

Read "Why I am a Communist," by William Morris.

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LIBERTY

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W.M. ROYCE

• A JOURNAL OF •

• ANARCHIST • COMMUNISM •

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AND OF J. TOCHATTI. CARMAGNOLE HOUSE. 7, BEADON ROAD, HAMMERSMITH.

THE COMING EMANCIPATION.

By CONRAD NAEWIGER.

The sound of strife, the roar of distant battle,
The tramp of feet now fall upon the air;
The clash of sword, the musketry's sharp rattle,
Oh! what is it, that makes some men despair?
It means for every nation,
The slave's emancipation,
From drudgery, from poverty's grim chain,
It means that slaves shall soon be men again.

Oh! what is it that makes the rich to tremble,
And fill their minds with anguish and with fear;
And with each other earnestly dissemble
As sounds of warfare fall upon each ear?
It means the day is breaking,
And Manhood is awaking,
From servitude, from hunger's grievous pain,
It means that slaves shall soon be men again.

Hark! Hark the shout that sets the air in motion,
Ten million voices sing with one accord;
Oh! what is it that causes such commotion
Why sheathed for ever is the gory sword?
It means the Revolution
Has found the great solution,
How peace and love again on earth shall reign
It means that slaves shall soon be men again.

Then join your hands, ye workers of each nation,
Let "Brotherhood" your motto ever be,
Then altered soon shall be the situation
And joy shall be where once reigned misery,
Then gird your loins, ye toilers,
To fight your old despoilers,
Who long enough have kept you in their chain,
Who wish that slaves for e'er you may remain.
Then hail the day when snapped shall be the chain
And slaves be freed, and ever free remain.

MY UNCLE BENJAMIN.

By CLAUD TILLIER.

For, nota this, gaiety always keeps company with servitude. It is a blessing that God, the great maker of compensations has created especially for those who become dependent upon a master, or fall under the hard and heavy hand of poverty. This blessing he has given them to console them for their miseries, just as he has made certain grasses to grow between the pavements that we tread under our feet, certain birds to sing on the old towers, and the beautiful verdure of the ivy to smile upon grimacing ruins.

Gaiety flies, like the swallow, above the splendid roofs of the great. It stops in the school yards at the gates of barracks, on the mouldy flaggings of prisons. It rests like a beautiful butterfly on the pen of the school-boy scrawling in his copy-book. It hob-nobs at the canteen with the old grenadiers; and never does it sing so loud—provided they let it sing—as between the dark walls that confine the unfortunate.

For the rest, the gaiety of the poor is a sort of pride. I have been poor among the poorest. Well, I found pleasure in saying to fortune: I will not bend under your hand; I will cut my hand out as proudly as the dictator Labienus once he cut his; I will wear my poverty as kings wear their diadem; strike us hard as you like, and strike again; I will answer your scourgings with sarcasms; I will be like the tree that blooms while they are cutting at its roots; like the column whose metal eagle shines in the sun while the pick is working at its base.

Dear readers, be content with these explanations, I can furnish you none more reasonable.

What a difference between that age and ours! The man of the constitutional *regime* is not a merry maker, quite the contrary.

He is hypocritical, avaricious, and profoundly selfish; whatever question strikes his brow, his brow rings like a drawer full of big pennies.

He is pretentious and swollen with vanity, the grocer calls the confectioner his neighbour, his honourable friend, and the confectioner begs the grocer to accept the assurance of the distinguished consideration with which he has the honour to be, etc., etc.

The man of the constitutional *regime* has a mania for wishing to distinguish himself from the people. The father wears a blue cotton blouse and the son an Elbert cloak. To the man of the constitutional *regime* no sacrifice is too costly to satisfy his mania for making a show. He lives on bread and water, he dispenses with fire in winter and beer in summer, in order to wear a coat made of fine cloth, a cashmere waistcoat, and yellow gloves. When others regard him as respectable, he regards himself as great.

He is prim and stiff; he does not shout, he does not laugh aloud, he knows not where to spit, he never makes one gesture more violent than another. He says very properly: "How do you do, Sir"; "how do you do, Madam." That is good behavior; now, what is good behavior? A lying varnish spread upon a bit of wood to make it pass for a cane. We so behave before the ladies. Very well; but, before God, how must we behave?

He is pedantic, he makes up for the wit that he has not by the purism of his language, as a good housewife makes up for the furniture which she lacks by order and cleanliness.

He is always observant of the proprieties. If he attends a banquet, he is silent and preoccupied, he swallows a cork for a piece of bread, and uses the cream for the melted butter. He waits till a toast is proposed before he drinks. He always has a newspaper in his pockets, he talks only of commercial treaties and railway lines, and laughs only in the Chamber of Deputies.

But, at the period to which I take you back, the customs of the little towns were not yet glossed with elegance; they were full of charming negligence and most agreeable simplicity. The characteristic of that happy age was unconcern. All these men, ships or walnut-shells, abandoned themselves with closed eyes to the current of life, without troubling themselves as to where it would land them.

The bourgeois were not office-seekers; they were not miserly; they lived at home in joyous abundance, and spent their incomes to the last pound. The merchants, few in number then, grew rich slowly, without devoting themselves exclusively to business, and solely by the force of things; the laborers worked, not to amass savings but to make both ends meet. They had not at their heels that terrible competition which presses us, and cries to us incessantly; "On! On!" Consequently they took their ease; they had supported their fathers, and, when they were old, their children in turn would support them.

Such was the abandonment of this society to merry-making that all the lawyers and even the judges went to the wine-shop, and there publicly took part in orgies. Far from fearing lest this might be known, they would willingly have hung their wigs upon the branches of the tavern bush. All these people, great and small alike, seemed to have no other business than to amuse themselves; they exercised their ingenuity only in playing some joke or in concocting some good story. Those who then had wit, instead of expending it in intrigues, expended it in merriment.

The idlers, and there were many of them, gathered in the public square; to them, market-days were days of fun. The peasant who came to bring their provisions to the town were their martyrs; they practised on them the most waggish and witty cruelties; all the neighbors leaped to get their share of the show. The police magistrates of to-day would prosecute such things; but the court officials of that time enjoyed those antics, and

scenes as well as anybody, and often took part in them.

My grandfather was a summons-server; my grandmother was a little woman whom they reproached with not being able to see, when she went to church, whether the holy-water basin was full. She has remained in my memory like a little girl of sixty. When she had been married six years, she had five children, some boys and some girls; they all lived upon my grandfather's miserable fees, and got along marvellously well. The seven of them dined off three herrings, but they had plenty of bread and wine, for my grandfather had a vineyard which was an inexhaustible source of white wine. All these children were utilized by my grandmother, according to their age and strength. The eldest, who was my father, was named Gaspard; he washed the dishes and went to the butcher's shop, there was no poodle in the town better tamed than he; the second swept the room; the third held the fourth in his arms, and the fifth rocked in its cradle. Meantime my grandmother was at church or talking with her neighbours. All went well, however; they succeeded in reaching the end of the year without getting into debt. The boys were strong, the girls were not ill, and the father and mother were happy.

To be continued.

Zola and Anarchism.

It is impossible to stop the rising tide of Anarchist ideas.

Disrespect for a Superior Race.

A cabby nearly runs over two guardians of the peace standing on the boulevard.

"Did you see that?" says one of the guardians. "A little more, and he would have crushed us—like people!"

AN ANARCHIST ON ANARCHY.

By ELISEE RECLUS.

Governments at least talk not to the poor about fraternity; they do not torment them with so sorry a jest. It is true that in some countries the jargon of courts compares the sovereign to a father whose subjects are his children, and upon whom he pours the inexhaustible dews of his love; but his formula, which the hungry might abuse by asking for bread, is no longer taken seriously. So long as Governments were looked upon as direct representatives of a heavenly Sovereign, holding their powers by the grace of God, the comparison was legitimate; but there are very few now that make any claim to this quasi-divinity. Shorn of the sanctions of religion, they no longer hold themselves answerable for the general weal, contenting themselves instead with promising good administration, impartial justice, and strict economy in the administration of public affairs.

Let history tell how these promises have been kept. Nobody can study contemporary politics without being struck by the truth of the words attributed alike to Oxenstierna and Lord Chesterfield: "Go, my son, and see with how little wisdom the world is governed!" It is now a matter of common knowledge that power, whether its nature be monarchic, aristocratic or democratic, whether it be based on the right of the sword, of inheritance, or of election, is wielded by men neither better nor worse than their fellows, but whose position exposes them to greater temptations to do evil. Raised above the crowd, whom they soon learn to despise, they end by considering themselves essentially superior beings; solicited by ambition in a thousand forms, by vanity, greed, and caprice, they are all the more easily corrupted that a rabble of interested flatterers is ever on the watch to profit by their vices. And possessing as they do a preponderant influence in all things, holding the powerful lever whereby is moved the immense mechanism of the State—functionaries, soldiers, and police—every one of their oversights, their faults or their crimes repeats itself to infinity and magnifies as it grows. It is only too true: a fit of impatience in a Sovereign, a crooked look, an equivocal word, may plunge nations into mourning and be fraught with disaster for mankind. English readers, brought up to a knowledge of Biblical lore, will remember the striking parable of the trees who wanted a king. The peaceful trees and the strong, those who love work and whom man blesses; the olive that makes oil, the fig-tree that grows good fruit, the vine that produces wine, "which cheereth God and man," refuse to reign; the bramble accepts, and of that noxious briar is born the flame which devours the cedars of Lebanon.

But these depositaries of power who are charged, whether by right divine or universal suffrage, with the august mission of dispensing justice, can they be considered as in any way more infallible, or even as impartial?

Can it be said that the laws and their interpreters show towards all men the ideal equity as it exists in the popular conception? Are the judges blind when there come before them the wealthy and the poor—Shylock, with his murderous knife, and the unfortunate who has sold beforehand pounds of his flesh or ounces of his blood? Hold they always even scales between the king's son and the beggar's brat? That these magistrates should firmly believe in their own impartiality and think themselves incarnate right in human shape, is quite natural; every one puts on—sometimes without knowing it—the peculiar morality of his calling; yet judges, no more than priests, can withstand the influence of their surroundings. Their sense of what constitutes justice, derived from the average opinion of the age, is insensibly modified by the prejudices of their class. How honest soever they may be, they cannot forget that they belong to the rich and powerful, or to those, less fortunate, who are still on the look out for preferment and honor. They are moreover blindly attached to precedent, and fancy that practices inherited from their forerunners must needs be right. Yet when we examine official justice without prejudice, how many iniquities do we find in legal procedures! Thus the English are scandalized—and rightly so—by the French fashion of examining prisoners—those sacred beings who in strict probity ought to be held innocent until they are proved guilty; while the French are disgusted, and not without reason, to see English justice, through the English Government, publicly encourage treachery by offers of impunity and money to the betrayer, thereby deepening the degradation of the debased and provoking acts of shameful meanness which cladden in their schools, more moral than their elders, regard with unfeigned horror.

Nevertheless law, like religion, plays only a secondary part in contemporary society. It is invoked but rarely to regulate the relations between the poor and the rich, the powerful and the weak. These relations are the outcome of economic laws and the evolution of a social system based on the equality of conditions.

Laissez faire! Let things alone! have said the judges of the camp. Careers are open; and although the field is covered with corpses, although the conqueror stamps on the bodies of the vanquished, although by supply and demand, and the combinations and monopolies in which they result, the greater part of society becomes enslaved to the few, let things alone—for thus has decreed fair play. It is by virtue of this beautiful system that a parvenu, without speaking of the great lord who receives counties as his heritage, is able to conquer with ready money thousands of acres, expel those who cultivate his domain, and replace men and their dwellings with wild animals and rare trees. It is thus that a tradesman, more cunning or intelligent, or, perhaps, more favored by luck than his fellows, is enabled to become master of an army of workers, and as often as not to starve them at his pleasure. In a word, commercial competition, under the paternal ægis of the law, lets the great majority of merchants—the fact is attested by numberless medical inquests—adult-rate provisions and drink, sell pernicious substances as wholesome food, and kill by slow poisoning, without for one day neglecting their religious duties, their brothers in Jesus Christ. Let people say what they will, slavery, which abolitionists strove so gallantly to extirpate in America, prevails in another form in every civilized country; for entire populations, placed between the alternatives of death by starvation and toils which they detest, are constrained to use the latter. And if we would deal frankly with the barbarous society to which we belong, we must acknowledge that murder, albeit disguised under a thousand insidious and scientific forms, still, as in the times of primitive savagery, terminates the majority of lives. The economist sees around him but one field of carnage, and with the coldness of the statistician he counts the slain as on the evening after a great battle. Judge by these figures. The mean mortality among the well-to-do is, at the utmost, one in sixty. Now the population of Europe being a third of a thousand millions, the average deaths, according to the rate of mortality among the fortunate, should not exceed five millions. They are three times five millions! What have we done with these ten million human beings killed before their time? If it be true that we have duties, one towards the other, are we not responsible for the servitude, the cold, the hunger, the miseries of every sort, which doom the unfortunate to untimely deaths? Race of Cains, what have we done with our brothers?

To be continued.

The Rule of the Fight A Fable.

Now it so happened that it came to pass that His Excellency the State became exceeding wroth against His Insignificance the Individual. So it happened that he did therefore challenge the said Insignificance to do mortal combat with him.

So they met; and His Insignificance did then and there throw a small round object, which was also black, at His Excellency, hurting him greatly, with exceeding pain, whereupon he exclaimed in great anger:

"Wretch, brute—you beer-drinking bomb-thrower—you—do you not know—are you not aware—that the rule of the fight is that only I do the striking?"

Whereupon he proceeded to extinguish His Insignificance the Individual. *George Forrest.*



HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW:
FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL
MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!

"Anarchist-Communism, is the union of the two fundamental tendencies of our society, a tendency towards economic equality and a tendency towards political liberty."—Kropotkin.

"LIBERTY" is a journal of Anarchist-Communism; but articles on all phases of the Revolutionary movement will be freely admitted, provided they are worded in suitable language. No contributions should exceed one column in length. The writer over whose signature the article appears is alone responsible for the opinions expressed, and the Editor in all matters reserves to himself the fullest right to reject any article.

We would ask our contributors, to write plainly and on one side of the paper only.

All Communications should be addressed, — The Editor, Liberty, 7 Beadon Road, Hammer-smith W.

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To Correspondents.

* * * The length of Comrade Morris's article is our excuse for the non-appearance of "MAMMON," by G. F. Watts, R.A., and "Social Contrasts," by R. Catterson Smith. These will, however, be in the March No.

A. HOLMES, Walthamstow.—Labour notes unavoidably crowded out. We look forward for your article.

G. E. CONRAD NAEWIGER, Hull.—Accept our thanks for pamphlets, proceeds shall go to push "Liberty." Your article will appear soon.

A. GORRIE, Leicester.—Your wishes for the success of "LIBERTY" and fraternal greeting help us to combat the difficulties we have to contend with.

T. SAMPSON, Brighton.—January Number is out of print.

J. PRESBERG.—We regret lecture list arrived too late for this issue.

D. J. NICOLL.—Your report arrived too late.

LIBERTY.

LONDON, FEBRUARY, 1894.

Between Ourselves.

Is it true that the Executive of the S.D.F. have passed a resolution "requesting their members not to discuss with Anarchists in future"? If so, is it or is it not sectarian?

John Burns, Socialist and Democrat, now one of the strongest supporters of those good friends of the workers, the present Liberal Government, has found time to deal out his share of abuse on the Anarchists. In his New Year's address he said, "the leaders are men of dreams, completely out of touch with the working classes, and their tools were the mentally deficient and the morally debased; the whole movement was a mere phase of criminality".

Well, it is all very easy talk. It is not so very long ago, though, since John Burns himself was a mere criminal. Then however he was not the hon. member for Battersea nor the hon. friend of Mr. Gladstone. Now times have changed, and "honest John" has changed with them.

The newspapers are giving some interesting notices of one of our noblest, and least understood, comrades, Louise Michel. An article in a recent issue of *The Sun*, and a character sketch by Severine in the *Weekly Times and Echo*, will go a long way to enlighten the public as to the real character of our courageous and untiring comrade, Louise Michel.

The Trade Returns for the past year again show a great falling off. England no longer controls the markets of the world. Countries we have exploited for years are now competing with us. Centralization of production, like everything else, cannot last for ever. The decentralization which has set in cannot be stopped. Our master's profit-mongering is breaking down, for want of customers.

Miss Josephine Butler is of opinion that the troubles in Sicily are not the result of Anarchist teaching or interference, nor have they any direct political bearing. The cause of all the trouble, she says, is simple but tragic—it is hunger, starvation. Miss Butler heard this in the house of a senator in Rome, from the lips of a Sicilian deputy.

The Fate of the Shareholder.

Recent manifestations of Anarchist activity, strike dismay into the hearts of railway and other shareholders. During the past few months the "Railway Times" has had numerous paragraphs and notes showing concern at the alarming spread of revolutionary doctrines, while its issue of January 13 expresses nervousness lest England should be on the verge of some great mishap.

On October 28th last, the above representative organ of railway shareholders in England, expressed the opinion that "Railway shareholders need look for nothing better than a short shrift and a sure cord, if the the Socialists ever come into power in this country"; while a few weeks before (Sept. 30th) it pictured Mr. Scotter, manager of the S. W. R., being "broken on the wheel" by the revolutionary party.

Our contemporary, the "Railway Times", in the above cases, absurdly exaggerates the ferocity of Anarchists and Socialists.

It must not be supposed that after the Revolution, shareholders, lawyers, legislators, or other criminals will be executed indiscriminately. They will certainly have to do useful work, and perhaps some will become good citizens. The fate predicted by the "Railway Times" is not likely to occur after the abolition of Monopoly and Government.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Italy is in revolt, the people furiously rising up to protest against the taxes, against a Government which has lost all hope of remaining in office. The Italian Government having no longer any moral force, is endeavouring by violence to repress and suffocate the efforts of a country weary of enduring misery of the most cruel kind. The prisons are crowded with insurgents and persons suspected by the Government. Blood is being shed everywhere, while the dead, and wounded by hundreds, are a source of disquietude to the whole country as to what the morrow may bring forth. Every province is agitated. The Government knows not what to be at to prevent the insurrectionary movement becoming general. Sicily has already been declared in a state of siege, 80,000 soldiers being in that island, spreading dismay and death in every part of it. At Masse, too, a state of siege has been declared. Pisa, Livorno, and other localities in Tuscany will shortly find themselves in the same condition. Bands of armed men have succeeded in reaching the mountains, where they wage furious conflicts with the military. The Minister of War, too, has been obliged to call upon the soldiers specially retained for the defence of the Alps, to pursue the insurgents. Work is at a complete standstill everywhere, commerce and industry in their death agony yesterday, have been killed outright by the insurrections of to-day. Commercial failures are no longer noticed, the shops put up their shutters in the evening the same as they took them down in the morning, without doing a sou of business all day. The question is not a political one, but is plainly economic. It is therefore no longer a question of making moral concessions, but material ones in order to render easy the life of a whole people, now plunged in the most abject misery and wretchedness.

* * *

In the Reichstag, Herr Singer, Socialist, condemned the action of the police in maintaining relations with Anarchists and Government spies, and instanced the case of a journalist who, he said, was the first to reveal in the press the Anarchist nature of the recent attempt upon Count von Caprivi's life. Herr Singer proceeded to state that when Herr von Puttkamer was Minister of the Interior the journalist referred to acted as political agent of the Berlin police in London, at a salary of 450 marks a month. While there he procured admission to an Anarchist society, which, however eventually expelled him. It was the same individual who brought the Anarchist Neve to penal servitude. He was now to be seen daily in the reporters' gallery of the Reichstag. It would thus appear, said Herr Singer in conclusion, that the police were not such innocent angels as they were represented to be.

WHY I AM A COMMUNIST.

By WILLIAM MORRIS.

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 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 unwhasteful 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 unnecessary 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, you 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 he *could* do, he would be delivered from the now very serious temptation of pretending to be a doctor when he is not one.

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 as 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 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 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.

This is the only road which I can see towards the attainment of Communism. Some while ago we, or some of us scarcely saw it; but growing hope has now pointed it out to us: and it seems to me that we are doomed to use it if we are in earnest in wishing to see Communism realized. I am opposed to Anarchism then (amongst other reasons) because it forbids the use of the only possible methods for bringing about the great changes in privilege, inequality, and poverty to equality and general wealth. So much for its tactics.

As to its theory, I must say that I cannot recognize Anarchism (as it has been expounded to me) as a possible condition of Society, for it seems to me in its essence to be a negation of Society; I rather look upon it as a mood engendered by the wrongs and follies of our false society of inequality, and which will disappear with them. A kind of idealized despair, surely not justified by the state of the socio-political movement of to day; which is most certainly settling towards Socialism in its narrower sense, and consequently towards Socialism in its wider sense; which is what I have been speaking of as Communism.

Mr. SHAW'S SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY.

LAST month Mr. Shaw confessed to the readers of *Liberty* why he reluctantly describes himself as a Social Democrat. Social Democracy is with him not a matter of conviction but of pure opportunism, and he frankly admits that many convinced Social Democrats would deny his right to so designate himself. In fact Mr. Shaw wears the Social Democratic colours merely as a *pis aller*. He hesitates, as we venture to think, to label himself with the unpleasing title of Opportunist Bureaueratic Socialist, yet this is the position he seems to imagine he holds; while he dare not even allow himself to believe what is nevertheless the truth, *i.e.*, that at heart he is a Communist-Anarchist.

For his reasons for not accepting Communist Anarchism he gravely refers us to his pamphlet, "The Impossibilities of Anarchism," but it is just the perusal of this very pamphlet that has convinced us of its author's naturally Anarchical and Communistic tendencies of thought and feeling. For Communism in the long run he openly declares, in spite of the fact that it fails—like Social Democracy—to solve the whole rent problem. The Democracy he defends as against Anarchism is as vague as the democracy of Walt Whitman. He does not touch on the crucial distinction between Democratic Government and Anarchist Administration of affairs. His objections are put forward to indicate the answers to them being thus suggested in already present to the objector's mind. In one important point, however, the pamphlet is a veritable piece of propaganda literature, but we can hardly fancy either Mr. Shreeve or Social Democrat reading it without coming away with a sense of satisfaction. We are inclined to think that a loud exclamation such as "That's my opinion!" might be uttered even by those who have been known to say "Even if I were a Communist, I would not be a Communist." Mr. Shreeve writes, "I am not a Communist because I am not willing to let myself be used as a tool for the purpose of dividing up the share of grub." And his real objection to Communism is that Anarchism seems to be tantamount to a system which makes men, whilst human beings, more like pigs than like men, piggy in character.

The question, therefore, that Mr. Shaw raises with Communist-Anarchists is not whether their principles, or those of Social Democrats are the more logical or the more comprehensive in the analysis of human nature and of social tendencies on which they are based; but merely whether they are the more opportune. It is the old, old question, whether the narrower or wider expediency be the wisest guide for conduct.

We do not deny that probably "the democratic movement has now gained sufficient power to complete itself," at all events in some countries. We do not deny that the evolutionary forces now working in society will probably effect the change from Individualism to Socialism, in some lands at least, through attempts to modify the wage-system and devise methods of governmental administration of land and capital, and governmental direction of industry and agriculture. But in our eyes this is no reason whatever why we should devote our energies to bringing these changes about. Nor does it alter the case at all, if it be demonstrated that either democratic governmental administration, or modifications of the wage-system may, to some small extent benefit the workers, and so help to pave the way for more far reaching changes. Even if these reforms could secure each hog a fair share of grub, which we gravely doubt, still we should not be contented to spend our energies on striving for them as an end and aim. The only *aim* we can heartily and energetically strive for is the attainment of a social condition which shall satisfy the cravings and aspirations of the *whole man*. All our endeavours must go to pave the way for that full satisfaction—the highest good we can now see, or indeed we should have neither heart nor hope for the struggle.

And this is not because we despise the day of small things, or imagine that a free society can be established in one generation, or in two. Rather it is largely because we are convinced that reforms and betterments are certain to follow in the wake of an energetic revolutionary propaganda, and alleviate the misery of the worker so that he gains fresh courage to revolt.

In revolutionary periods the fears of the ruling classes, the honest efforts of folk who see nothing better to do, the manœuvres of politicians to keep or gain power, all work together to bring about temporary relief measures. And the thoroughness and usefulness of these partial reforms depend largely on the strength and thoroughness of the revolutionary feeling in Society and on the far-sightedness and determination of the demands of the people. The more they ask for the more they will get.

Thus, even from the opportunist point of view, we contend that the larger, fuller, and more thorough the program of the advanced party, the sooner will the hard pressed worker get his few shillings more, his few hours less, and other such palliatives of his lot. Let him and the Socialist party ask for these things only, and they may agitate and organise for ever. Let them show a little revolutionary spirit, and the threatened classes will zealously devise and apply reforms to save their privileges.

With the opportunism of the practical humanitarian, who, leaving the great ends, devotes himself to such deeds of brotherly kindness as may lighten the burden of existence for the human lives which touch his, we have much sympathy. But we confess we find it more difficult to enter sympathetically into the opportunism of the propagandist, whose, in these days of universal struggle, of the spirit in man deliberately choosing to suffer, in teaching the theory which he himself sees as the wholly inadequate expression of the higher aspirations of humanity.



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