

**THE LARGER LIBERALISM:
OUTLINES OF A SOCIAL
PHILOSOPHY FOR THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649625048

The Larger Liberalism: Outlines of a Social Philosophy for the United States of America by
Edward Bernard Benjamin

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EDWARD BERNARD BENJAMIN

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EDWARD BERNARD BENJAMIN
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Printed for the author's private circulation by

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

1918

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3rd Printing May 1976

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THE LARGER LIBERALISM

INTRODUCTION

1. Social reform and the hour, p. 1. 2. The author and the author's aims, p. 5.

ENTHUSIASTS in any great cause with a past tend naturally to err in relating the present to that past. Thus it is that in estimating the strength of the liberal tendencies of the day, we easily overlook the half century which brought forth such men as Cobbett, Bentham, Place, Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, Proudhon, Disraeli, Engels and Karl Marx; and the decade which produced the Webbs, Shaw, Wells and Hobson.

However this may be, the fact stands that probably never before in history has the cause of social reform received a more respectful hearing than at the moment. We are speaking now in particular of social reform as directed towards more equitable distribution of wealth and the improvement of working conditions in industry. This liberalism of the hour has become for the intellectuals of all countries a

vital interest; has attained, indeed, a sort of intellectuality of its own. But this interest extends far beyond any one class. Thus in our own country, the "Reconstruction Report" of the British Labor Party, originally brought out by the *New Republic*, has been written up for the *Saturday Evening Post*, and been made a topic of discussion by the members of the American Economic League. Of special significance is the spectacle of American business men, among them some of our best-known financiers, gravely and considerately debating industrial reforms which twenty years ago would have seemed out-and-out revolution. The faith of organized labor, "Things will be different after the war," apparently has attracted converts from altogether unexpected quarters.

There are several factors accountable for this sudden accentuation of interest in social reform. Partly the phenomenon in question arises as a result of the Russian Revolution, which not half understood by the great mass, has touched the imagination of many, bringing home a realization of what men can be goaded to by suffering and oppression, and a remembrance that the catastrophe of the past lives on in the present. Partly, also, this phenomenon