how to the smallest details spiritual, political, and purely economic affairs overlap. In view of this state of things it may well be asked: How could a splitting-up, a dismemberment, bring about any improvement? Let us begin by taking the problem of the origin of merchandise, of actual commodities. We shall find that the value of a commodity, of merchandise, is already possessed of a threefold nature, in that the commodity is produced, distributed, and consumed within the social organism; yet this value gives the appearance of a unity bound to the commodity, as we shall see.

What determines the value of a commodity which can satisfy our requirements? In the first place we must have some personal need for the commodity in question. But let us examine how the need is determined. To begin with, it has, of course, to do with our bodily nature. For the bodily nature determines the value of the various material commodities. But even material goods are variously valued, according to the kind of

education and requirements of the individual person. But where spiritual and intellectual products are concerned — and these are often inseparable from the sphere of the material, physical goods — we shall find that the method of valuing any commodity whatever is absolutely determined by the whole make-up of the human being, and the amount and kind of work he is willing to perform in order to possess that commodity. Here we see that it is the spiritual or intellectual element in man that determines the value of a commodity, or of any sort of merchandise.

Secondly, we see that the goods being exchanged between one man and another are limited by the conditions of ownership. and that means neither more nor less than that they are limited by legal conditions. Whenever one man tries to obtain a commodity from another, he touches in some way the other's rights to the commodity in question. So that economic life with its circulation of commodities is permeated throughout by all sorts of legal conditions.

And in the third place, a commodity has not merely the value which we attach to it through our requirements and the personal importance we give to these requirements, which is then transferred to the commodity, it has also an objective value in itself. It has an objective value, to the degree that it is durable or the reverse, lasting or perishable; to the degree that by its nature it is more or less serviceable, plentiful, or scarce. All these things condition an objective, actual economic value, the determination of which demands an objective expert knowledge, and the production of which requires an objective technical capacity. But these three determinations of value are brought together into a unity in the commodity. Hence it may be said with reason. How can that which is united in the commodity be separated and come under the administration of three departments, all concerned with the commodity and interested in its circulation?

Looking merely at the idea, it is certainly true that in life things can and do unite which are administered from the most diverse directions. On the one hand, why should not the subjective value which a man personally attaches to a commodity be determined by his education which has its own independent administration? On the other hand, why should not legal conditions be given a place in the economic organizations? And why should not all the objective value that accrues to the commodity from expert knowledge and technical skill be added to the rest and unite in the object, in a unity? But all this is idea only and has no special value. That which the threefold order of the social organism aims at in this direction must have a much deeper foundation. Here it must be said that the threefold order of the social organism is not an idea conceived out of personal inclinations by one or more persons; it is an impulse resulting from an impartial observation of the historical development of humanity in modern times. We may say that actually for centuries the most important impulses of humanity have been tending unconsciously in the direction of this threefold membering; only they have never gained sufficient force to carry it through. The failure to develop this force is the cause of the present state of things, and of the misery in our surroundings. The time is ripe to say that the work must now be taken in hand for which preparation has been made for centuries, the work of bringing order into the social organism. The first thing we see is that the really free spiritual and intellectual life has broken away from the political and economic bodies. For that

spiritual life which is dependent on the economic, legal-political organizations is by no means free. It is a portion of the spiritual life, torn away from the really fertile, free life of the spirit. It would be more exact to say that at the beginning of the period in which capitalism appeared with its division of labor on a grand scale, the really free spiritual life in certain spheres of art, of philosophy, and of religious conviction tore itself away from the economic organization and the political life, and was to a certain extent carried on unnoticed. That free spiritual life, forming only a part of all spiritual life, acts creatively only out of man's own impulses. In my lecture of yesterday I claimed that freedom for the whole of spiritual life. Detached from the free spiritual life, which is the outcome of man's own impulses, exists all that man finds necessary for the administration of the economic life, and for the administration of law and order. What is necessary for the administration of economic affairs has become dependent upon the economic forces themselves. In the positions and circles in which economic power exists, the possibility also exists to train the next generation in economic science, so that it may be able in its turn to attain economic power. But the science which has arisen out of economic life itself is only a part of all that might flow into the economic organization, were the whole of spiritual life to be drawn upon for economic life. But actually, it is commercial risk alone, and everything resulting from it, that is made the object of study; this is worked up into a science of economics.

In regard to political life, the state requires functionaries and even learned men to fill its appointments, and these have been educated according to the stereotyped pattern prescribed for them by the state. The state, in its appointments, wishes and expects that qualities should be cultivated in individuals which can be used to its own advantage. But that brings about intellectual and spiritual enslavement, even if a man imagines himself to be free. He is not aware of his dependence, does not see that he is confined within the limits of the stereotyped model held up to him. But the truly free spiritual and intellectual life has won for itself a certain position in the world, independent of the economic and the political organizations. What is this position? I have already characterized it in part. That spiritual and intellectual life which has preserved its independence has become foreign to life; in one sense it has acquired an abstract character. We need only glance at the content of the philosophies of the free spiritual life, whether aesthetic, religious, or even scientific, in order to see that although very much is said, it amounts to little more than admonitions to society. This content is there merely to appeal to the understanding and to feelings; it is there to play a part in the inner life of men, to fill the soul with inner comfort and well-being. But it has not the power or the impetus actually to enter and influence external life. Hence the unbelief in that spiritual life, to which I have already referred, proceeding from socialist quarters and expressed in the words: No social idea however well-intended, if it is a purely spiritual one, can ever transform social life. To transform social life, real forces are necessary. But this abstract spiritual life is not reckoned as a real force. How far are the things that make up the inner life of the business man or civil servant in his religion, or even his scientific convictions, removed from the laws which he applies in business, in his position in life, in the administration of public affairs! It is absolutely a double outlook on life. On the one hand, principles which are entirely the outcome of economic and political life; on the other, a remnant of freedom, of spiritual life, condemned to impotence as regards inner affairs.

Thus it may be said that a unitary, free, spiritual life came into being centuries ago, but because this was not recognized in the ordering of public life, it has become abstract, devoid of reality. Now, because the influence of the spirit is needed in external social life, spiritual life reclaims its might, its power. That is the situation which now faces us. Political life has followed another direction. *Whereas spiritual life has partly emancipated itself, the political organization has completely merged itself in the course of recent centuries in the powerful interests of the economic body.* It has happened unnoticed, but in reality the two have become one. Economic interests and needs have found expression in public laws, and these are often held to be human rights. But when scrutinized, they are found to be only economic and political interests and wants in the guise of laws. While, on the one hand, spiritual life demands its power, we find, on the other, that confusion has arisen in regard to the relation between legal and economic conditions. Large masses of the population throughout the civilized world include in their demands for the solution of the social problem a further fusion of the legal and economic organization. The whole of economic life is to be molded according to political and legal conceptions. If we examine today's favorite catchwords, what do we find but the last consequences of the fusion of political and economic life. We find that the radical socialist party, which influences wide circles of the population, demands that a political system, centralized, and graded as to administration, be tacked on to the economic life, and the economic life be hedged in on all sides by legal measures. The power of the law is to extend over economic processes.

This is the other aspect of the crisis which has arisen in our time, and we may say: Through the demands for the increase of political and legal power over the economic life, tyranny of the state, of the legal system, over the economic system will arise. We see that the changes demanded for the recovery of economic life are not such as arise naturally out of economic conditions themselves; rather this demand arises out of the quest for political power, which aims to take possession of and dominate economic life. Proletarian dictatorship — what is it but the last consequence of the fusion of legal and political with economic life.

Thus we see the necessity of thoroughly investigating the connection between law and politics, and the economic life at present. On the one hand, free spiritual life has partly emancipated itself and demands restitution of its original powers; on the other hand, if the legal system continues to be more and more closely bound up with the economic system, the whole social organism will be thrown into disorder. The subordination of thought to the suggestion that the state is a unity, and therefore the social body is also a unity, has lasted long enough. The time has now come for us to realize the consequence of that thought in the social chaos existing over a large part of the civilized world. Economic conditions demand complete separation from legal control, because of the evident abuses which the political system would bring into economic affairs, were the developments of the last centuries to be carried to their final consequence. The impulse of the threefold social organism takes cognizance of these facts; and I should like to give you a striking example of something which ought to work as a unity in life, but which is torn asunder owing to these very facts. It is said now that the aim of the threefold order is to break up the unity of social life. In the

future, however, it will be said that the threefold order truly lays the foundation for that unity. A striking example will show us that an abstract endeavor to bring about unity has had just the effect of destroying unity. At present there are some superficial people who are extremely proud of the theoretic distinction they draw between law and morality. These people say that morality is the valuation of human action judged purely from the inner stand-point of the soul; that the judgement of an action, whether good or bad, is guided only by that inner stand-point; and precisely in questions of philosophy the moral judgment is very carefully distinguished from the legal judgment, which belongs to outer, public life, and should be determined by the decrees and measures of political and social public life.

Of this separation of morality and law nothing was known up to the time of the rise of modern technical science and the later capitalism. Only within the last few centuries have the impulses of law and morality been torn asunder. And why? Because the moral judgment was diverted into that free spiritual life which has emancipated itself, but which has become powerless with regard to external life. The free spiritual life might be said to exist only for the purpose of exhortation or judgment. It has lost the power really to lay hold on life. Those maxims which might lay hold on life require economic impulses, because they can no longer find purely human impulses, these having been relegated to the sphere of morality. These economic impulses are then turned into laws. Thus the activities of life, the determination of justice and the warmth infused into it by human morals are torn asunder. That which ought to be a unity is torn apart into a duality.

A close study of the development of modern states will show that by insisting on the unitary character of the state, we have hastened the disunion of those very forces which should combine to produce a unity. The impulse of the three-membered social organism is in opposition to this separation. If we regard in its true light the actual principle of that impulse we shall see there can be no question of any splitting up of life. The spiritual life should have its own administration. And has not every human being a connection with it, when it develops — as I have described it — in perfect freedom? Everybody is educated in that free spiritual life, our children are brought up in it, we find our immediate spiritual interests in it, we are united with it. And the very people who are thus united with that spiritual life and draw their strength from it, those very same people live within the legal and political life, and determine the legal order governing their relations with one another. They establish that legal order by the help of the spiritual impulses which they take in from the spiritual life; and this legal order is the direct result of what has been acquired through contact with the spiritual life. Again, the tie which is developed, binding man to man democratically on the basis of the legal order, the impulse which he receives as the basis of his relationship to other men, he carries into economic life, because there are again the same human beings who have a connection with the spiritual life, occupy a legal position, and carry on business. On the one hand, the measures which the human being takes, the manner in which he associates with others, the way in which he transacts business, all that is permeated with what he has developed in his spiritual life, and with the legal order he has established in economic life; for they are the same men who work in the threefold organism and the unity is not effected by any abstract regulation, but by the living human beings themselves. Each member of the community, however, can develop his

own nature and individuality in independence and can thus work for unity in the most effective manner. This applies to every member. On the other hand, we can see how, under the suggestion of the state as the principal of unity, precisely what is inseparable in life becomes separated, even what is so intimately connected as law and morality.

Therefore the impulse to establish the threefold social organism is not to bring about the separation of what belongs together, but actually the cooperation of factors which ought to work together.

The spiritual life can only develop on its own free and independent basis. But when allowed to develop in this way, and granted an equal right to subsist side by side with the two other departments of the social organism, it will no longer be an abstract formation, like the spiritual life which has actually been developing for centuries apart from the realities of life; it will develop an impetus to play a direct part in the active, real life of the legal-political and the economic organizations. It might seem to be an absurd contradiction, a paradox, to assert, on the one hand, that spiritual life should be fully independent and develop from its own foundations, as I showed yesterday, and, on the other hand, to claim that it shall play a part in the practical fields. But precisely when the spirit is left to itself does it develop impulses capable of embracing all spheres. For there is no reason why the free spirit in man should defer to any stereotyped pattern in the interest of the state; it is not to be limited by the condition that only those shall receive education who can command economic resources; but it will be able to develop human individuality in any generation through the observation of human capacities. The force, however, which strives to find expression in any one generation will not only embrace the phenomena and facts of nature; it will include, especially, human life itself, because the spirit extends its interests over all life. We have been condemned to be unpractical in the sphere of spiritual matters, because only these regions were left to the free spiritual life; we were denied the right to enter into external reality. As soon as the spirit is allowed not only to register parliamentary measures, but of itself to determine the laws of the state in freedom, in that moment it will make the legal code its own creation. The spirit will enter into the machinery and into the order of the law, as soon as the present mechanical system, which functions without thought according to certain maxims and points of view for the economic life, has been relinquished. As soon as the human spirit is free to play its part in the economic life it will at once prove its capacity in the practice of life within the economic circuit. All that is needed is to admit its power to enter actively into the practical realm. Then it will play its part. This true view of reality is a necessity. The spirit in man must not be hermetically sealed up in abstractions; it must be allowed to influence life. Then at every moment it will fructify the economic sphere, which otherwise must remain sterile, or must be dependent on mere chance for its fructification.

Now all this must be taken into account, if we wish to arrive at a clear understanding of the manner in which the spiritual, the legal-political, and the economic system should work together within the threefold social organism. There are very clear-sighted persons to whom these things are still quite obscure. They often see that under present economic conditions, from which, we may say, the spirit has been banished, circumstances have arisen which are now socially untenable. There is, for

instance, a highly respected economic thinker whose opinion is as follows. He says: Looking at economic life today, what strikes us most is a system of consumption by which social evils are promoted in the highest degree. Those who possess the economic means today consume various things which are really only luxuries. He points out the role played by what he considers luxuries in the life of society and in economic life. Certainly this is not difficult. We need seek no further than the common occurrence of the purchase of a string of pearls by a lady. Many people would regard this as a very harmless luxury. They do not consider the actual present economic value of a string of pearls. On the equivalent of its value, five working-class families can live for six months. Yet this is hung by the lady in question round her neck! Anybody can understand this, and in the present-day attitude of mind one can seek a remedy for such things. The esteemed thinker whom I have in mind thinks it necessary for the state (of course, everybody is now under the obsession of the state) to impose high taxes on luxuries; so high, indeed, that people would cease buying them. He does not admit the validity of the argument that if luxuries were taxed in this way, they would decrease, and the state then would lose the benefit of the taxation. He argues that this is just what should happen, and that the taxation has a moral aim. Taxation would then have the effect of promoting morality!

Such is the way of thinking today. So small is the belief in the power of the human spirit, that it is proposed to establish the morality, which should spring from the human soul and spirit, by means of taxation, namely, by law! No wonder that here, at any rate, no unity of life can be reached.

The same thinker points out that the acquisition of property is a wrong, for the reason that monopolies are possible in our social life; that, for instance, social life still labors under the burden of the right of inheritance. And again he proposes to regulate all these things by taxation. If inherited property were taxed as highly as possible, he thinks that justice as regards property would result. It would also be possible to oppose monopolies and other evils of the same kind by law, by legal promulgations of the state. What strikes one in this thinker is that he says it is not of such importance that all these proposals should be determined by state laws, taxation, and so on; for it is plain that the value of such measures is by no means beyond dispute, because state laws do not always produce the intended result. But then he says: 'The essential point is not that these laws should actually raise the level of morality, or hinder monopolies; what matters are the feelings which prompt such laws.'

But this is an absolutely complete example of turning in a circle! A famous political thinker of our day does almost exactly the same thing. He proposes to call forth an ethical mode of thought and feeling by legislation; but, he says, it is not necessary that this legislation should actually be in force; the main thing is that people should have a feeling for such legislation. It is a clear case of the Chinaman who tries to catch himself by his own pigtail! It is a strange closing of the circle; but one which works most effectually in our present social life. For public life is now molded under the influence of this mode of thought. And no one sees that all these things must lead in the end to the recognition of the fact that the basis for a really new construction of social life is the activity of the spiritual life in complete independence; likewise, the independence of the legal organization and its detachment from the economic system; and, finally, the

untrammelled development of the economic organization.

Such things strike us very forcibly today when we see how people, who are more than commonly well-intentioned, whose ethical sense for the need of a reconstruction of social life is beyond doubt, show at least a faint indication in their works of the absolute necessity for a spiritual foundation to the social edifice, and yet give evidence everywhere of a lack of understanding of the means by which that spiritual foundation can be attained.

Such a person is Robert Wilbrand, who has just written a book on the social problem. Robert Wilbrand is no mere theorist. In the first place, he speaks from a warm heart and enthusiastic for social things. Secondly, he has traveled all over the world in order to acquaint himself with social conditions, and in his book, which appeared a few weeks ago, he faithfully depicts the terrible misery of the human being that prevails everywhere today. He gives graphic pictures of the misery of the proletariat, the wretchedness of the civilized world. He shows also from his own standpoint how, in the most diverse regions in which the social question has now become acute, people have striven to build up a new social structure, but how they have been, or must be, frustrated, as may be plainly seen in present-day Middle Europe (1919). And Robert Wilbrand is quite certain that every attempt made in the temper of the present day must fail. Having given expression to this sentiment in various cadences in the course of his book, he concludes in the following remarkable manner. He says: 'These attempts which are being made must fail; they will never succeed in any reconstruction, because the social organism lacks a soul, and until it has a soul, it can accomplish no fruitful work.' The most interesting part is that the book doses on this note, but does not indicate how this soul is to be found. The aim of the impulse for the threefold social organism is not to announce theoretically that the soul is lacking, and wait till it appears of itself; but to point out how it will develop. It will develop when the spiritual life has been liberated from the political and economic organizations. The spiritual life, if it can only follow the impulses which man evolves from his spiritual nature, will then be strong enough to take its part in all the rest of practical life. Then spiritual life will take that form which I endeavored to describe yesterday; it will contain reality. We can say that in the present and in the future this spiritual life will be strong enough to bear the burden laid upon it, which, for example, is mentioned in my book, *The Threefold Commonwealth*. It is true, we can now point out, as it has been done in my second lecture, the way in which capital works today in the social economic process. But those who simply say that capital should be abolished or transformed into common property have no idea how capital works in the economic system, especially under the present conditions of production. They do not know that accumulations of capital are needed in order that through the control of capital men may work for the public good. For this reason in my book, *The Threefold Commonwealth*, the administration of capital was made, on the whole, dependent on the spiritual organization in cooperation with the independent political and legal organization. Whereas we now say that capital makes business, the impulse for the threefold order of the social organism requires that, although it should always be possible to accumulate capital, provision must be made for capital to be administered by some one who has developed out of the spiritual life the necessary capacity for business; and that this accumulation of capital may be administered by the person to

whom it belongs only as long as he is able to administer it himself. When the capitalist can no longer put his own capacities into the administration of the capital, he must see — or if he should feel himself incapable of such a task, a corporation of the spiritual organization must assume the responsibility of seeing — that the management of the business shall pass to a highly capable successor, able to carry it on for the benefit of the community. That is to say: The transference of a business concern to any person or group of persons is not dependent on purchase or any other displacement of capital, but is determined by the capacity of individuals themselves; it is a matter of transfer from the capable to the capable, from those who can work in the service of the community to those who can also work in the best way for the common good. On this kind of transference the social safety of the future depends. *It will not be an economic transference, as is now the case; this transference will result from the impulses of the human being, received from the independent spiritual-intellectual life and from the independent legal-political life. There will even be corporations within the cultural organization, united with all other departments of the cultural life, on which the administration of capital will devolve.*

Thus, instead of handing over the means of production to the community, we transfer it from one capable person to another equally capable, that is, the means of production is circulated within the community; this circulation depends on the freedom of the cultural life by which it is effected and upheld. So that we may say: the main factor in the circuit of economic life is the impulse which is at work in the spiritual, and in the equity life. It would be impossible to imagine any unity more complete than that effected in economic life by such measures. But the stream which unites itself with the economic organization flows from the free spiritual and the free political organizations. No longer will society be exposed to the chance which is expressed in supply and demand; or in the other factors in our present economic organization. Reasonable and just relations between man and man will enter into this new economic life. So that the spiritual, legal, and economic organizations will work together as one, even though they are administered separately; man will carry over from one sphere into another — since he belongs to all three — what each one needs. It is true that we must free ourselves from many a prejudice if these things are gradually to be brought to pass. Today we are absolutely convinced that the means of production and land are matters belonging to economic life. The impulse of the threefold order requires that only the reciprocal values of things shall come under the economic administration, and that prices shall approximate values, so that ultimately what finally proceeds from the economic administration is merely the determination of price.

But it is impossible to reach a just determination of price as long as the means of production and land function as they now do within the economic system. The disposal of land, systematized in the laws relating to its ownership, and the disposal of the finished means of production (for example, a factory with its machinery and equipment), should be no matter for the economic organization; they must belong partly to the spiritual and partly to the legal. That is to say, the transference of land from one person or group of persons to another must not be carried out by purchase or through inheritance, but by transference through the legal means, on the principles of the spiritual organization. The means of production through which something is manufactured — a process which lies at the basis of the creation of capital — can only

be looked at from the viewpoint of its commodity-cost while it is being built up. Once it is ready for operation, the creator of it takes over the management because he understands it best. He has charge of it as long as he can personally use his capacities. But the finished means of production is no longer a commodity to be bought and sold; it can only be transferred by one person or group of persons to another person or group of persons by law, or rather, by spiritual decisions confirmed by law. Thus, what at present forms part of the economic life, such as the laws relating to the disposal of property, to the sale of land, and to the right of disposal of the means of production, will be placed on the basis of the independent legal organization working in conjunction with the independent spiritual organization. These ideas may appear to the present-day world strange and unfamiliar. But this fact is just what is so sad and bitter. Only when these things find entrance into the minds and souls and hearts of men, so that the human being orders his social life accordingly, only then can be fulfilled what so many try to bring about in other ways, but always without success.

It is a truth which must now at last be recognized, that much which at present appears paradoxical will seem a matter of course when social life is really on the way to recovery.

The impulse for the three-membered social organism makes no social demands on the basis of passion, or impelled by motives and emotions which often underlie these social demands. It puts forward its demands from a study of the actual evolution of humanity in recent times up to the present day. It sees how, in the course of long centuries, one form of social life has given place to another. Let us go back to a time before the end of the Middle Ages. We find a condition of things extending into the latter part of medieval times, especially in civilized Europe. We find society in a condition which we may call a social order of might. This society of might or despotism arose in the following way, to give one example of the manner in which such changes are brought about. Some conqueror, with his train of followers, settled in some locality and these became his workmen. Then, since the leader was looked up to an account of his individual qualities, his abilities, a social relationship was brought about between his power and that of those whom he had once led, and who afterwards became his servants or his workmen. Here the model for the social organism, which took its rise in one person or in one aristocratic group, passed on to the community at large, and lived on in that community. The will of the community was to a certain extent only the reproduction or the projection of the single will in that society of might, of despotism.

Under the influence of modern times, of the division of labor, of capitalism, of technical culture, this despotic order of society gave place to the system of trade, of exchange, which, however, carries on the same impulses among individuals and in the whole life of the community. The commodity produced by the individual becomes merchandise, which is exchanged for something else. For financial economy is, in reality, so far as it consists in a transaction between individuals or groups, neither more nor less than a system of trading. Social life is a system of trading. Whereas under the old despotic system, the whole community had to do with the will of a single individual, which it accepted, the system of trading, under which we are still living, and from which a great part of the population of the world is striving to extricate itself, has to do with the will of one individual opposed to the will of another. And only out of the

cooperation of one single member with another arises, as if by chance, the collective will of the community. Springing from intercourse between one individual and another the economic community takes shape, together with wealth, and the element which we recognize in plutocracy. In all this there is something at work which has to do with the clashing of individual interests with one another. It is no wonder that the old despotic order of society could not aspire to the smallest emancipation of the spiritual life. For on account of his superior capacity their leader was also recognized as the authority in the spiritual, and in the legal order. But it is quite comprehensible that the legal, the state, the political principle has gained the upper hand, especially in the trading system of society, for have we not seen on what foundation law actually wills to rest, even though that will does not find its true expression in the present social order?

Law is really concerned with all that the individual man has to regulate with other individual men who are his equals. The trading system is an order in which one person has to do with another. It was, therefore, to the interest of the society based on the trading system to transform its economic system, in which one person has to do with another, into a legal system; that is to say, to change economic interests into legal statutes. Just as the old despotic system was transformed into a society of trading, this latter system now strives, out of the innermost impulses of human evolution, to take a new social form, especially in the domain of economies. For the system of trading, having appropriated to itself the spiritual life, having enslaved it and turned it away from real life, has gradually grown into a mere economic system of society, the form demanded by certain radical socialists. But, out of the deepest human impulses of our day, this trading system strives to pass, especially in the domain of economic life, into that form which I might call, even if the term is inadequate, the Commonwealth. *The Society of Traders must be transformed into the Commonwealth.*

What form will the Commonwealth take Just as the individual will, or the will of an aristocracy, which is also a kind of individual will, continues in a sense to work in the whole community, so that the impulses of the individuals only represent an extension of the will of the one; just as the trading system had to do with the clashing of one individual will with another, so the economic order of the Commonwealth will have to do with a kind of collective will, which then in reverse fashion works back on the individual will. I explained in the second lecture how associations of the various branches of production with the consumers will be called into existence in the sphere of economic life, so that everywhere there will be a combination of the producers with the consumers. These associations will enter into contracts with other associations. A kind of collective will then arises, within larger or smaller groups. This collective will is an ideal for which many socialists yearn; but they visualize the matter in a very confused, by no means reasonable, manner. Just as in the society of despotism, of power, the single will worked in the community, so there must work in the future Commonwealth a common will, a collective will.

But how will that be possible? As we know, it must arise through the cooperation of single wills. The single wills must give a result which is no tyranny for the individual, but within which everyone must be able to feel himself free. What must be the content of this collective will? In it must be contained what every soul and every human body can accept, something with which they are in agreement, with which they can grow

familiar. That means that the spirit and soul which live in the individual human being must also live in the collective will of the Commonwealth. This is possible only when those who build up the collective will carry in themselves of their own will, in their intentions, in their feelings, and in their thoughts, a complete understanding of the individual man. Into that collective will must flow all that is felt by the individual man, as his own spiritual, moral, and bodily nature. This is imperative.

This was not so in the society of might, which acted instinctively, in which a single person was looked up to by the community, because the individual persons forming the community could not make their individual will felt. Nor was it so in the trading system of society, in which a single individual will clashed with others, and a chance kind of common life arose from it. But it must be otherwise when an organized collective will influences the individual. Then, no one who shares in the forming of that collective will must lack understanding of what is truly human. There no one who is equipped only with abstract modern science, which applies merely to external nature, and which can never explain the whole man, must presume to decide questions on the philosophy of life. Men will approach the philosophy of life with spiritual science which embraces the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, and provides understanding in regard to the feeling and will of every single person. Hence, it will only be possible to establish an economic order of the community, when the economic organization can be inspired by the independent spiritual life. It will thus not be possible to bring about a sound future unless what is thought in the free life of the spirit is reflected back from the economic life. That free spiritual life will not prove itself unpractical, but on the contrary, prove itself very practical. Only he who lives in an atmosphere of spiritual slavery can be content just to reflect on Good and Evil, on the True and the False, the Beautiful and the Ugly within his own soul. But anyone who, through spiritual science, has learnt to behold the spirit as a living force, and who grasps it by the aid of spiritual science, will be practical in all his actions, especially in everything relating to human life. That which he absorbs from his spiritual vision passes immediately into every function of life; it actually puts on a form which enables it to live in the immediate practice of life. Only a spiritual culture that has been banished from practical life can become foreign to life. *A spiritual culture which is allowed to influence practical life develops in the practice.* He who really knows what spiritual life is, knows how close to practical life that spirit element is, when it is allowed to follow its own impulses unhindered. The man who desires to found a new philosophy, and who does not know even how to chop wood, should the occasion arise, is no really good philosopher. For he who would found a philosophy, without the ability to turn his hand to anything in the direct practice of life, can found no philosophy of life, but only one foreign to all life. True spiritual life is practical. Under the influences which have made themselves felt for centuries, it is comprehensible that there should be persons belonging to the present civilization — among them the leaders of our intellectual life — who are of the same opinion as Robert Wilbrand. In his book on social reconstruction, with the best intentions, from a feeling prompted by true ethics, he says: “No practical work of reconstruction can be accomplished because the soul is lacking.” But people cannot bring themselves to ask about the reality of soul-development, of soul-building, they cannot make up their minds to ask: What is the effect of a truly free spiritual life on the political and economic life? That free spiritual life will, as I have shown, rightly

cooperate with the economic life. Then the economic life, which can cooperate with the political and spiritual life, can at all times train men who will in their turn give stimulus to the spiritual life. Through the three-membered social organism a free, absolutely real life of the community will be brought about. Then those persons who now, out of instinct rather than out of a true courage in life, seek a vague something which they call soul or spirit, may be answered in these words: Learn to recognize the reality of your spiritual nature. Give to the spirit the things of the spirit, and to the soul the things of the soul; and it will then be plain also what belongs to the economic life.