

B. James, What is Communism?

And other Anarchist Essays

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I submit that every individual has certain natural proportions or relations subsisting within himself, and that all social wrong is the establishment of relations by which persons are made to stand towards each other differently from these natural proportions. When these are preserved we have social equality, which is the equation between the internal ratios of each as a sole individual and as a member of a group of related individuals. The present system of society is the pretended equation between $6:8::6+4:8-4$, or $1x3::\frac{1}{2}x\frac{1}{4}$ or any other equally palpable irreconcilables. All relations should be such as to aid the fulfilment of the normal tendencies that appear without relation and those which are made or allowed to appear by the fulfilment of the former — that is, they should give scope for the enlargement and satisfaction of the relations latent in each, and create no relations of a different origin. "the Perfection of Relation into Irrelativity".

Every institution (in the social sense) must have one of three objects: 1) the creation or preservation of abnormality; 2) the re-establishment of normality by counteracting abnormality; 3) the preservation of normality better than it can preserve itself i.e. by introducing a primary abnormality.

As to the first, every reformer is aware that institutions of this kind are the direct means of intentional privilege and oppression. The second do not create normality, but the abnormality existing only remodel oppression and add to it new features of their own. The third create **abnormality** and immediately defeat their own purpose — normality. All are iniquitous and absurd. The truth of each of these propositions is obvious without further observation, of which, however, there is no lack.

Therefore All Must Go. The State Capital Religion Vaccination — Marriage Land Ownership — all these.

They are not all I tell you that there are two elements which must be permanently or genuinely impossible. Property and Industrial Division of Laborers — and between these two, a third, the System of Exchange.

I deny Property altogether. The only factors in determining normality, whether I shall take enjoyment of *anything* are: 1) The accessibility of that thing; 2) my desire to have enjoyment of it; 3) whether, in taking the proposed enjoyment of it, I shall be depriving anyone else of any enjoyment of it, or connected with it, naturally coming to him, or whether nobody will be so effected; that is, whether or not I shall be frustrating the individuality of another by intervening to bring failure upon his **design of satisfying his needs with the aid of that object.**

Property on the other hand even in the most advanced sense gives someone a monopoly of certain resources on the plea of preserving his interest in the design or labor passing in them. Thus, also, the landowner holds his monopoly.

No doubt it seems very natural to those who fancy the aim of a man's life to be the production of something he does not need, with the design of changing it for something which somebody else in like manner needlessly worked upon, in which case of course the design would be frustrated by such a liberty — yet it requires only a moment's thought to show that what would be frustrated would **not** be the design of supplying one's own needs by access to the 'product' of others, with the reciprocal condition that they supply theirs by access to the 'product' of oneself, but the design of supplying one's own needs by access to the 'product' of others, gained by granting to those others a monopoly of one's own 'products'. And this design presupposes that one is excluded from access to anything but one's own 'product' and more untouched raw material, except on the condition of conceding the privilege of monopoly over some article upon which one has worked, and would still be so excluded if there were no monopoly of one's own particular 'product' — in other words that everyone would only be at liberty to use in any way that of which he is the direct producer, if everyone were at liberty to use that of which he is not the direct producer — in other words: ROT!

Given this fancy 'property' in 'produce' and where are you to begin or where stop? If I crop an acre, and move onto the next lot, am I to forbid you access to the first access because neither you nor Nature will ever be able to absolutely undo the results of my labor on that first acre, though I do not require it? The only benefit which tends to me out of my production is that which it is physically possible for me to have in my own person. If anyone else can reap a benefit from it that I cannot, yet without denying me any of the benefit that I can, what right have I to say him nay?

I warn you solemnly that, without Nihilism, that is except on the basis of Communist-Anarchy, Anarchy is **impossible**.