

SOCIALISM AND PERSONAL LIBERTY

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Socialism and Personal Liberty by Robert Dell

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BY
ROBERT DELL

"If ye learn to walk in the perfect law of liberty,
ye shall do well."

NEW YORK
THOMAS SELTZER, INC.
5 WEST 50th STREET

—
1922

926

6

NOTE

READERS of *My Second Country* will find that the opinion that I expressed in that book about the dictatorship of the proletariat as a method of transition from capitalist to Socialist Society is modified here. The reasons for that modification, arising from the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, are explained in the chapter on the subject.

I would warn the reader that the descriptions of various Socialist systems given in the present book are necessarily very summary and incomplete and need to be supplemented. It is not my purpose to give a complete exposition of Socialist theory, nor would that be possible within the limits of a small volume. All that I have been able or have tried to do is to touch on the various theories merely in their relation to the particular question of personal liberty.

R. D.

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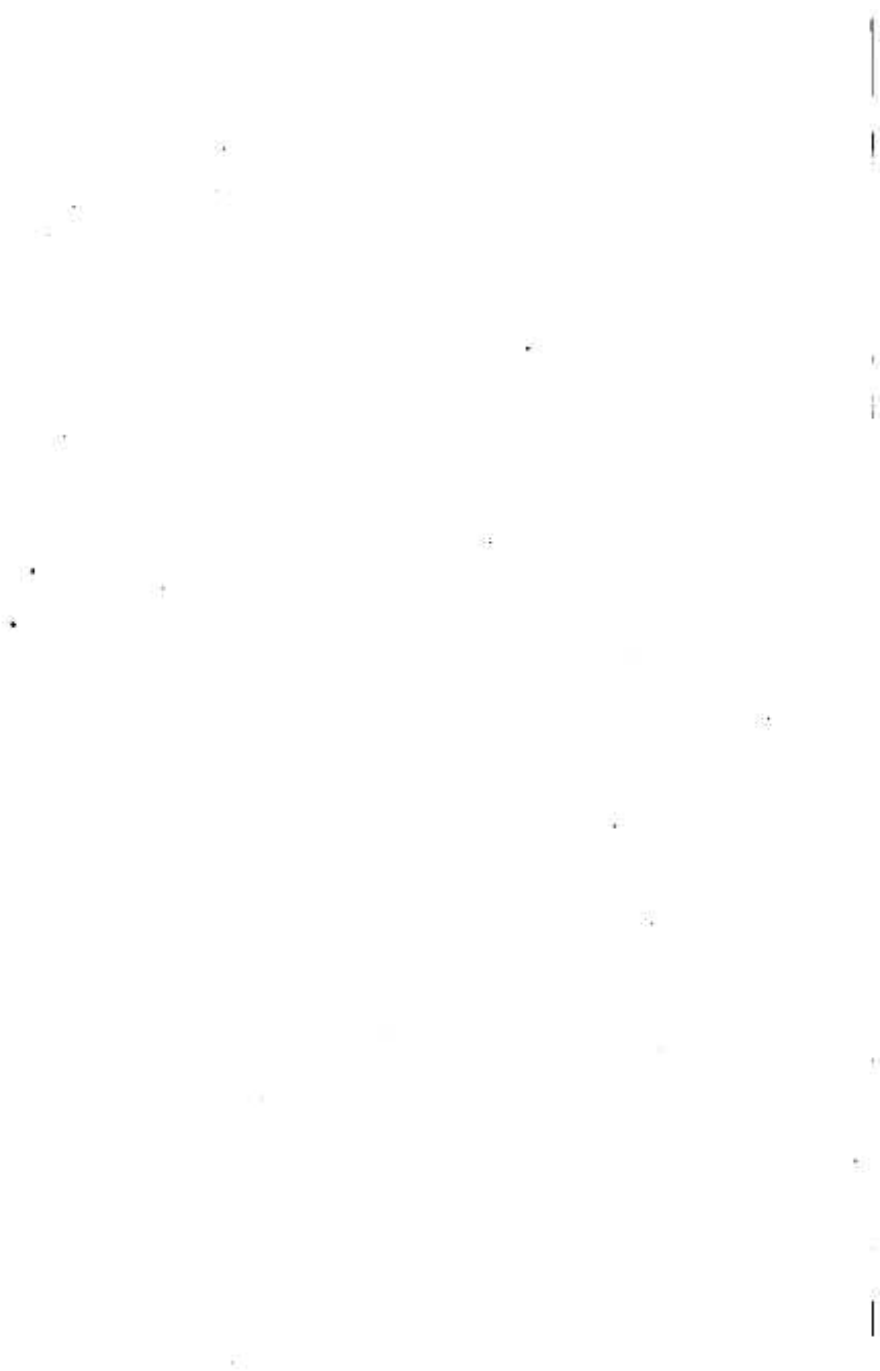
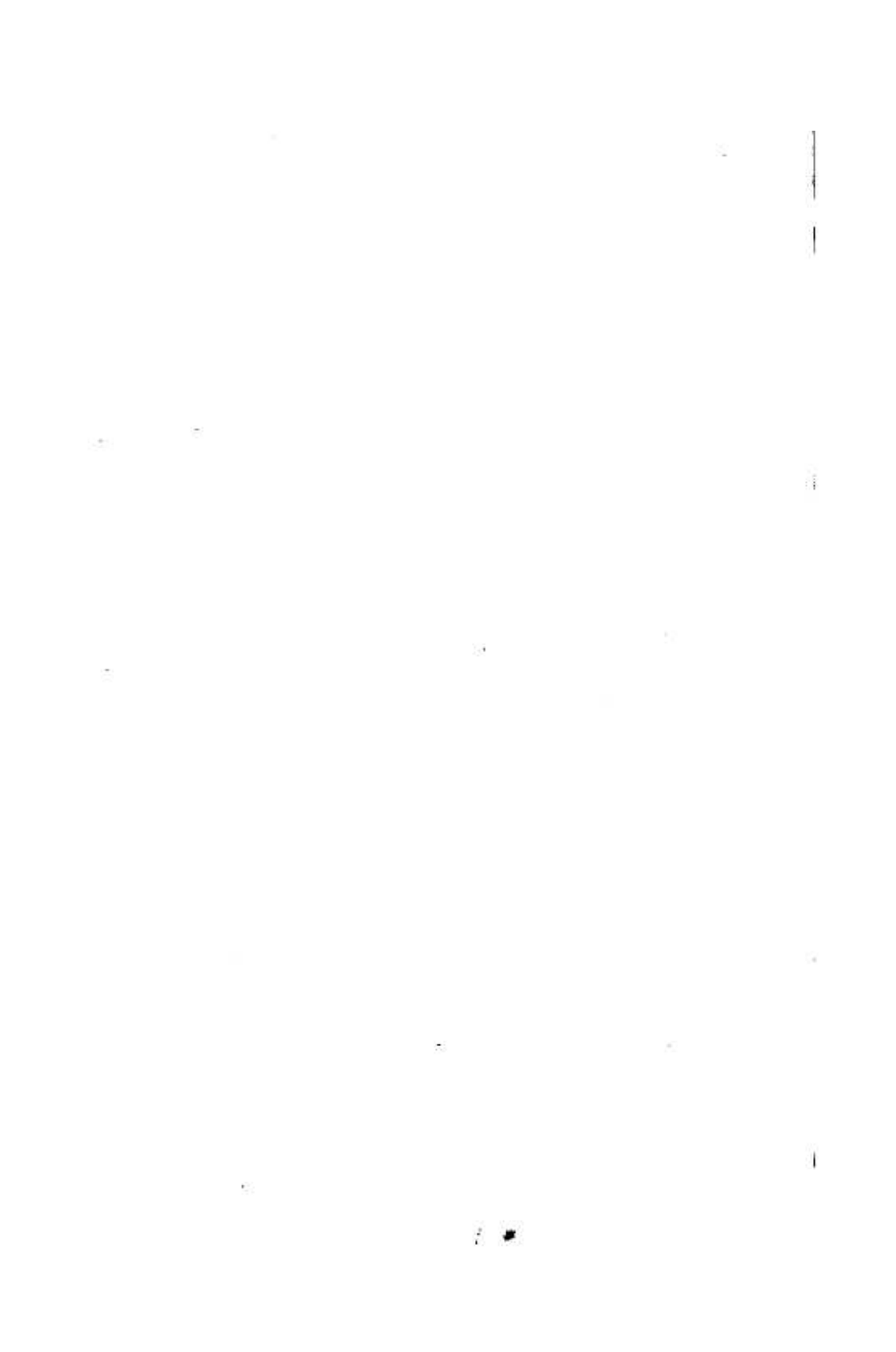


Figure 1. The relationship between the number of species (S) and the number of individuals (N) for various species. The plots are arranged in a grid with rows labeled 1-10 and columns labeled 1-10. Each plot shows a positive correlation between S and N, with the slope of the relationship increasing as the number of individuals (N) increases.

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SOCIALISM AND PERSONAL LIBERTY

CHAPTER I.

THE CONDITIONS OF PERSONAL LIBERTY.

ONE of the greatest obstacles to the progress of Socialist ideas is the fear that Socialism would destroy personal liberty. The objection is not met by pointing out that for the large majority of mankind personal liberty does not really exist in present economic conditions. That is true; but the fact that it is true is one of the strongest reasons for altering the conditions. Socialism is not presented in a very attractive guise by the argument that it would be no worse than the present social system. A prisoner would, no doubt, be gratified by the news that he was about to be transferred to a more comfortable prison where the food was better and more abundant, but he would not be aroused to the same enthusiasm as if he were told that he was about to be set free. The enthusiasm for Socialism now felt by a minority of the workers will spread to the large majority only when they are convinced that Socialism is really a path to freedom. "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains," but they want to be sure that they will not merely exchange their chains for others of a different pattern.