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Capitalist Democracy

So let us start with the capitalist democratic system, the system which cast a sort of injustice in the economic life, a dictatorship in the political, a stagnation in the intellectual life of the church and whatever is related to it, preparing the reins of government and influence to a new ruling group which substituted its predecessors yet played their very social role only in a new manner.

Capitalist democracy has been based on a limitless belief in the individual, and that his personal interests by themselves guarantee, naturally, the society's interest in different fields, and that the idea of government is but for the protection of individuals and their personal interests; therefore, the government must not go beyond this objective in its activities and actual scopes.

Capitalist democracy may be summarized by declaring the four norms of freedom: political, economic, intellectual and individual. Political freedom allows every individual's speech to be heard and opinion to be respected in determining the nation's general well-being, planning, construction and appointing the authorities for its protection.

For the nation's general system and ruling organ are a matter directly linked to the life of each of its individuals, affectively touching one’s happiness or misery; so, it is natural, then, that each individual has the right to participate in and build both system and organ.

Had the social issue been as we said before, a matter of life or death, happiness or misery of the natives on whom general laws and regulations are enforced, it equally is natural not to let an individual or group, whatever the circumstances may be, take its responsibility as long as there is no individual whose purity of purpose and wisdom of mind rise above inclinations and mistakes.

Therefore, there has to be a complete equity in the political rights of all citizens, for they all are equal in bearing the results of the social issue and obeying the demands of constituting and executing authorities. On this basis stand the right of voting and the principle of general election which guarantee that the ruling organ, in all its authorities and offices, represents the majority of citizens.

Economic freedom hinges on belief in free economy on which the open door policy has been erected, determining to open all doors and prepare all fields before the citizen in the economic field. So, everyone has the right to ownership for the sake of both consumption and production. Such productive ownership, which renders the mass capital without a limit or restriction, is equally allowed for everyone. Each individual, then, possesses an absolute freedom to produce, in any norm or method, accumulate, increase and multiply wealth in the light of his own personal interests and benefits.

According to the allegation of some defenders of this "economic freedom", the laws of political economy, which naturally are based on general principles, can guarantee the society's happiness and keep an economic equilibrium in it, and that the personal interest, which is the strong motive and real goal of the individual in his work and activity, is the best to guarantee the general social interest, and that the competition which takes place in the free market is solely sufficient to create the spirit of justice and equity in different accords and contracts.

The natural laws of economy, for example, interfere in keeping the natural level of price in a manner which can almost be mechanical, for if the price rises above its fair natural limits, demand will decrease, according to the natural law which rules that "The rise of a price causes a decrease in demand", and the decrease in demand causes in turn the lowering of the price, according to another natural law, and it does not leave price until it lowers it to its previous level, thereby removing exceptions.

The personal interest always imposes on the individual to think of the way to increase and improve production, while decreasing its expense and cost. This (according to the same theory) brings forth the society's interest at the same time when it is regarded as a private issue which also concerns the individual.

Competition naturally demands restricting prices of goods and paying worker’s and labourer’s fair wages without injustice or inequity, for each seller or producer fears raising his prices or the lowering of the wages of his labourers because of the competition of other sellers and producers.

Intellectual freedom means that people must live free in their doctrines and beliefs according to their reasoning or whatever their liking and inclination inspire to them without obstacles from the authority. The government must not rob any individual of this freedom, nor must it forbid him from practising his right in it, the proclamation of his ideals and beliefs, and the defence of his viewpoints and reasoning.

Personal freedom expresses: the emancipation of man in his behaviour from different kinds of pressures and restrictions. Therefore, he possesses his will and (the freedom to) improve it according to his personal desires, regardless of whatever happens as a result of applying such control over his personal conduct of consequences and results, unless they clash with the control of others over their own con-duct.

The deadline at which the personal freedom of any individual stops is: others’ freedom. As long as the individual does not harm this latter freedom, there is no problem in conditioning his life in the manner

which he/she likes, following different customs, traditions, rituals and rites one finds to be palatable, for this is a private matter which is linked to his/her existence, whether present or future.

As long as he possesses such existence, he is capable of faring with it however he pleases. Religious freedom, according to the norm of capitalism it advocates, is but an expression of the individual freedom in its doctrinal aspect and of the personal freedom in the practical aspect which is related to doctrines and conduct.

From this exposition we can reach this summary: The wide intellectual line of such a system, as we hinted to it, is: Society's interests are linked to those of the individual: The individual is the basis on which the social system must be erected. A good government is the apparatus which is utilized for the service and benefit of the individual and the strong instrument to keep and protect his interests.

Such is the capitalist democracy in its basic principles for the sake of which several revolutions broke out and many peoples and nations strove to achieve under the leadership of leaders who, when describing such new system and counting its merits, describe paradise in its blessing and happiness and what it contains of aspiration, bliss, dignity and fortune, and on which several amendments were made, but such amendments never touched its heart's essence; rather, it stayed maintaining the most significant of its principles and bases.

Materialistic Trend in Capitalism

It is obvious that this social system is a purely materialistic one which mankind has followed separately from both his beginning and end, limited to the utilitarian aspect of his materialistic life, placing his assumptions thereupon. But this system, while being saturated with a domineering materialistic outlook, has never been based on a materialistic philosophy of life or a detailed study thereof. Life within the social atmosphere of this system has been separated from every relationship outside the materialistic and utilitarian limits, but there has been no complete philosophical comprehension prepared for the establishment of this system for the purpose of such separating operation[1].

I do not mean that the world did not contain schools for philosophical materialism and its adherents; rather, it contained popularity of the materialistic inclination as the result of the experimental mentality which was widespread since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and by the spirit of doubt and intellectual upheaval brought forth by the intellectual revolution which befell a group of notions used to be considered among the most clear and accurate facts[2] and by the spirit of rebellion and anger against the alleged "religion" which was freezing the minds and intellects, flattering tyranny and iniquity, supporting the social corruption in every battle it waged against the weak and the oppressed.[3]

These three factors helped promote materialism in the minds of many a Western mentality. All of this is true, but the materialistic system has never been based on a philosophical comprehension of life, and this is its contradiction and incapacity, for the social aspect of life is linked to the reality of life: It is not

crystallized in a correct form except when it is based on a central basis which explains life, its reality and limitations.

The materialistic system lacks such a basis, for it implies deception and cheating, speed and little consideration when the realistic aspect of life is frozen and the social issue is studied separately from it, although the continuation of the intellectual balance of a system is its restriction of attitude, from the beginning, to the reality of life which attitude provides society with the social ingredient: the mutual relationships among people and one's method in understanding it and discovering its secrets and values.

Had mankind in this planet been the making of a managing and overwhelming Power that knows his secrets and obscurities, appearances and peculiarities, organizing and directing him, then he would have naturally surrendered, in his direction and life-conditioning, to such Creating Power, for that is wiser than him regarding his own affairs as being more knowledgeable about his reality, more righteous in faring and more moderate than he is.

Also, had this limited life been the beginning of a perpetual one that will stem out of it, taking its hue there from, with its balances depending on the extent of the first one's moderation and righteousness., then it would have been natural to organize the present life, since it is the beginning of an immortal one based on both materialistic and non-materialistic principles.

Therefore, the issue of believing in God and in life to have sprung from Him is not a purely idealistic matter detached from life so it would be separated from life's spheres, for which special codes and laws would have to be legislated, while by passing that matter and separating it. Rather, it is a matter linked to the mind, the heart and life altogether.

The proof for its closer link to life than democratic capitalism itself is that its idea is based on the belief that there has been neither individual nor a group of individuals whose infallibility of objective, intellectual inclination and discretion are of the degree which allows entrusting the social issue to it and to depend on it for the establishment of a righteous life of the nation.

This very basis has neither position nor meaning except when built on a purely materialistic philosophy which does not recognize the establishment of a system except by a limited human mind. The capitalist system is materialistic in all the sense the world implies; it either implies materialism, without daring to declare its link to it and dependence on it or it may be ignorant of the extent of the natural link between the realistic matter of life and its social aspect. Therefore, it lacks the philosophy on which every social system has to lean. It simply is materialistic even though it has never been based on a materialistic philosophy with clear outlines.

Position of Ethics in Capitalism

The result of such materialism with whose spirit the system has been overwhelmed is that ethics have been left out of all calculations, without winning any existence in that system, or say their concepts and ideals have been altered, and the personal benefit has been declared as a super–most priority and all types of freedom are means towards achieving this priority.

Resulting from that are all calamities and catastrophes, troubles and tribulations about which the modern world has complained (and will keep complaining).

Advocates of democratic capitalism may defend its attitude towards the individual and his personal interests by saying that the personal interest by itself brings forth the social interest, and the results achieved by ethics in their spiritual values are also achieved in the democratic capitalist society, not through "ethics" but through the special "motives" and their service: When man performs a social service, he, too, achieves a personal benefit, being part of the society for which he labours.

When he save someone's endangered life, he also earns a benefit for himself, for that person's life will serve the social body a portion of which service will be his own. Therefore, the personal motive and the utilitarian sense suffice to guarantee and ensure the social interests since they, when analysed, amount to personal interests and individual benefits.

Such an apology is closer to vast imagination than to reasoning. Imagine if the practical criterion in the life of every individual in the nation had been the achievement of his personal benefits and interests, to the widest possible range, and had the state been providing for the individual his freedom, sanctifying him without reservation or limitation, then what would the position of social work have been in the dictionary of such an individual?

How can the link between the social interest and the individual one be sufficient to direct the individual towards the occupations called forth by ethical codes, knowing that many such occupations do not bring him any benefit?

If it happens that they do contain some benefit to him, since he is a member of the community, it often happens, too, that such minute benefit (which cannot be conceived except analytically) would be counteracted by transient benefits or individual interests which find in freedom a guarantee to their achievement, so much so that the individual would trample over all systems of ethics and spiritual conscience.

Tragedies of the Capitalist System

If we wish to discern the consequent series of social tragedies resulting from this system which does not stand on a studied philosophical base, this research's scope will only be too narrow for that; therefore,

we would like to just allude to them thus: The first of such series is the minority ruling the majority, controlling its interests and essential affairs. Political freedom has meant that the establishment of systems and codes as well as their execution is the right of the majority.

Let us suppose that the group which represents the majority of the nation holds the reins of government and legislation while having the democratic capitalist mentality, which is a mentality purely materialistic in its trend, inclinations and objectives, what will be the fate of the other groups?

Or, say, what can the minority expect in the shade of laws legislated for the benefit of the majority to protect its interests? Will it be strange, then, if the majority legislates laws in the light of its own interests, neglecting the minority's interests, following an unjust trend to achieve its desires that may harm other's interests? Who will maintain this minority's existing entity and defend it against injustice, as long as the personal benefit is the concern of every individual, and as long as the majority does not know, in its social concept, any values for the spiritual and intellectual principles?

Naturally, sovereignty will stay under the system as it did before, and the symptoms of monopoly and trespassing on the rights and interests of others will linger in the social atmosphere of this system as it did in the old social systems. The only difference is that degrading the human dignity used to be done by the individual to his nation; now in this system it comes from the majorities against the minorities, the first composing a huge number of humans.

This is not the whole story. The tragedy would then be simple, but the stage is set for more laughs than tears. The case worsens and becomes more severe when the economic issue results from this system later on; therefore, the economic freedom is decided in the fashion which we have described above, sanctioning all the ways and means of getting rich; no matter how outrageous or odd in method or manner, guaranteeing what it had advertised when the world was busy in a big industrial revolution and science was giving birth to the machine which overturned the face of industry and wiped out manual industries and the like.

The coast was then clear for an outrageous wealth for the nation's minority. Opportunities enabled the latter to benefit from the modem means of production, provided by limitless capitalist liberties with sufficient absurdities for their utilization and use to the furthermost limit, annihilating thereby many groups of the nation whose industries were wiped out by the machine that shook their livelihoods without finding a way to withstand the torrent, since the promoters of the modern industries were armed with "economic freedom" and all other "sacred" liberties.

Thus does the field remain vacant except of that elite group of the promoters of industry and production, while the middle class is being reduced to the generally low level, and this crushed majority falling at the mercy of that elite group that does not think or calculate except according to the "democratic capitalist" mode.

Naturally, then, it would not extend its kind and assisting aid to them in order to get them out of the pit

and give them a share of its tremendous profits. Why should it, since its "ethical" criterion is benefit and pleasure, as long as the State guarantees absolute freedom in whatever it does, so long as the democratic capitalist system is too narrow for the intellectual philosophy of life with all its related concepts?

The matter, therefore, has to be studied in the manner inspired by this system, which is: These important men take advantage of the majority's need for them and their living standards to oblige those who are capable of working in their occupations and factories for a limited time and for wages enough only to sustain them.

This is the "logic" of pure utilitarianism which they would naturally adopt, dividing the nation consequently to a group in the peak of wealth and a majority in a bottomless pit: Here, the nation's political right is crystallized in a new form.

As for equality with regard to the citizens' political rights, even though it is not wiped out of the system's record, it has survived this turmoil only as a shadow and pure ideology: When the economic freedom records the results which we exposed above, it will come to the conclusion of the deep division which we have explicated, taking control of the situation and holding the reins, conquering the political freedom before it.

Because of its economic status in the society and capacity of using all means of propaganda, and because of its capacity of buying supporters and helpers, the capitalist group controls the reins of government in the nation, seizing power in order to use it for its own interests and to guard its objectives, and both legislative and social systems will be controlled by capital, after it has already been supposed by the democratic concepts to be the right of all the nation.

Thus does democratic capitalism become in the end an authority monopolized by the minority, a means through which several individuals protect their own existence at the expense of others, according to the utilitarian mentality inspired by the democratic capitalist "culture". Here we reach the worst series enacted by this system.

Those people in whose hands the democratic capitalist system has placed all sorts of influence, providing them with every kind of power and potential, will direct their attention, inspired by this system's mentality, towards the horizons and feel inspired by their interests and objectives that they are in need of even new areas of influence for two reasons:

First: The abundance of production depends on the extent of abundance and availability of essential materials; therefore, whosoever's share of such materials is larger, his producing capacities will be stronger and more plentiful. These materials are spread in God's vast lands. It is necessary to obtain them, then the lands which contain them have to be seized [by force if need be] for absorption and utilization.

Second: The strength of the producing speed and power, motivated by the anxiety for plenty of profit on one hand, and the low standard of living of many nations, due to the materialistic greed of the capitalist group and its competition with the public through its utilitarian means, on the other, make the public unable to purchase products and consume them. All of this makes the big producers in dire need of new markets to sell their surplus products. Finding such markets means thinking of seizing [colonizing] new lands.

Thus is the matter studied in a purely materialistic mentality. Naturally, such mentality, the system of which has never been based on spiritual or ethical principles and the social system of which admits nothing but filling this limited life with different sorts of pleasures and desires, finds in these two reasons a justification and a "logical" appetizer to transgress on peaceful countries, trespass on their dignity, control their provisions and potential natural resources, utilizing their wealth for marketing its surplus products.

All of this is a "reasonable" and "permissible" matter, according to the "ideals" of individual interests on whose bases both capitalist system and "free economy" stand; from here is the giant of materialism sets free to invade and wage wars, scuffling and tying, colonizing and exploiting in order to satisfy the mania of wills and whims.

Look into the tragedies humanity has suffered because of such system which is materialistic in spirit, form, manner and aim, even though it has never been based on a certain philosophy in agreement with that spirit and form, in harmony with such manners and objectives, as we have pointed out above.

Judge for yourself the share of happiness and stability of a society based on the principles of this system and ideals, one which lacks self-denial and mutual trust, true compassion and love, and all the good spiritual trends, so much so that the individual lives in it feeling that he is responsible only for his own self, that he is in danger because of each and every interest of others that may clash with his own, as if he is living in a continuous struggle and race, unarmed except by his own powers, aiming thereby at none other than his own personal interest.

1. This experiment has won a great significance in the scientific field, having achieved an unexpected success in finding out many facts and unveiling surprising secrets which have enabled mankind to utilize those secrets and facts for a practical living. The success it has achieved has won it sanctity in the minds of common people, making these people depart from the abstract ideals and all facts which cannot be realized through the senses and experiments, so much so that the experimental sense has become, according to the doctrine of many experimentalists, the only basis for knowledge and science.

   We have explained in Falsafatuna (Our Philosophy) the fact that the experiment itself relies on the mental intellect, and that the main basis for all knowledge and science is the mind which realizes facts the senses cannot feel as it does concrete facts.

2. Among the prevalent beliefs which used to enjoy a high degree of clarity and simplicity, although based neither on an intellectually logical basis nor a philosophical proof, was the belief that earth was the centre of the world. When such beliefs crumbled down in the shade of accurate experiments, the common notion was shaken, and a wave of doubt overtook many

intellects, causing thereby the resurrection of Greek sophistry influenced by the doubting spirit just as it was influenced during the Greek period by the spirit of doubt which had resulted from the contradictions of philosophical creeds and the intensity of arguments among them.

3. The Church played a significant role in utilizing religion in a scandalizing manner, making its name nothing but a tool for the achievement of its own aims and objectives, strangulating scientific and social liberties, establishing the Inquisition Courts and granting them wide prerogatives to fare with people's fate, so much so that all of that resulted in people being fed-up with religion altogether and feeling disgusted with it: Crimes were being committed in its name, although in its pure reality and accurate essence it is not less than those grumbling critics in denouncing crimes and in the desire to uproot motives behinds these crimes. I have explained these notions and undertaken a detailed scientific study thereof in my book Iqtisaduna.

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