

The Future of Pessimism and Individualism

Georges Palante

1914

Everything in current social evolution indicates an increased reinforcement of society's powers, an increasingly marked tendency towards the encroachment of the collective on the individual.

Everything equally indicates that on the part of most individuals this encroachment will be less and less felt, and will provoke less and less resistance and rebellion. Social conformism and optimism will thus clearly have the last word. Society will emerge victorious over the individual. There will come a moment when social chains will wound almost no one, lacking people sufficiently in love with independence and sufficiently individualized to feel these chains and suffer from them. Lacking combatants, the combat will come to an end. The small independent minority will become increasingly small.

But however small it might be, it will suffer from the increased social pressure. It will represent, in this time of almost perfect conformism and generalized social contentment, pessimism and individualism.

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