

Man wishes to realise his responsibilities. He wishes to know what differences acts will make to other people. He wishes to be able to lead a personal life, the harm of which would be as small as possible. He knows that his self-expression is hampered by nothing so much as by his incapacity to lead a life the effects of which on his fellows he is unable to realise. He feels that his moral personality is incomplete as long as he is not able to realise it in the everyday functions of life; in his day's work, in production, in consumption, in the handling and wear of commodities others have produced for his use, in the way he uses the things of everyday life which have sprung into existence as an effect, as a part of the life and work and trouble of his fellows. As a producer as well as a consumer, he wants to embody the responsibilities entailed.

Man wishes to realise all his responsibilities. He wishes to be able to influence directly the moral standards obtaining among his fellows, not in the roundabout way we call politics, i.e. influencing the power factors already existing, but in the direct way of bringing a power for good into existence.

Man wishes to do the things which create human happiness or satisfy human needs for the sake of this happiness, for the sake of these deeds. He does not want to be shut up from the social effect of his own acts. He wants to act from human motives. Man feels that he is living the good life if his consciousness is filled with human motives; he lives a higher life if he is able to know the part he is playing in the life of his fellows by performing his everyday work; and he lives on a yet higher plane if he not only knows this, but is also able to act accordingly.

Every form of Socialism is based on the hope of mankind to attain to a form of social being in which men could normally in their everyday existence fulfil their responsibilities to their fellows because they would know how their commissions and omissions affect them and they would be able to act accordingly.

This is the real meaning of group life and fellowship in group life. What makes a group not too big to become possible, the home of a humane life, is precisely the possibility of knowing that my acts affect the existence of others and how it affects them. Our wish (and capacity) for an all-round moral existence finds here a chance of fulfilment. What makes larger groups seem barren, bleak, uncanny, inhuman (groups for instance like the State) is the fact that relationships to our neighbours cannot be compassed any more in them. Where there is a market, the effect of my efforts as a producer of commodities ends when these commodities have reached the market and have turned into goods, the further fate of which is governed by prices only. The same limitations apply to me as a consumer in a market economy: the effect of self-discipline in consumption may easily be only to ruin my neighbour, who lives by selling or perhaps even producing the surplus goods. These limitations of personal responsibilities can in no wise be overcome in a market economy.

In capitalism everybody is constrained to regard the productive service he does to his neighbour as a service he renders to himself! The "idea" of service (Rotary) does not change this fact, because you do not know to whom you render service, and even if you chance to know, it would be more self-delusion to pretend that you were producing for his sake, for you must actually go on producing, even if he were non-existent - simply for your own sake.

Man as a consumer is no better off. He may have the "idea" that he is being helped in his needs by his fellows (which, of course, in an

objective way, is the case). Yet, consciously, he will be handled as the person who does the service to the producer - a most paradoxical situation. It is actually the consumer, the person living upon society, who appears as the one rendering a service to his fellows, whilst the producer who toils and creates thereby actually plays the role of a superfluous being, not much better than a parasite.

The market does the trick. It is a machinery for producing egotism, even there where there is no inclination to this. It is a machinery which isolates one being as an economic entity from the other, that is, it isolates them just in their everyday life. Each individual lives as it were in an economic "beyond" in respect to his fellows. For each individual person the rest of humanity is beyond the pale. Human beings are connected with each other only by means of a common centre, without in any case being connected with each other directly. The strings by which they are bound together all run through the market. In this way the market isolates one person from another. It exchanges the goods but cuts off their producers personally from one another. My interests can never transcend the market, e.g. the baker who sells his wares to the monied, not to the needy, cannot even try to be humane. Of course if my services fetch a price in the market, then I can be sure that they meet a human need. Yet I cannot be assured that they reached the person most in need of them - on the contrary, I can be assured that they did not reach this person, but necessarily a less needy one, or one who wanted them hardly at all. For this is one of the laws of the market.

The conscience of man in a market society is not in harmony with the everyday realities of his social existence.