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Objection has been made to the use of the word "Communism" to express fully-developed Socialism, on the ground that it has been used for the Community-Building, which played so great a part in some of the phases of Utopian Socialism, and is still heard of from time to time nowadays. Of Communism in this sense I am not writing now; it may merely be said in passing that such experiments are of their nature non-progressive; at their best they are but another form of the Mediæval monastery, withdrawals from the Society of the day, really implying hopelessness of a general change; which is only attainable by the development of Society as it is; by the development of the consequences of its faults and anomalies, as well as of what germ of real Society it contains.

This point of mistaken nomenclature being cleared off, it remains to ask what real Communism is, and the answer is simple: it is a state of Society the essence of which is *Practical Equality of condition.* Practical, i.e., equality as modified by the desires, and capacity for enjoyment of its various members. This is its economical basis; its ethical basis is the *habitual* and full recognition of man as a social being, so that it brings about

the habit of making no distinction between the common welfare and the welfare of the individual.

I am a Communist, therefore, because—1st, it seems to me that mankind is not thinkable outside of Society; and 2ndly, because there is no other basis, economical and ethical, save that above stated, on which a true Society can be formed; any other basis makes waste and unnecessary suffering an essential part of the system. In short I can see no other system under which men can live together except these two, Slavery and Equality.

The first of these two says, some standard of worth having been determined (of course not as a result of the immediate agreement of men living under such and such a system, but of the long development of many centuries) those who have attained to that standard are the masters of those who have not so attained, and live as well as surrounding circumstances, together with a quasi-equitable arrangement amongst the worthy, will allow them, by *using* those who have not come up to the standard above mentioned: in the dealings between the worthy with the non-worthy there is no attempt at any equitable arrangement (I was going to say no *pretence*, but at the present day that would not be quite true); the worthy use their advantage to the utmost, and it is a recognized assumption that the non-worthy are in a state of permanent inferiority, and their well-doing or ill-doing must be looked at from quite a different point of view from that of the worthy. For instance at the present day, the income which would imply ruin and disgrace to a member of the worthy class, would mean success and prosperity to a working man. It must be added that the standard of superiority is always an arbitrary one, and does not necessarily mean any real superiority on the side of the worthy; and that especially in our own days, when the unworthy or disinherited class is the one class which has any real function, is, in fact, the useful class; the functions of the worthy amongst us being directed solely towards their own class; they being otherwise a burden on the *whole* public.

Now this theory of society has been that held for the most part from early historical periods till our own days, though from time to time there have been protests raised against it. The standard of worthiness has varied, but the essential assertion of the necessity for inequality has always been there. In its two earlier phases; birth and race, i.e., the belonging, really or theoretically, to the lineage of the original conquering tribe, conferred the privilege of using the labour of those not so recognized; and Chattel Slavery was the method of using their labour in Ancient, and Serfom Serfdom in Mediæval times. In our own days the method of exercising privilege has changed from the use of the arbitrary accident of birth, to the acquirement (by any means not recognized as illegal) of an indeterminate amount of wealth which enables its possessor to belong to the useless class.

It would not be very profitable to discuss which of these three systems of inequality, to wit, Chattel Slavery, Serfdom, or Wage-Earning, is per se the better or the worse; it is enough to say that since the present one has come down to us in due course of development from the others, it gives us a hope of progress which could not have belonged to them. And in fact a new theory of Society can now be put forward, not as a mere abstraction, but as a root change in Social conditions which is in actual course of realization.

This theory is Communism; which says: In a true Society the capacities of all men can be used for their mutual well being; the due unwasteful use of those capacities produces wealth in the proper sense of the word and cannot fail to produce it; this wealth produced by the Community can only be fully used by the Community; for if some get more than they need, that portion which cannot be used must of necessity be wasted, and the whole Community is impoverished thereby; and again further impoverished by the necessity for the producers having to work harder than they otherwise need; which in its turn brings about grievous and burdensome inequality; for all men feel un-

necessary work to be slavish work. Again, though men's desires for wealth vary, yet certain needs all men have, and since we have seen that it is the *Community* which produces wealth in a true society, to force on any class lack of these needs is to practically thrust them out of the Community and constitute them a class of inferiority; and since we know that they can all work usefully, on what grounds can we do this? Certainly on no grounds that they as men can really agree to. We must *force* them into submission, or cajole them into it. And when force and fraud are used to keep any men in an artificial inequality, there is an end of true Society.

Communism, therefore can see no reason for inequality of condition: to each one according to his needs, from each one according to his capacities, must always be its motto. And if it be challenged to answer the question, what are the needs of such and such a man, how are they to be estimated? The answer is that the habitual regard towards Society as the real unit, will make it impossible for any man to think of claiming more than his genuine needs. I say that it will not come into his mind that it is possible for him to advance himself by injuring someone else. While, on the other hand, it will be well understood that unless you satisfy a man's needs, yon cannot make the best of his capacities. We are sometimes asked by people who do not understand either the present state of society or what Communism aims at, as to how we shall get people to be doctors, learned scientists, etc., in the new condition of things.

The answer is clear; by affording opportunities to those who have the capacity for doctoring etc.; the necessary cost of such opportunities being borne by the Community; and as the position of a doctor who has mistaken his vocation would clearly be an uncomfortable one in a society where people knew their real wants, and as he could earn his livelihood by engaging himself to do what be *could* do, he would be delivered from the now very serious temptation of pretending to be a doctor when he is not one.

mastery, in the assemblies of a Communal Society, there would be no opposition of interests, but only divergencies of opinion, as to the best way of doing what all were agreed to do. So that the minority would give way without any feeling of injury. It is a matter of course that since everybody would share to the full in the wealth and good life won by the whole community, so everybody would share in the responsibility of carrying on the business of the community; but this business of administration they would as sensible people reduce as much as possible, that they might be the freer to use their lives in the pleasure of living, and creating, and knowing, and resting.

This is a brief sketch of what I am looking forward to as a Communist: to sum up, it is Freedom from artificial disabilities; the development of each man's capacities for the benefit of each and all. Abolition of waste by taking care that one man does not get more than he can use, and another less than he needs; consequent condition of general well-being and fulness of life, neither idle and vacant, nor over burdened with toil.

All this I believe we can and shall reach directly by insisting on the claim for the communization of the means of production; and that claim will be made by the workers when they are fully convinced of its necessity; I believe further that they are growing convinced of it, and will one day make their claim good by using the means which the incomplete democracy of the day puts within their reach. That is they will at last form a wide spread and definite Socialist party, which will, by using the vote, wrest from the present possessing classes the instruments which are now used to govern the people in the interest of the possessing classes, and will use them for effecting the change in the basis of society, which would get rid of the last of the three great oppressions of the world.

I might go through a long series of objections which ignorant persons make to the only reasonable form of Society, but that is scarcely my business here. I will assert that I am a Communist because, amongst other reasons, I believe that a Communal Society could deal with every problem with which a Capitalist Society has perforce to deal, but with free hands and therefore with infinitely better chance of success. I believe that a Communal Society would bring about a condition of things in which we should be really wealthy, because we should have all we produced, and should know what we wanted to produce; that we should have so much leisure from the production of what are called "utilities," that any group of people would have leisure to satisfy its cravings for what are usually looked on as superfluities, such its works of art, research into facts, literature, the unspoiled beauty of nature; matters that to my mind are utilities also, being the things that make life worth living and which at present *nobody* can have in their fulness.

I believe in the final realization of this state of things, and now I come to the method by which they are to be reached. And here I feel I shall be dealing in matter about which there may be and must be divers opinions even amongst those who are consciously trying to bring about Communal conditions.

In the first place I do not (who does really) believe in Catastrophical Communism. That we shall go to sleep on Saturday in a Capitalistic Society and wake on Monday into a Communistic Society is clearly an impossibility. Again I do not believe that our end will be gained by open war; for the executive will be *too strong* for even an attempt at such a thing to be made until the change has gone so far, that it will be *too weak* to dare to attack the people by means of direct physical violence.

What we have to do first is to make Socialists. That we shall always have to do until the change is come. Some time ago we seemed to have nothing else to do than that, and could only do it by preaching; but the times are changed; the movement towards a communal life has spread wonderfully within the

last three or four years; the instinctive feeling towards Socialism has at last touched the working classes, and they are moving toward the great change; how quickly it is not easy for us, who are in the midst of the movement, to determine; but this instinct is not leading them to demand the *full* change directly; rather they are attacking those positions which must be won, before we come face to face with the last citadel of Capitalism, the privilege of rent, interest, and profit. Broadly speaking they see that it is possible to wrest from their masters an improved life, better livelihood, more leisure, treatment in short as citizens, not as machines. I say from their masters: for there is nowhere else whence it can come. Now to show sympathy with this side of the movement, and to further those who are working for it, is a necessity, if we are to make Socialists nowadays. For again I say it is the form in which the workers are taking in Socialism; the movement is genuine and spontaneous amongst them; and how important that is, those know best who remember how a few years ago the movement was confined to a few persons, of education and of superior intelligence, most of whom belonged by position to the middle classes. Neither need we fear that when the working classes have gained the above mentioned advantages they will stop there. They will not and they cannot. For the results of the struggle will force on them the responsibilities of managing their own affairs, and mastership will wane before Communal management almost before people are aware of the change at hand.

This will bring us at last to the period of what is now understood by the word Socialism when the means of production and the markets will be in the hands of those who can use them, i.e., the operatives of various kinds; when great accumulations of wealth will be impossible, because money will have lost its privilege; when everybody will have an opportunity of well-doing offered him; and this period of incomplete Socialism will, I believe, gradually melt into true Communism without any violent change. At first indeed, men will not be absolutely equal in condition; the old habit of rewarding excellence or special rare qualities with extra money payment will go on for a while, and some men will possess more wealth than others; but as on the one hand they will have to work in order to possess that wealth, and as on the other the excess of it will procure them but small advantage in a Society tending towards equality, as in fact they begin to understand that in a Community where none are poor, extra wealth beyond the real needs of a man cannot be *used*, we shall begin to cease estimating worth by any standard of material reward, and the position of complete equality as to condition will be accepted without question. I do not say that gifted persons will not try to excel; but their excellence will be displayed not at the expense of their neighbours but for their benefit.

By that time also we shall have learned the true secret of happiness, to wit, that it is brought about by the pleasurable exercise of our energies; and since opportunity will be given for everyone to do the work he is fitted for under pleasant and unburdensome conditions, there will be no drudgery to escape from, and consequently no competition to thrust ones one's neighbour out of his place in order to attain to it.

As to what may be called the business conduct of Communism, it has been said often, and rightly as I think, that it will concern itself with the administration of things rather than the government of men. But this administration must take form, and that form must of necessity be democratic and federative; that is to say there will be certain units of administration, ward, parish, commune, whatever they may be called, and these units all federated within certain circles, always enlarging. And in each such body, if differences of opinion arise, as they would be sure to do, there would be surely nothing for it but that they should be settled by the will of the majority. But it must be remembered that whereas in our present state of society, in every assembly there are struggles between *opposing interests* for the