

A FEW FACTS CONCERNING SOCIALISM.

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To deal with a subject like socialism, necessitates a very elaborate and continuous study. It has as many champions; each having an ideal, and each interpreting the use of economic terms so as to fit his shades of meaning that is very hard for one with little experience in economic problems to adhere to the subject.

A brief history will tend to show its scope and time of existence. The purpose of this theme is to show what conditions society must be in for any elaborate conception of reform to take shape and a partial explanation of terms which are erroneously confused with the term "socialism".

History of Socialism.

Among the first socialistic schemes; not that of in those days, as such, but as history reveals to us now; was the Hebrew Theocracy. This theory being "That all land belonged to God alone and to no individual in fee simple". Every one belonged to this organization. They had to realize its benefits. A poor man could not be alienated from the land. The law defended the fatherless, hireling, stranger, poor, oppressed, and the widow.

All thru the ancient world, were scattered religious sects like the Essenes, having their property in common. During the earlier part of Christian era, there were attempts made toward communism. In this respect, during the Middle age, social functions were fostered by the Church. And during the reign of Feudalism, each and every serf had his house individually and pasture land in common. This as late as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. And immediately before this era Athens might be taken as an example of socialistic theory in practice. She was democratically governed, and the city as such owned and operated land (timber and arable)-mines; it built temples, baths, and amphitheatres; controlled and conducted the commerce, art etc: and paid

out of the general treasury to citizens of Athens more than they taxed the people hence supported them; she being supported by the surrounding country.

It might here be said that modern socialism began about the year 1817 when Robt. Owen laid his scheme before the English Parliament. During this same year Saint Simeon took up the cause and published his first book pertaining to Christian socialism. Following these have been many writers contributing to advance of socialism.

Professor Richard T. Ely says, "The results of socialism may be brot together in a definition which would read something like this: Socialism is that contemplated system of industrial society which proposes the abolition of private property in the great material instruments of production and the substitution therefore of collective property; and advocates the collective management of production, together with the distribution of social income by society, and private property in the larger proportion of this social income".

As socialism is that principle of society according to which the community as a whole fraternally organized, it should collectively own and operate land and capital for the good of all. This is not an iron bound rule, which if violated the bonds of social relationship will be broken; but only a principle which followed more or less closely, will tend to eradicate the classes of today. It has a definite purpose regardless of method used, and is very flexible in form, as is shown by the different forms in different countries; France has her communes. In Switzerland there are Cantons. Belgium has very near non-political co-operation. Here in our own country it will probably develop in the federated form.

It is distinctly evolutionary and adheres to no fixed rule of development, and there can be no definite formula laid down where by any class, community or country can grow a full fledged socialistic government very fast; but it must wait until the people have undergone the proper degree of development. It holds that a country must go through:

1st. A period of primitive individualism where the people, money and land are not bound up by the intrigues of law.

2nd. Assuming the same independence excepting in cases of slaves being used g.e. the strong forcing the weaker (prisoners of war and woman) to work.

3d. Following this line of development in which law and order begin to unfold and the poor putting themselves voluntary or otherwise under the care of the stronger; as, was the case during the Feudal period, and

lastly, a period when industry develops invention and machinery until society throws off this yoke of protection and stands in its own, but now individuality, having the advantage of science. (But in natural order of evolution we might say as we are beginning a new period).

In this period of struggling for oneself, the one victorious is generally the one inheriting money; "brains" or ability to take advantage of all opportunities. This process of centralizing-financial interests- in the hands of a few have left the rest in miserably poor circumstances. The latter are barely able to eke out an existence by working for the class in control. Competition among individual manufacturing and employers compels them to make as cheaply as possible so as to enter the market with their goods. If they do not, they must fail in business. Hence while these men are compelled to be as econom-

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ical as possible, they pay wages scarcely sufficient to sustain the actual wants of the laboring men. Another cause of the limits of the wants of man is due to the fact that man increases faster than land and capital; hence, their per cent of the whole is lowered; again the invention of machinery and concentration of industry in manufacturing centers throw more or less laborers out of employment. Following these is the fact that there exists in many cases competition between the laborers. Unskilled labor is partially taking place of skilled and unskilled in so far as they are competent to perform the work. This condition of affairs is continually growing. Man is nothing more than a machine. The large are swallowing the smaller industries. The middle men, retailers, and etc. are going out of business, or entering the field of competition, with the rest of co-workers for wages. The rich are becoming richer, more educated, more influential, because of their money to pay for lobbying. Laborers are strained more and more, until they become materialistic, and even reckless. The rich have reached this point thru shiftlessness, idleness, fast living and recklessness. Hence, boycotts, lockouts, strikes are constituents of society to day from one stand point.

The question here arises, "Is this justice to our fellowmen to enact laws that support such conditions? Is there no possible means of extricating ourselves from such a social snare?" There have been many theories advanced, advocated and even practiced. (They are (profit sharing, trades unions, partial co-operation, charities and etc) but mere bubbles in the ocean of competition. They may do a little good but what we want is a scheme which will replace this competition by co-operation; and as we have, we might say, launched upon the fifth stage in social evolution; it is admissable to call this one "co-operation" or "combination". Whether this new system be a combination by the few as in trusts, or by the many as in co-operation is for society

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to decide. But be it as it may, competition along certain lines is a thing of the past. It exists to day to a marked degree only among laborers, or more properly speaking in a limited form. As before stated it is impossible to comply with the ideals of all. One great difference arising in regard to the ownership of private property. But letting this pass, they say all else will come with evolution.

The task now before us is to accomplish this freedom spoken of thru political organization, and replacing the now existing competition by a system of co-operation. Socialism would have society own land, as a whole, not as a community.

The theory does not hold that a few have the right to own capital and divide profits among themselves. As the only scheme of idealization Socialists are not in favor of trades unions owning and conducting the machinery of their respective trades; nor do they believe in communistic colonies. These are all good in now existing form of society, but under socialism would break the law of "special privileges". Hence, is not the organization of a few as such but a general unity of the whole.

The government under this scheme would more nearly approach the truly democratic form than our government does at the present. As it is to be a government of the whole, and not a part,, it would be more of the fraternal rather than despotic. There is now existing a government (Switzerland) that very nearly approached this ideal; as thru the Initiative and Referendum, it puts all social reform enactment of new laws directly into the hands of the people.

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Socialists do not emphatically deny all phases or aspects of competition. "It is all wrong for strife in physical pursuits" so they say. In more ancient times, it produced Giants. And as society has retained competition but restrained it, somewhat, in form it has passed thru the stages of Giants-Physically- military states and fraternalism-thru competition of industry. The socialists do not deny the stimulating influence of competition, but they do want to change its direction from a physical to a higher or intellectual stand point. When men by co-operating can satisfy their physical needs by a few hours work each day it will develop the aesthetic and philanthropic tendencies of man; and by so doing we will generate a race more fitted to survival. In older countries, certain classes have been relieved from industrial pursuits, and intellectual competition has produced intellectual giants. And here we might say ^{that} this great amount of talent has been inversely proportional to numbers making their living thru industrial competition.

Socialism does not seek slavery, but freedom. They do not ask people to do for them that which they will not do for themselves. "They urge that "socialism" will mean the "Open Sesame to man and woman of true individuality giving us a twentieth century renaissance in art, a revival in learning, a reformation in religion".

The study of the subject shows that it wishes no break with the past. It is not revolutionary, as is generally supposed but it is more evolutionary.

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If this premise be true, socialism, may be said to be based up on no one system of Political economy. We have the so called "Scientific Socialism" by Marx, which is not accepted by all today. But as it is not my purpose to herein discuss his or any other author's works in particular; it will suffice to say that they all do not exactly agree as to the method of procedure, with minute technicalities; but that the general tenor of their thots are essentially the same. People as a whole form a very erroneous conception of socialism; holding that if any one point of support is fully broken that the entire theory is exploded. Instead of demoralizing the entire, they are only causing it to grow stronger. Its tendency is towards Socialistic legislature and a unity of thot until the entire nation becomes socialistic.

Another wrong conception of socialism, according to some is in regard to its in regards to its synonyms. Many holding that it is fraternalism, which is very plainly not so. Co-operation is not socialism except when all realize the benefits therefrom. Communism means the organization of a certain clan or tribe or small part of nation for their mutal welfare. Anarchism deals with Philosophy of individual Sovereignty while socialism does not recognize it at all.

In summing up we find that socialism has existed for a few thousand years, in some form or other, and will here add that every Political Economy tested its validity and knew something of its working hypothesis. We find that it must have certain in society to live up on, and as a living principle it is for society to decide what should be done with its own production. Besides these, many terms from a socialistic stand point have been associated with socialism which they say is detrimental to society which they want to build.

Whether this theory is the most efficient of all individual theories or whether the combinations of different theories would be better for society or not, is not for us to decide.