

3. INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

The socialists believe in two things which are absolutely different and perhaps even contradictory: freedom and organisation.

Elie Halevy

Before we can progress with our main problem, an obstacle has yet to be surmounted. A confusion largely responsible for the way in which we are drifting into things which nobody wants must be cleared up.

This confusion concerns nothing less than the concept of socialism itself. It may mean, and is often used to describe, merely the ideals of social justice, greater equality and security which are the ultimate aims of socialism. But it means also the particular method by which most socialists hope to attain these ends and which many competent people regard as the only methods by which they can be fully and quickly attained. In this sense socialism means the abolition of private enterprise, of private ownership of the means of production, and the creation of a system of "planned economy" in which the entrepreneur working for profit is replaced by a central planning body.

There are many people who call themselves socialists although they care only about the first, who fervently believe in those ultimate aims of socialism but neither care nor understand how they can be achieved, and who are merely certain that they must be achieved, whatever the cost. But to nearly all those to whom socialism is not merely a hope but an object of practical politics, the characteristic methods of modern socialism are as essential as the ends themselves. Many people, on the other hand, who value the ultimate ends of socialism no less than the socialists, refuse to support socialism because of the dangers to other values they see in the methods proposed by the socialists. The dispute about socialism has thus become largely a dispute about means and not about ends—although the question whether the different ends of socialism can be simultaneously achieved is also involved.

This would be enough to create confusion. And the confusion has been further increased by the common practice of denying that those who repudiate the means value the ends. But this is not all. The situation is still more complicated by the fact that the same means, the "economic planning" which is the prime instrument of socialist reform, can be used for many other purposes. We must centrally direct economic activity if we want to make the distribution of income conform to current ideas of social justice. "Planning", therefore, is wanted by all those who demand that "production for use" be substituted for production for profit. But such planning is no less indispensable if the distribution of incomes is to be regulated in a way which to us appears to be the opposite of just. Whether we should wish that more of the good things of this world should go to some racial elite, the Nordic men, or the members of a party or an aristocracy, the methods which we shall have to employ are the same as those which could ensure an equalitarian distribution.

3. 个人主义与集体主义

社会主义者相信两种截然不同，甚至可能相互矛盾的东西：自由与组织。
埃利·阿列维

开始主要问题之前，还必须克服一个障碍。必须澄清一个混淆，这个混淆很大程度上会让我们陷入谁都不想的境地。

这个混淆指的正是社会主义概念本身。社会主义可能意味着，也常被仅用来描述社会公正、更平等和更有保障等这些社会主义终极目标的理想。但它也意味着大多数社会主义者希望借以达到这些目标的具体手段，很多能人认为这些手段是全面、快速达到这些目标的唯一手段。在这个意义上，社会主义意味着废除私有企业，废除生产资料私有，创造一种用中央计划部门替代谋利企业家的“计划经济”制度。

有很多人自称社会主义者，尽管他们只关心前者，他们狂热地相信那些社会主义的终极目标，但既不关心也不懂得如何实现它们，他们只是确定这些目标必须达到，不管代价如何。但对几乎所有那些不仅把社会主义当作希望而且当作实际政治目的的人来说，现代社会主义的特色手段和目的一样地基本。另一方面，有很多重视社会主义终极目标并不亚于社会主义者的人，拒绝支持社会主义，因为他们看到社会主义者提议的手段危及他们的其它价值。这样，对于社会主义的争论很大程度上成为关于手段而不是目的的争论——尽管也涉及社会主义不同目的能否同时实现的问题。

这足以产生混淆。通常实践中，否认那些拒绝社会主义手段的人对社会主义目的的尊重，更进一步增加了混淆的程度。但这还不是全部。社会主义改革的基本工具，“经济计划”，相同手段还能用于很多其它目的，这使情况进一步复杂化。如果我们想使收入分配符合现在社会公平的想法，我们必须集中指挥经济活动。因此所有想用“为用而产”取代为利而产的人都需要“计划”的手段。但是，如果想以在我们看来与公平相对的方式来分配收入，那样的计划手段也是同样地必不可少。无论我们是否应该希望一些精英种族譬如北欧人、或者某党党员、某贵族阶层应该更多地获得世界上的好东西，我们需要采用的手段和用来确保分配平均的手段是相同的。

It may, perhaps, seem unfair to use the term socialism to describe its methods rather than its aims, to use for a particular method a term which for many people stands for an ultimate ideal. It is probably preferable to describe the methods which can be used for a great variety of ends as collectivism and to regard socialism as a species of that genus. Yet, although to most socialists only one species of collectivism will represent true socialism, it must always be remembered that socialism is a species of collectivism and that therefore everything which is true of collectivism as such must apply also to socialism. Nearly all the points which are disputed between socialists and liberals concern the methods common to all forms of collectivism and not the particular ends for which socialists want to use them; and all the consequences with which we shall be concerned in this book follow from the methods of collectivism irrespective of the ends for which they are used. It must also not be forgotten that socialism is not only by far the most important species of collectivism or "planning"; but that it is socialism which has persuaded liberal-minded people to submit once more to that regimentation of economic life which they had overthrown because, in the words of Adam Smith, it puts governments in a position where "to support themselves they are obliged to be oppressive and tyrannical".

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The difficulties caused by the ambiguities of the common political terms are not yet over if we agree to use the term collectivism so as to include all types of "planned economy", whatever the end of planning. The meaning of this term becomes somewhat more definite if we make it clear that we mean that sort of planning which is necessary to realise any given distributive ideals. But as the idea of central economic planning owes its appeal largely to this very vagueness of its meaning, it is essential that we should agree on its precise sense before we discuss its consequences.

"Planning" owes its popularity largely to the fact that everybody desires, of course, that we should handle our common problems as rationally as possible, and that in so doing we should use as much foresight as we can command. In this sense everybody who is not a complete fatalist is a planner, every political act is (or ought to be) an act of planning, and there can be differences only between good and bad, between wise and foresighted and foolish and shortsighted planning. An economist, whose whole task is the study of how men actually do and how they might plan their affairs, is the last person who could object to planning in this general sense. But it is not in this sense that our enthusiasts for a planned society now employ this term, nor merely in this sense that we must plan if we want the distribution of income or wealth to conform to some particular standard. According to the modern planners, and for their purposes, it is not sufficient to design the most rational permanent framework within which the various activities would be conducted by different persons according to their individual plans. This liberal plan, according to them, is no plan—and it is indeed not a plan designed to satisfy particular views about who should have what. What our planners demand is a central direction of all economic activity according to a single plan, laying down how the resources of society should be "consciously directed" to serve particular ends in a definite way.

用社会主义这个词来描述手段而不是目的，把一个对很多人来说代表终极理想的词用于具体的手段看起来或许不妥。把能用于各种各样目的的手段统称为集体主义，而视社会主义为这一类中的一种，可能更理想。然而，尽管对大多数社会主义者来说，只有一种集体主义可以代表真正的社会主义，必须时刻记住社会主义是一种集体主义，适用于集体主义的一切因此也适用于社会主义。社会主义者和自由主义者之间争论的几乎所有问题都是各种集体主义共性的方法问题，而不是关于社会主义者想用这些方法达到的具体目的；本书所关注的所有后果都源于集体主义的方法，而不管用以何种目的。我们也不要忘记社会主义不仅仅是迄今为止集体主义或者“计划”中最重要的一种，而且正是社会主义说服了具备自由主义思想意识的人再一次屈从于经济生活的严密管辖。这种管辖他们曾经推翻过，因为用亚当·斯密的话来说，管辖使政府有资格“为了自身需要，被迫专制独裁、鱼肉百姓。”

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如果我们同意使用集体主义这个词以表示各类不管目的如何的“计划经济”，那通用政治词汇含义模糊造成的困难并没完。如果就计划一词我们明确指出是用来实现与分配有关的理想的那种计划，计划这个词的含义会更些许确定些。但是，中央经济计划的想法具有吸引力很大程度上归功于该词含义模糊，在讨论其后果之前，我们有必要应该就其确切含义达成一致。

“计划”大受欢迎很大程度归功于一个事实，那就是每个人都想在处理公共问题的时候尽可能地合理，为此应该尽可能多的运用先见之明。在这个意义上，每个人如果不是完全的宿命论者，那他就是一个计划者，每一项政治行动都是（或者说应该是）有计划的行动，区别的只是计划的好与坏，明智或有远见与愚蠢或近视。一个经济学家其全部任务就是研究人们实际上怎么处理、怎么计划各项事务，一般说来，他应该是最后一个可能反对计划的人。但是，对热衷于一个有计划的社会的人来说，现在不是在这个意义上使用计划这个词，也不仅仅是如果我们想要收入或者财富的分配符合某些特定标准我们必须有那个计划的意思。根据现代计划者，按他们的目的，设计一个最合理的永久性框架，在其中各人按各自的计划进行各自的活动，是不够的。按照他们的说法，这个自由主义的计划就是毫无计划——它也的确不是针对谁应该得到什么这个问题的某个具体意见而设计的计划。我们计划者所要求的是所有经济活动按照统一计划集中指挥，规定应该怎样“有意识地调度”社会资源以某种确定的方式服务特定的目的。

The dispute between the modern planners and their opponents is, therefore, not a dispute on whether we ought to choose intelligently between the various possible organisations of society; it is not a dispute on whether we ought to employ foresight and systematic thinking in planning our common affairs. It is a dispute about what is the best way of so doing. The question is whether for this purpose it is better that the holder of coercive power should confine himself in general to creating conditions under which the knowledge and initiative of individuals is given the best scope so that they can plan most successfully; or whether a rational utilisation of our resources requires central direction and organisation of all our activities according to some consciously constructed "blueprint". The socialists of all parties have appropriated the term planning for planning of the latter type and it is now generally accepted in this sense. But though this is meant to suggest that this is the only rational way of handling our affairs, it does not of course prove this. It remains the point on which the planners and the liberals disagree.

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It is important not to confuse opposition against this kind of planning with a dogmatic laissez-faire attitude. The liberal argument is in favour of making the best possible use of the forces of competition as a means of co-ordinating human efforts, not an argument for leaving things just as they are. It is based on the conviction that where effective competition can be created, it is a better way of guiding individual efforts than any other. It does not deny, but even emphasises, that, in order that competition should work beneficially, a carefully thought-out legal framework is required, and that neither the existing nor the past legal rules are free from grave defects. Nor does it deny that where it is impossible to create the conditions necessary to make competition effective, we must resort to other methods of guiding economic activity. Economic liberalism is opposed, however, to competition being supplanted by inferior methods of coordinating individual efforts. And it regards competition as superior not only because it is in most circumstances the most efficient method known, but even more because it is the only method by which our activities can be adjusted to each other without coercive or arbitrary intervention of authority. Indeed, one of the main arguments in favour of competition is that it dispenses with the need for "conscious social control" and that it gives the individuals a chance to decide whether the prospects of a particular occupation are sufficient to compensate for the disadvantages and risks connected with it.

The successful use of competition as the principle of social organisation precludes certain types of coercive interference with economic life, but it admits of others which sometimes may very considerably assist its work and even requires certain kinds of government action. But there is good reason why the negative requirements, the points where coercion must not be used, have been particularly stressed. It is necessary in the first instance that the parties in the market should be free to sell and buy at any price at which they can find a partner to the transaction, and that anybody should be free to produce, sell, and buy anything that may be produced or sold at all. And it is essential that the entry into the different trades should be open to all on equal terms, and that the law should not tolerate any attempts by individuals or groups to restrict this entry by open or concealed force. Any attempt to control prices or quantities of particular commodities deprives competition of its power of bringing about an effective co-ordination of individual efforts, because price changes then cease to register all the relevant changes in circumstances and no longer provide a reliable guide for the individual's actions.

现代计划者跟对手争持的不是我们应该在多种可能的社会组织形式之间如何明智选择的问题；也不是我们是否应该深谋远虑和采取系统性思维来计划公共事务的问题。它是关于这样做最好的方式是什么的争论。其问题是，为此目的，以下哪个更好：掌权者应该把自己限制在总的来说是创造条件，给个人知识和主动性最好的空间，使他们能做出最成功的计划；还是是否为了合理利用资源，需要按照某些有意制订的“蓝图”集中指挥、组织所有活动。所有党派社会主义者都把计划这个词归结为后一种类型的计划，现在这个词也是在这个意义上被普遍接受了。但是尽管我意在表明这是应对词义模糊的唯一理性方式，当然并非证明。计划者和自由主义分子在这点上仍有分歧。

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重要的是，不要对这类计划的反对与教条的自由放任态度相混淆。自由主义的主张是赞成尽可能地利用竞争的力量作为一种协调人类努力的手段，而不是主张让事情放任自流。这是基于相信，只要能够产生有效竞争，在引导个人努力上，它就是最好的方法。它不否认，甚至强调，为了使竞争有益必须要一个经深思熟虑的法律框架，并且现存的与过去的法律规则都不无严重缺陷。它也不否认，如若不可能创造有效竞争的必要条件，我们必须求助于其它方法来引导经济活动。不管怎样，经济自由主义反对以协调个人努力的低级方法来取代竞争。并且，竞争之所以优越，不仅因为在大多数环境下它是已知的最有效的方法，更因为它是无需政府强行、随意干预，我们的活动就能相互协调的唯一方法。确实，支持竞争最主要的论据之一就是，它无需“自觉的社会控制”，它给个人以机会自行决定一项具体工作其前景是否足以相抵连带的弊端和风险。

成功使用竞争作为社会组织的原则避免了对经济生活的某种强制性干预，但承认其它干预有时能相当好地协助经济运行，甚至还需要某种政府行为。但是，有充足的理由要特别强调“不可以”的需求，就是不能使用强迫的地方。首先，必要的是，市场参与方只要能找到交易对手接受，就应该可以自由地以任何价格买或者卖；任何人应该可以自由地生产、销售、和购买被许可生产和销售的任何东西。其次，至关重要的是，各行业的准入应该基于同等条款向所有人开放，法律不应该容许任何个人或团体采用公开或隐秘的手段阻隘市场准入。任何试图控制某种商品价格或者数量的做法都会使竞争协调个人努力的作用失效，因为价格变化不再能够反映周遭环境所有相关的变化，不再能为个人行动提供可靠的指引。

This is not necessarily true, however, of measures merely restricting the allowed methods of production, so long as these restrictions affect all potential producers equally and are not used as an indirect way of controlling prices and quantities. Though all such controls of the methods or production impose extra costs, i.e. make it necessary to use more resources to produce a given output, they may be well worth while. To prohibit the use of certain poisonous substances, or to require special precautions in their use, to limit working hours or to require certain sanitary arrangements, is fully compatible with the preservation of competition. The only question here is whether in the particular instance the advantages gained are greater than the social costs which they impose. Nor is the preservation of competition incompatible with an extensive system of social services—so long as the organisation of these services is not designed in such a way as to make competition ineffective over wide fields.

It is regrettable, though not difficult to explain, that much less attention than to these negative points has in the past been given to the positive requirements of a successful working of the competitive system. The functioning of competition not only requires adequate organisation of certain institutions like money, markets, and channels of information—some of which can never be adequately provided by private enterprise—but it depends above all on the existence of an appropriate legal system, a legal system designed both to preserve competition and to make it operate as beneficially as possible. It is by no means sufficient that the law should recognise the principle of private property and freedom of contract; much depends on the precise definition of the right of property as applied to different things. The systematic study of the forms of legal institutions which will make the competitive system work efficiently has been sadly neglected; and strong arguments can be advanced that serious shortcomings here, particularly with regard to the law of corporations and of patents, have not only made competition work much more badly than it might have done, but have even led to the destruction of competition in many spheres.

There are, finally, undoubted fields where no legal arrangements can create the main condition on which the usefulness of the system of competition and private property depends: namely, that the owner benefits from all the useful services rendered by his property and suffers for all the damages caused to others by its use. Where, for example, it is impracticable to make the enjoyment of certain services dependent on the payment of a price, competition will not produce the services; and the price system becomes similarly ineffective when the damage caused to others by certain uses of property cannot be effectively charged to the owner of that property. In all these instances there is a divergence between the items which enter into private calculation and those which affect social welfare; and whenever this divergence becomes important some method other than competition may have to be found to supply the services in question. Thus neither the provision of signposts on the roads, nor, in most circumstances, that of the roads themselves, can be paid for by every individual user. Nor can certain harmful effects of deforestation, or of some methods of farming, or of the smoke and noise of factories, be confined to the owner of the property in question or to those who are willing to submit to the damage for an agreed compensation. In such instances we must find some substitute for the regulation by the price mechanism. But the fact that we have to resort to the substitution of direct regulation by authority where the conditions for the proper working of competition cannot be created, does not prove that we should suppress competition where it can be made to function.

然而，对于仅仅限制生产许可的方法，只要这些限制同等影响所有的潜在厂商，并且措施不被用来间接控制价格和数量，这个说法就未必成立了。尽管所有这样对方法或者生产的控制增加了额外成本，也就是一定产出必须消耗更多的资源，但这么做可能很值得。禁止使用某种毒性物质，或者使用时要求采取特殊的防卫措施，限制工作时间，或者要求某种卫生措施，都是与维护竞争完全兼容。唯一的问题是，对某些具体例子，获取的利益是否大于增加的社会成本。维护竞争也并非与广大的社会服务系统不兼容——只要提供这些服务的组织并非针对竞争，旨在使竞争大面积失效而设置。

很遗憾，尽管不难解释，对于使竞争制度成功运作的积极条件，较之消极条件，过去的关注要少得多。竞争起作用不仅仅需要某些制度如货币、市场以及信息渠道的充分合理的组织——其中某些完全无法由私企充分提供——但是首先取决于存在适当的法律制度，一个设计来既保护竞争又尽可能促进有益竞争的法律制度。法律应该承认私人财产和合约自由远远不够；不同标的私有产权精确界定非常重要。很遗憾，我们忽视了对促进竞争的法制形式的系统性研究；可以找到有力的论据，表明这方面的严重不足，特别是有关公司与专利法的不足，不仅仅使得竞争的潜力远未得到发挥，甚至导致了很领域竞争的破坏。

最后，毫无疑问有些领域法定安排无法创造使竞争和私有产权制度发挥作用的主要条件，即，所有者享受其产权所带来的一切好处，承担对他人造成损害的所有责任。譬如，定价支付来享有某些服务不切实际，那么竞争就不会产生这些服务；权利使用对他人造成伤害，不能有效追究所有者责任时，价格系统也同样无效。在所有这些例子中，纳入私产计算的项目和影响社会福利的项目存在不同；无论什么时候这种不同一旦变得显著，就需要寻找竞争之外的手段来提供该服务。因此，在路旁设立路标，以及大多数情况下道路本身的使用，都不可能由一个的使用者来支付费用。毁林、某些耕种方法、工厂烟雾噪音所造成的损害都不能局限于产权所有人，也不能局限于愿意取得赔偿接受其损害的人。对那样的例子，我们必须为价格调控机制找到替代办法。但，在不能创造条件使竞争正常作用的地方，我们不得不取而代之以政府的直接调控，这一事实并不证明在竞争能起作用的地方我们应该压制竞争。

To create conditions in which competition will be as effective as possible, to supplement it where it cannot be made effective, to provide the services which, in the words of Adam Smith, "though they may be in the highest degree advantageous to a great society, are, however, of such a nature, that the profit could never repay the expense to any individual or small number of individuals", these tasks provide indeed a wide and unquestioned field for state activity. In no system that could be rationally defended would the state just do nothing. An effective competitive system needs an intelligently designed and continuously adjusted legal framework as much as any other. Even the most essential prerequisite of its proper functioning, the prevention of fraud and deception (including exploitation of ignorance) provides a great and by no means yet fully accomplished object of legislative activity.

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The task of creating a suitable framework for the beneficial working of competition had, however, not yet been carried very far when states everywhere turned from it to that of supplanting competition by a different and irreconcilable principle. The question was no longer one of making competition work and of supplementing it, but of displacing it altogether. It is important to be quite clear about this: the modern movement for planning is a movement against competition as such, a new flag under which all the old enemies of competition have rallied. And although all sorts of interests are now trying to re-establish under this flag privileges which the liberal era swept away, it is socialist propaganda for planning which has restored to respectability among liberal-minded people opposition to competition, and which has effectively lulled the healthy suspicion which any attempt to smother competition used to arouse¹.

What in effect unites the socialists of the Left and the Right is this common hostility to competition and their common desire to replace it by a directed economy. Though the terms capitalism and socialism are still generally used to describe the past and the future forms of society, they conceal rather than elucidate the nature of the transition through which we are passing.

Yet, though all the changes we are observing tend in the direction of a comprehensive central direction of economic activity, the universal struggle against competition promises to produce in the first instance something in many respects even worse, a state of affairs which can satisfy neither planners nor liberals: a sort of syndicalist or "corporative" organisation of industry, in which competition is more or less suppressed but planning is left in the hands of the independent monopolies of the separate industries. This is the inevitable first result of a situation in which the people are united in their hostility to competition but agree on little else. By destroying competition in industry after industry, this policy puts the consumer at the mercy of the joint monopolist action of capitalists and workers in the best organised industries. Yet, although this is a state of affairs which in wide fields has already existed for some time, and although much of the muddled (and most of the interested) agitation for planning aims at it, it is not a state which is likely to persist or can be rationally justified. Such independent planning by industrial monopolies would, in fact, produce effects opposite to those at which the argument for planning aims.

创造使竞争尽可能有效的条件，在竞争无效时提供补充，提供某些用亚当·斯密的话来说“可能最大程度有益于广大社会，然而其本质上来说，对任何个人或者少数人来说，利润不足以抵偿成本的”服务，这些任务才真地是政府应该行为的广泛而无可争议的领域。无论什么制度下，为政府无所作为而辩护都不合理。有效的竞争制度和其它制度一样，需要一个巧妙设计、不断调适的法律框架。甚至是使其发挥像样作用最基本的前提条件，防欺诈和欺骗（包括利用他人的无知）都对立法活动提出了一个巨大而远未全部完成的任务。

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然而，为竞争的有利运作建立一个合适框架的任务还没有取得很好进展，各地政府已经开始掉头，代之以一个不同的、与之矛盾的原则。问题不再是使竞争起作用，并加以修修补补，而是完全取代它。弄清楚这点很重要：宣扬计划的现代运动是一个反对竞争的运动，一个因此将所有竞争的宿敌招致其麾下的新旗帜。尽管现在各种利益方都力图在这面旗帜下重建自由主义时代已经被消灭的各种特权，但是，是社会主义者对计划的宣传，使得有自由主义思想的人重新反对竞争，麻痹了对扼杀竞争总会出现的正常怀疑。

事实上统一社会主义左派和右派的，是对竞争的共同敌意，和取而代之以计划经济的共同意愿。尽管资本主义和社会主义的术语仍然普遍被用来描述过去和未来的社会形式，但社和资两词掩盖了而不是澄清了我们正在经历的过渡期的本质。

然而，尽管我们看到的所有变化朝对中央全面指挥经济活动的方向发展，但全方位反对竞争的斗争势必首先产生一个在很多方面甚至更糟的结果，一种既不能让计划者满意也不能让自由主义者满意的状态：行业出现一种辛迪加或者“社团式”的组织形式，其中竞争多多少少被压制，而计划的权力被控制在独立的各行业寡头手中。这是人们因对竞争的共同敌意而联合起来，却未有达成其它共同意见的情况下，首先出现的必然结果。通过在一个接一个的行业中破坏竞争，在那些组织得最好的行业中，这一政策使得消费者只能听任资本家和工人联合垄断行为的摆布。然而，尽管这一状态在很多领域存在已有些时间，尽管很多胡闹煽动计划的人（大多数是利害关系方）有意这么做，但它不合理，难以持续。那样一种通过行业寡头独立进行计划的形式实际上将产生与计划的期望目标相反的效果。

¹ Of late, it is true, some academic socialists, under the spur of criticism, and animated by the same fear of the extinction of freedom in a centrally planned society, have devised a new kind of "competitive socialism" which they hope will avoid the difficulties and dangers of central planning and combine the abolition of private property with the full retention of individual freedom. Although some discussion of this new kind of socialism has taken place in learned journals, it is hardly likely to recommend itself to practical politicians. If it ever did, it would not be difficult to show (as the author has attempted elsewhere-see *Economica*, 1940)

that these plans rest on a delusion and suffer from an inherent contradiction. It is impossible to assume control over all the productive resources without also deciding for whom and by whom they are to be used. Although, under this so-called competitive socialism, the planning by the central authority would take somewhat more roundabout forms, its effects would not be fundamentally different, and the element of competition would be little more than a sham.

Once this stage is reached the only alternative to a return to competition is the control of the monopolies by the state, a control which, if it is to be made effective, must become progressively more complete and more detailed. It is this stage we are rapidly approaching. When, shortly before the war, one of the weeklies pointed out that "there were many signs that British leaders are growing accustomed to thinking in terms of national development by controlled monopolies"², this was probably a true estimate of the position as it then existed. Since then this process has been greatly accelerated by the war, and its grave defects and dangers will become increasingly obvious as time goes on.

The idea of complete centralisation of the direction of economic activity still appalls most people, not only because of the stupendous difficulty of the task, but even more because of the horror inspired by the idea of everything being directed from a single centre. If we are nevertheless rapidly moving towards such a state this is largely because most people still believe that it must be possible to find some Middle Way between "atomistic" competition and central direction. Nothing indeed seems at first more plausible, or is more likely to appeal to reasonable people, than the idea that our goal must be neither the extreme decentralisation of free competition, nor the complete centralisation of a single plan, but some judicious mixture of the two methods. Yet mere common sense proves a treacherous guide in this field. Although competition can bear some admixture of regulation, it cannot be combined with planning to any extent we like without ceasing to operate as an effective guide to production. Nor is "planning" a medicine which, taken in small doses, can produce the effects for which one might hope from its thoroughgoing application. Both competition and central direction become poor and inefficient tools if they are incomplete; they are alternative principles used to solve the same problem, and a mixture of the two means that neither will really work and that the result will be worse than if either system had been consistently relied upon. Or, to express it differently, planning and competition can be combined only by planning for competition, but not by planning against competition.

It is of the utmost importance to the argument of this book for the reader to keep in mind that the planning against which all our criticism is directed is solely the planning against competition—the planning which is to be substituted for competition. This is the more important as we cannot, within the scope of this book, enter into a discussion of the very necessary planning which is required to make competition as effective and beneficial as possible. But as in current usage "planning" has become almost synonymous with the former kind of planning, it will sometimes be inevitable for the sake of brevity to refer to it simply as planning, even though this means leaving to our opponents a very good word meriting a better fate.

一旦到达这一阶段，只有两条路，除了回到竞争，就是国家垄断控制，国家垄断的方式如要有效，必须逐渐全面化、细节化。我们现在就是迅速逼近这一阶段。战前不久，曾有一家周刊指出“很多迹象表明，英国领导人已经越来越习惯想通过有控制的垄断来实现”国家发展，这很可能是当时形势的正确估计。从那开始，战争大大加速了这一进程，随着时间推移，其严重的缺陷和危险将更加明显。

完全集中指挥经济活动的想法仍然震惊了大多数人，不仅仅因为这一任务极其困难，更因为一个中央指挥所有事情的想法激起的恐怖。虽说如此，如果我们仍向那样一种状态迅速靠近，很大程度上是因为大多数人仍然相信“微观的”竞争和中央的指挥之间可以找到某种中间道路。初看来，真的没有什么比我们的目的既不是自由竞争的极端分散也不是单一计划的全面集中而是二者恰如其分的混合这样一个想法更有道理，更能吸引理性的人。只不过这里常识要坏事。尽管竞争能够容许掺入某些监管，但是它并不能和计划随心所欲的结合而不致于失效无法引导生产。“计划”并不是一剂良药，小量多次服用能产生彻底治疗所期望的效果。竞争和中央指挥如不彻底皆效果平平、效率平平；他们是解决同一个问题的二择其一的原则，二者混合意味着二者均不能真正起作用，结果反比坚持其中任一原则更糟糕。或者，换个说法，计划和竞争的结合只能为竞争而计划，不能反竞争而计划。

本书论证极端重要的一点是，请读者牢记，我们一切批评所针对的计划仅仅是反对竞争的计划——用来取代竞争的计划。因为我们不能在本书范围内讨论为使竞争尽可能有效、有力并非常必要的那类计划，这点显得尤其重要了。但，用到目前为止，“计划”已经与前一种计划几乎同义，为了简洁起见，有时不可避免地提到它时简称计划，即使这意味着留给我们对手一个用来当枪挡枪很好的词。

² *The Spectator*, March 3rd 1939, p.337